

the magazine for town and parish

your **Berkhamsted**



Remembering life as a foundling
Berkhamsted's visitors from space

Is your child dyslexic?

News from around Berkhamsted

May 2011

50p

From the Editor May 2011



*The Parish Magazine of
St Peter's
Great Berkhamsted*

Welcome to the May issue of *Your Berkhamsted*.

In this month's issue we continue our celebrations of the 60th anniversary of Ashlyns School with a fascinating first hand account of life as a foundling at the Ashlyns Foundling Hospital.

Dan Parry tells us how we can get a glimpse of life in space from our own back gardens while Corinna Shepherd talks about dyslexia in children and her upcoming appearance at Berkhamsted Waterstone's.

We bring you the latest news from "Around the town" - please let us know your community news for future issues.

This month we also have features about the Ashridge Annual Garden Party, the Petertide Promises Auction, and a very clever dog, as well as our regular columnists, and the eighth and penultimate chapter of our serial *Little Spirit*.

Ian Skillicorn, Editor

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We welcome contributions, suggestions for articles and news items, and readers' letters. For all editorial and advertising contacts, please see page 19. For copy dates for June to August's issues, please refer to page 30.

Front cover: photo courtesy of Cynthia Nolan - www.cheekychopsphotos.co.uk. Back cover: Bluebells at Aldbury Nowers.

Responsibility for opinions expressed in articles and letters published in this magazine and for the accuracy of any statements in them rests solely with the individual contributor. Your Berkhamsted has no affiliation with the Save Your Berkhamsted campaign.

Your Berkhamsted Leader by Fr Michael Bowie



Easter has fallen so late this year that the holidays came before, rather than after the festival.

I had to take my post Easter break two weeks before Easter so that Carolina and I could get away together.

Just before writing this, I was listening to a radio commentator complaining about there being too many holidays this year. In addition to the usual May bank holidays, the lateness of the Easter festival, the May elections and another recent event (which I have vowed not to mention but which led to an extra bank holiday) have kept children at home for a record number of days this spring. This was the real complaint – not too many holidays, but what was described as a ‘childcare nightmare’. I detect a recurring theme in the commentariat: when schools close because of snow the complaint is that parents have to look after their children themselves; now too many holidays produce the same ‘problem’. I have no idea whether this is a complaint made by real people rather than what Australians call a ‘media beat-up’, but I hope it doesn’t catch our imaginations.

Anything which allows or even forces us to spend more time together is good for us. We are intrinsically social beings, but we are increasingly starving ourselves of everything but employment and other busyness, as the pressures of mortgages and rising prices skew our priorities away

from each other and towards a myth of success, or even just survival. Leisure has itself become an ‘industry’ and many of us leave work only to exhaust ourselves further on gymnasium treadmills which look to me more like torture than relaxation.

Life which is more than existence takes time; we need time to enjoy each other’s company and to learn about ourselves and other people; we also need time on our own, to think. Time spent, even ‘wasted’, with friends or family is essential for our growth and flourishing.

Jesus spent, or possibly wasted, a great deal of his short life attending to people and to his own relationship with his heavenly Father. The cross reminds us that human life can end very suddenly and too soon. Easter is all about the deeper and qualitatively richer life of God, into which Jesus rose and promised that we could follow him, in which there is no urgent pressure to achieve or prove that we exist, but a generous permission to be.

My next holiday is going to involve doing nothing at all. *yB*

Fr John Pritchard’s new appointment

Next month Fr John Pritchard leaves Berkhamsted to take up a new appointment as Assistant Priest at All Saints Margaret Street in central London.

We will be remembering Fr John’s four years in Berkhamsted in June’s issue.

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Around the town

The latest news from around Berkhamsted

Many thanks to those of you who entered our photography competition in March.

We are delighted to announce the winner and runner up.

First place goes to Chris Richards for his photo of St Peter's church clock being cleaned in 1979.

We chose this photo as it depicts a rare sight in the town and also transports us back to get a glimpse of the church a few decades ago.

Our runner up is Lindsey Toms for a beautiful snow scene at Ashridge.

We weren't planning to have a runner up but



Cleaning the clock tower in 1979



Walking the dog—Ashridge

this photo was so charming we felt it also deserved a special mention, and to be seen by our readers.

Chris Richard's photo will appear as a full page picture on the back cover of Your Berkhamsted in August's issue.

Congratulations to both Chris and Lindsey.

We are always happy and grateful to receive suggestions for photos, news items, features and interviews in Your Berkhamsted.

Please turn to page 31 for more information about how you can contribute to your town and parish magazine.

(more news on page 7)

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The Berkhamsted Branch of the RNLI invites you to 'An Insider's View of the RNLI' by Paul Boissier, RNLI Chief Executive Officer at Ashley Green Village Hall, Two Dells Lane, Ashley Green HP5 3RB on Friday 20th May at 7.00pm for 7.15pm. Tickets £6 (including tea/coffee). Souvenir Stall.

Paul Boissier has spent most of his working life either at sea, or closely involved with seafarers. After graduating in Mechanical Engineering at Cambridge University, he joined the Royal Navy, where he specialised in navigation and served in a variety of submarines during the Cold War. This culminated in two submarine commands – HMS ONYX and HMS TRAFALGAR - before he moved across to the surface fleet as Captain of the anti-submarine frigate, HMS CHATHAM. Before moving to the RNLI, Paul spent 2 ½ years as the Royal Navy's Chief Operating Officer.

There will be a Service of Healing and Wholeness at All Saints Church, Shrublands Road on Sunday 29th May at 4pm.

Oxfam's Children's Wear Event raised an amazing £7700.00 in just two and a half hours. Delighted organizer Nicky Evans thanked all the donors, customers and the hardworking team of volunteers who made it possible. Special thanks went to Geoff Dell who arranged the transport. This is enough to build four single classroom schools and train 33 teachers or create 18 libraries.

The Oxfam book and music shop at 232 High St. (formerly the Wine Rack) is up and running and proving popular with local book and music lovers.

In July Oxfam's annual literary festival Bookfest will take place and the theme this year is Local History. Donations of good quality books of all kinds are always very welcome but with the Festival in mind any gift on the topic of the local area would be particularly appreciated.

This year's Ashridge Garden Party in aid of the Hospice of St Francis is on Sunday 22nd May between 2pm and 5pm, at Ashridge Business School. See page 9 for full details.

Corinna Shepherd of Dancing Kites Creative Learning will be talking about dyslexia at Waterstone's from 11am to 3pm on 21st May. Read an interview with Corinna on page 20.

Ashlyns School's 60th anniversary Open Weekend takes place on the 14th and 15th May. See page 23 for more details. *JB*

Please let us know your community news. Contact details are on page 19.

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Annual Ashridge Garden Party

The Hospice of St Francis is delighted to announce the date of its annual Ashridge Garden Party on Sunday 22nd May between 2pm-5pm at Ashridge Business School in the beautiful Ashridge estate. It's a rare opportunity to browse in the gardens which aren't often open to the public.

The Garden Party is a great day out for everyone and raises much needed funds for the Hospice of St Francis. This year the Kids Zone will include a circus skills workshop by Alight Fingers, Punch & Judy show, face painting area, Bouncy Castle and many other child friendly entertainments.

Refreshments are being provided by the ever popular Pimms Bar and local company Jolly Huckster's Bar will be selling locally brewed beer. New stands this year include hot food from Ashridge Delicious, providing freshly cooked paella and tartiflette, sausages and French baguettes, as well as a selection of French olives. And something that will bring a smile to everyone's faces - Berkhamsted's very own Scoops ice cream parlour will be selling a selection of their delicious Italian ice creams.

For some retail therapy, there will be a large range of stalls selling gifts and goodies, such as Phoenix Cards, Rocking Pony (selling outdoor accessories) and Finishing Touches (fairtrade jewellery). The Jolly Jazzers jazz band will add to the party atmosphere throughout the afternoon, so do come and join us, it's a great way to help raise vital funds for the Hospice of St Francis.



The Hospice of St Francis cares for people from Dacorum, St Albans, Harpenden, Markyate, Chesham, Amersham and the surrounding villages. It is the only inpatient unit with special facilities that allow patients to be cared for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It also helps patients who are seriously ill at home and in day hospice but needs to raise more than £3.3 MILLION every year.

Tickets are £4 if bought in advance or £5 on the day, and can be purchased from any of the Hospice of St Francis shops or from the Hospice main reception located off Shooters Way. Children under 16 are free. *yB*

For more information email fundraising@stfrancis.org.uk or call 01442 869555. Directions to Ashridge Business school at www.ashridge.org.uk.

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The time for student democracy

Sam Limbert continues his regular column written to us from university

At a time when some students have seen the need to take to the streets in protest, for those who stayed on their university campus, it has been their chance to campaign and vote in various Union and society elections.

Here at the University of Surrey, there has been almost a month of campaigning for key sabbatical positions in the Students' Union for next year, with five vice-president positions up for grabs. The campus has been covered with posters and banners, people have been wearing campaign t-shirts and there were even a couple of 'Question Time' style events where students could ask the VP candidates about issues that mattered to them.

At the time of writing, it is currently voting week with some candidates' campaigns reaching an unavoidable climax as they try and persuade students that they can make their student life better next year.

In the meantime, the societies run by the Students' Union have been holding their own elections with key positions being filled in AGMs.

The society I've been most involved with this year has been the student radio station, GU2 radio. I started by going through presenter training before joining the sports team. I have since been one of the regular presenters on the Saturday afternoon show.

The GU2 AGM was quite a long affair with a number of committee positions to be filled. Whereas some societies only needed a few people to be elected onto the committee, GU2 has a range of roles that covers areas such as programme control, music and marketing. This meant there were a lot of speeches, questions and votes to get through.

I went to the AGM unsure if I was going to run for any positions, but the longer the meeting went on the more I thought it would be worthwhile to try and take something on as its great experience and, if nothing else, improves a CV. One of the last positions available was the sports editor, and having been on the sports team I thought I'd give it a go. I ended up being the only candidate so was duly elected.

Having enjoyed just being a presenter, being the editor should be a great experience and a lot of fun. I'll take over as sports editor towards the end of May and our first show after Easter will be on 14th May.

If you ever happen to be in Guildford, you can hear GU2 on 1350AM. It can also be listened to online anyway at www.gu2.co.uk.

The sports show is on Saturday from 3-5pm, and features a range of university and national sports news and discussion, along with live scores and a range of music so feel free to have a listen! *yB*

Berkhamsted's visitors from space

Dan Parry looks to the stars

There is a place just 60 miles from Berkhamsted that leaves some who visit it weeping in admiration. Throughout the history of humanity only around 500 people have been there, and yet anyone can look upon it pretty much any night they choose. Space is of course no easy place to reach. Space travel is so expensive the world's biggest superpower was recently forced to abandon a future programme of state-funded manned missions. The space shuttles are being given away: should you want one you simply need to prove you're associated with an educational establishment, that you have ample parking and that you have the means of paying postage and packaging (which for a space shuttle sent from America doesn't come cheap).

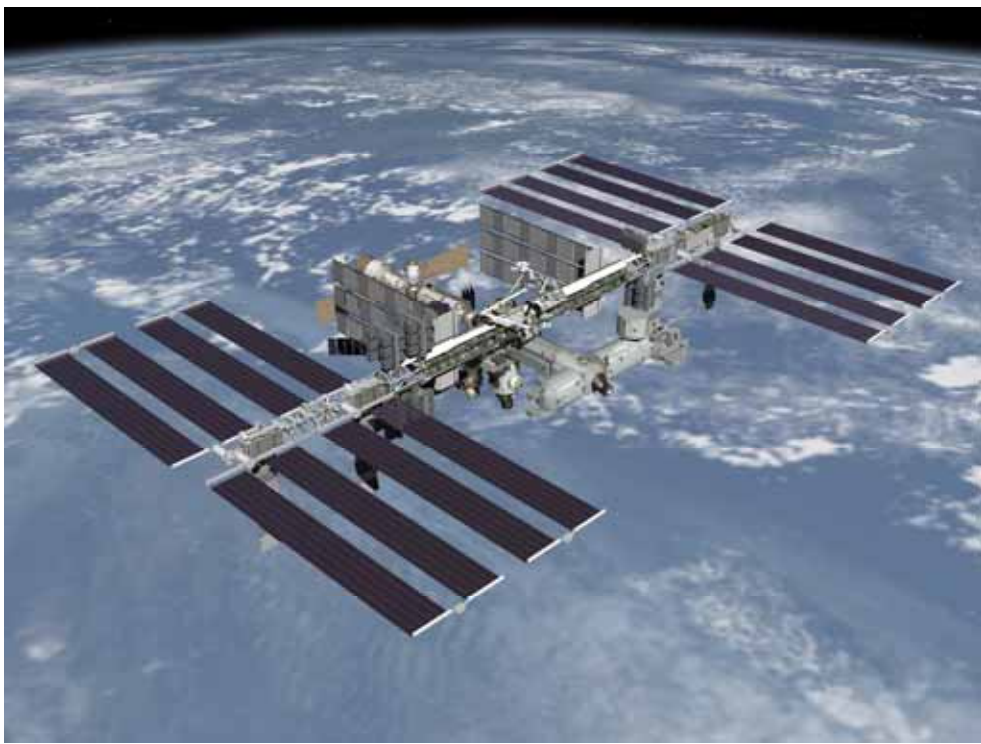
Nevertheless there are many places around the world where you can still delight in the thrill of seeing a spacecraft pass directly above your head – and Berkhamsted is one of them. The spacecraft in question is the International Space Station (ISS) which boasts a fabulously futuristic array of facts and stats. Its on-orbit construction was started in 1998 and since then it has been repeatedly extended so that now it consists of 15 modules offering laboratories, docking compartments, airlocks, living quarters and two toilets; but no shower. It has a gym, an acre of solar panels, 52 computers controlling its systems and a humanoid robot called robonaut (sent up just last month) – though its legs won't arrive until next year.

Already 358 feet wide and by far Earth's

biggest artificial satellite, when it's finished ISS will have a mass of more than 400 tons. Yet perhaps the most startling fact is that one of humanity's greatest achievements is so little known. Those who've heard of it might not know that its permanent crew of half a dozen people now live in an area equivalent to a five-bedroomed house; or that when you see it coasting silently overhead you won't quite believe you'd never spotted it before. Best seen just after sunset, it's more exotic than the stars yet nearer than Paris. Then, just as you begin wondering how to become an astronaut, it's gone. Travelling at more than 17,000mph, in no more than four minutes it's slipped over the horizon as silently, and apparently secretly, as it arrived.

The second most amazing fact is that on a summer evening you can share a glass of wine with friends and quietly watch ISS leave – and then marvel as it returns to your garden just 90 minutes later, having travelled right around the world.

From space the view is mesmerising. Travelling at that speed ISS crews see the sun rise or set every 45 minutes. Astronaut Michael Massimino confessed to me that in watching arcs of rich crimson light roll back the blackness of space he felt that the beauty of such a scene should only be witnessed by God. Indeed when he found himself silently weeping during a space-walk, he had to force himself to stop before his weightless tears floated from his face and collided with the live electrical components inside his helmet.



Watching from a garden near Berko station doesn't always produce the same effect, but perhaps the emotion may run a little deeper in the days to come. While ISS can be seen any time of the year, the most evocative moments are those periods when you know the space shuttle is approaching, or even docked. This promises to be a rare sight. As we went to press, the penultimate shuttle trip was due to launch on April 19th, with the spacecraft Endeavour beginning its final mission. Endeavour is scheduled to land on May 3rd and until then there will be several opportunities to see the rendezvous from our neck of the woods. Of course once Endeavour leaves, ISS will still be visible most nights of the year. The best way to see the space station is to start at <http://spaceflight.nasa.gov/realdatasightings/> which will give you precise local details, (begin by selecting

country, then town – e.g. Luton). The actual direction in which it arrives varies, as does its angle above the horizon. Essentially after sunset it approaches from the direction of Northchurch and vanishes somewhere above Potten End. Its first pass might be above Ashridge, next it comes more or less overhead before reappearing in a final pass, perhaps above Chesham. Look for a constant, bright light, moving quickly through the heavens. And while you're marvelling at the wonders of science and technological achievement, maybe spare a thought for those on board. With the imminent demise of the shuttles, (the final mission is in July) commercial spacecraft and the Russians will fill the gap – a thought that might cause you to rethink that change of career and leave the astronauting business to those bolder – or more crazy – than ourselves. *yB*

Little Spirit

‘...everyone’s mission to others begins at home with the self.’

Chapter Eight: A Reunion by **PJ Marvell**

Although the glare of the church lights tempted Little Spirit to remain rooted to the spot, his preference to stay in his shadowy existence was still strong and even though his heart desperately wanted to try, in his limited English, to tell the Curate his story, his legs decided it was far too risky and that it was time to run. The boy felt himself dashing to the choir pews and pulling the statue of The Lost Sun into his arms. He then scrambled to the tower door.

‘STOP!’ shouted the Curate running down the aisle, ‘Stop boy!’

As he flew past the door, Little Spirit yanked the key to the tower from the lock, he then pressed the stone to open the secret tunnel, climbed in and re-sealed the entrance. He sat in the dark and waited. A few moments later, footsteps hammered up the stairs to the tower.

The Curate searched the heights and the depths of the tower and was astounded to find not a trace of the boy or the heavy thing he was carrying. Eventually, the Curate locked the tower door and sat facing the great north windows of the church.

‘A ghost,’ he muttered, ‘did I see a ghost?’

He glanced around trying to make sense of the happenings of the night. It was then that he saw it - a heap of prayer cushions piled up in the corner with bits of the old curtains thrown on top.

‘Evidence!’ said the Curate triumphantly, ‘So there is someone living here... but where?’ It was now past three a.m. and the Curate decided to return home to rest before morning prayers. He would resume his search later.

In the crypt, Little Spirit had placed the statue next to his makeshift bed in a musty corner. He had hidden emergency supplies in the crypt weeks ago, anticipating his discovery in the church. More than ever he desperately needed to find Eliza so he could tell the Curate his story and return The Lost Sun. He fell asleep determined to find her the next day.

The young boy spent the next month hiding in the graveyard waiting for Eliza to visit. He even waited at the totem pole by the canal to see if she visited her grandmother’s house. One day perched on the top of the high graveyard wall, he did spot her, but Eliza was with her mother and they walked straight past the graveyard, not stopping to visit like they usually would. The boy noticed that Eliza was uncharacteristically silent as she trudged past looking at the floor.

Little Spirit also watched out for the strange man as he waited for Eliza to return to his life. The man was also absent, as was any further evidence of an inhabitant at the church, other than the odd mouse. The Curate had searched every corner and tiny nook of the church and the tower and could not find the boy. He had asked the local teachers and parents but nobody knew of such a lad. In his morning

prayers the Curate prayed for the boy, sensing he might be very alone in the world.

In the May sunshine, Little Spirit lay in the long grass snoozing; he felt happier than he had for months. Today, he had made a decision, and had decided that if Eliza didn't come to the graveyard by the following day, Sunday, he would gather his belongings and move on. He couldn't stay any longer, he felt stuck. He slowly opened his eyes to gaze at the sky, when a black curly cloud suddenly moved into view.

'Sorry,' hissed a girl's voice.

'Eliza!' said Little Spirit.

'Sorry I haven't been to see you,' she said in Spanish now, 'mother grounded me. I was late back to grandma's house after you showed me the secret tunnel.'

Little Spirit couldn't stop smiling; he knew his friend hadn't forgotten him.

'After Sunday service, tomorrow,' she said quickly, 'be in the church with The Lost Sun and we'll explain everything to mother and the Curate.'

Eliza shook the boy by the shoulders, 'be there!' she ordered, 'I know you have no home. You can't stay at the church for ever.' She grabbed Little Spirit, hugged him tightly and then ran off.

Little Spirit sat in the long grass and wondered how Eliza knew he hadn't got a home. But he felt his long straggly hair and looked down at his tattered trainers and baggy coat and conceded she may just have guessed. The boy didn't waste

another second. He had things to clear up and pack, he needed to say his goodbyes. His narrow shoulders felt as if the weight of the world had been lifted from them – tomorrow, at last, he would find a new way home.

At eight o'clock that evening, Little Spirit climbed out of the tunnel, unlocked the tower door and walked into the main church. He had packed all his belongings, including a couple of bananas, into a small bag he had made out of pieces of the old curtains. He placed the Lost Sun under the long altar cloth so it was hidden from view and went to sit under the large windows. The light lasted longer in the late spring evenings and he sat in its warmth looking through his favourite book. He took one last walk around, sitting on the balcony, straightening the prayer cushions and gazing at the dove above the altar. He knew he would never forget the church.

Finally, he decided to sleep and lay down under the altar next to The Lost Sun, resting his head on his bag.

The light of the morning didn't wake the young boy such was the depth of his sleep and the feeling of closeness to home. It was only the fanfare of the organ and the bellowing announcement of the churchwarden that woke the boy.

Little Spirit sat up quickly and banged his head on the underside of the altar – the service had begun! *JB*

To be continued...

Don't miss the final instalment of Little Spirit in next month's Your Berkhamsted.

Christian Aid Week - 15th to 21st May by Margaret Burbidge

Where would we be without coffee? Next time you have a cup, think about the coffee beans and the farmers who grow them. Many live in poverty. In Nicaragua, the second



Another community has this vision too. Seeing the bigger picture and going beyond what seems achievable, the people are working to have a

poorest country in Latin America, most of its population have an income of under US\$2 a day. The coffee farmers in the poorest area of the country struggle to survive, receiving little money for the coffee beans they sell. Uneducated and with no experience, they have no hope of their lives improving.

supply of clean water and latrines for the people to use. A new school will give all the children the chance to learn to read and write.

Soppexcca, a local organisation in Nicaragua and a Christian Aid Partner, helps the coffee farmers in two poor communities to form a co-operative, sharing knowledge and equipment. Most important of all, it enables the coffee farmers to get a fair price for their crops and trains them to produce Fairtrade coffee. Soppexcca loans them money given by Christian Aid, to help farmers get started, increase their crops, improve its quality and buy modern machinery for processing the coffee beans. The result is the coffee farmers are better off and their communities are being transformed.

In the gospel stories Jesus says that life is more than just survival; it is about abundant living, rich with hope and promise. For these Nicaraguan coffee farmers this comes from working with the co-operative and achieving transformation for the whole community. We can be part of this hope and vision.

Give generously this Christian Aid Week in the red envelopes that may drop through your letter box or donate online, and support the Christian Aid stall in the market on Saturday 21st May.

“Help people in poverty out of poverty”
for Christian Aid believes in life before death. www.caweek.org

Over the years, through the co-operative, money has been set aside and used to build a school and a health centre.

Thank you to all who supported the Christian Aid Lent Lunches. A total of £511.50 plus Gift Aid was raised. yB

Healing on the streets (HOTS) by Cassie Emmott

On the fourth Saturday of each month, a banner announcing 'HEALING' appears on Berkhamsted High Street, just outside Tesco. Healing On The Streets (HOTS) is a Christian outreach model pioneered by Mark Marx, in Coleraine, Ireland. It began Easter 2005 and Mark has seen the Church uniting across the UK and Europe, praying for people on the streets every week since then.

Teams are trained to carry out Healing on the Streets, which can be done by any Christian. Its simplicity allows the opportunity to connect with the community, reaching out to the lost and hurting on our own streets, by powerfully and consistently expressing God's love; responding to the commission of Jesus to *'Heal the sick who are there and tell them, The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*

Berkhamsted HOTS team meets once a month at 9am to pray together and spend time in God's presence, before heading to the High Street. Giving him praise and receiving from him is vital if we are to minister effectively. We are not 'Super-Christians', far from it, we can do nothing in our own strength, but we are convinced that *'[He] is able to do far more*

abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us.'

The purpose of HOTS is to show the love and power of God by offering to pray for healing in the name of Jesus. By announcing 'HEALING' we draw attention to our focus, the certain belief that *'with God all things are possible'*, that *'my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus'* and that we should take courage to believe his promises and ask him.

We pray for all kinds of healing, from physical to the emotional needs of people. Nothing is insignificant. As a member of the team, HOTS has blessed me hugely. I originally signed up to practise being obedient and to step out of my comfort zone, hoping that God would prove himself by meeting me there. However, I have gained such a joy at the privilege of seeing God bring hope and healing to people, that my faith has been strengthened, and I have seen more breakthrough in my own challenges. If you would like to know more about the Berkhamsted HOTS team please contact Chris Dunham 866631 or Lexie Thompson 875672. yB

News from the pews...a light-hearted view by Julian Dawson

I am saved. Here I am, blinking, unaccustomed to the daylight. In a daring plan, breath-taking in its stunning simplicity and courage a crack team of SAS furniture removers airlifted me under a smog of covering fire, steam and sawdust. They would have rescued me sooner, but chose to travel by London Midland. A miracle that they reached me at all, let's face it. And now I am facing the new challenge of arrayed press, media commitments, a book, a Hello magazine feature and quite possibly a perfume. The scent

May Parish Diary

Tues 3rd	7.30pm	Petertide May Dinner, <i>ticketed event</i>
Sat 6th		Church walk, led by Jean and Ray Emsall, <i>All Saints</i>
Sun 8th		Children’s Society—Berkhamsted Walk
Sun 8th	6:00pm	Service of Thanksgiving for the Lives of the Departed, <i>St</i>
15th-21st		Christian Aid Week
Sat 21st	8am	ABC Prayer Breakfast, <i>Sacred Heart</i>

Sunday Services	St Peter's		All Saints' - May		
	8:00am	Eucharist	1st	10:00am	Morning Worship
	9:30am	Sung Eucharist & Sunday School			Revd Wilf Bahadur
	6:00pm	Evensong	8th	10:00am	Holy Communion
					Revd John Kirkby
			15th	10:00am	Morning Worship
					Christian Aid Service
					Ruth Treves Brown
			22nd	8:00am	Holy Communion
					Revd Caroline Weaver
			10:00am	Morning Worship	
				(followed by General Church Meeting)	
				Revd Caroline Weaver	
		29th	10:00am	Morning Worship	
				Richard Hackworth	
			4:00pm	Healing Service	
				Revd Caroline Weaver and Jenny Wells	
Registers	Baptisms				
	St Peter's				
	6 Mar	Katherine Mary Adderley			
	20 Mar	Henry James Gordon Riddick			
	20 Mar	Sylvie June Cotterell			
	20 Mar	Poppy Sylvia Arundel Derbyshire			
	20 Mar	Annabel Claire Charman			
	All Saints'				
	6 Mar	Aniya May Moorcroft, All Saints'			
	27 Mar	Xavier Emilio White, All Saints'			

Regular Church Activities

3rd Mon	Pastoral Network, 7:45pm, The Court House. Contact Philippa Seldon 871534
Tue	Chuckles Parent & Toddler Group, 10-11:30am. All Saints Church Hall. Song Time or short service as announced. Contact Jenny Wells, 870981
Tue	St Peter's Choir, Children 5:15-6:15pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859
1st Tue	Tuesday Club, 7:45pm A lively women's group with guest speaker. The Court House. Contact Barbara McKenna 871159
3rd Tue	Mothers' Union, meet in members' houses at 2.30pm. New members always welcome. Contact Kathie Lally, 863526 **Please note new meeting time**
4th Tue	Mothers' Union Prayer Group, 2:30pm. 17 Shaftesbury Court. Tell us if anyone needs your prayers. Contact Jenny Wells 870981
Wed	Julian Meeting, meets about twice a month. 11:30am. All welcome. At Jenny Wells, 57 Meadow Rd, 870981 or at Ruth Treves Brown, 1 Montague Rd, 863268
Thu	Home Group, 8pm on 2nd and 4th Thurs.
Thu	Bellringing, 8pm, St Peters. Contact Helen Ruberry, 890949
Fri	Little Fishes Parent & Toddler Group 9:30-11:30am. The Court House. Weekly, with short service on 1st Friday in St Peter's (10am). Tracy Robinson 863559
Fri	St Peter's Choir, Children 7-8:30pm, Adults 7:30—8:30pm. St Peter's. Adrian Davis 875674 or Jean Wild 866859
3rd Sat	ABC Prayer Breakfast, 8am for breakfast & prayers. Various local churches.

Key church contacts

Parish Office, Hilary Armstrong and Kate Perera, Court House, 878227.

Fr Michael Bowie, 864194 (day off Fri). Team Rector, St Peter's.

Fr John Pritchard, 870016 (day off Thurs). Asst Curate, St Peter's.

The Revd Caroline Weaver, 866324 (day off Fri). Methodist Minister, All Saints.

Your Berkhamsted editorial contacts

Editorial Team

Ian Skillicorn 862628, editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Fiona Powell 872338, fiona@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Cathy Edmunds 07900 490169, cathy@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Advertising: Rowena Pike advertising@yourberkhamsted.org.uk

Circulation: Sheila Miller 31 Lincoln Court, HP4 3EN (864277)

Is your child dyslexic?

Corinna Shepherd discusses dyslexia in children ahead of her appearance at Waterstone's this month

What is Dancing Kites Creative Learning and how did it come about?

My interest in dyslexia and my passion to help those who struggle with it started around five years ago. At the time my son was struggling with literacy and became disengaged in learning. At the same time I was on a course for work learning about dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Because of what I learnt, I realised he might be dyslexic and I had him assessed by an educational psychologist, who confirmed that he was indeed mildly dyslexic. In response the school did not offer much support and advice, as they felt he was performing adequately. But I knew he was not reaching his potential.

My interest in this subject and the fact that dyslexia is often not picked up or addressed satisfactorily led me to establish The Chilterns IDL (Dyslexia) Centre in January 2007. Out of my work with these children, I developed the Dancing Kites Creative Learning brand with a range of interactive, illustrated books for the age range 4 to 15. These books can help detect potential learning issues with reading and spelling without the child even realising it. They can be used by the non-specialist too, such as a parent or carer. They are written and designed to be books that even the most reluctant child will want to pick up.

What is dyslexia?

The word dyslexia comes from the Greek,



literally meaning “difficulty with words”. The condition can affect spelling and reading and many people believe that is all it is. But it can also affect individuals in other areas, such as confusing dates and times, confusing left and right, difficulties getting ideas down on paper, sequencing numbers and information, and following verbal instructions.

Working memory is often also poor. This shows itself when new information needs to be processed effectively and quickly.

While dyslexia can be viewed as a learning difficulty, it can also be seen as a gift. Some talents shared by dyslexics include the ability to think in pictures, being creative and intuitive, being good with their hands. They are often highly aware of their environment and have vivid

imaginations. Children with dyslexia often have above average intelligence, yet they struggle with words and processing new information.

Who is affected by dyslexia?

The exact percentage of the population is debated, but it is generally thought to affect between 8% and 15% of the population, 4% severely. Children with dyslexic tendencies are likely to be resistant to traditional teaching methods and benefit from a one-to-one, multi-sensory learning environment.

Dyslexia often runs in families, with a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle or cousin struggling with it too. Most are born with it and do not grow out of it, though learn to cope with it. It is not directly linked to intelligence. Children and adults with other learning difficulties or sensory disabilities may have dyslexic difficulties also.

What are the common signs that a child may be dyslexic?

There is much you can pick up about your child as a parent or carer, just by sitting down with your child and a good book, appropriate to their developmental stage and interest level. Areas of difficulty to look out for include:

Does your child struggle with reading or spelling?

Does he or she avoid picking up a book?

Does the child guess at a word, looking at the whole word or just the initial letter?

Does he/she forget how to read or spell a word as soon as he/she has turned the

page?

Can he/she find it hard to sound out individual letters in simple 3 letter words e.g. cat, bat?

Does the child find it hard to rhyme simple words?

Does he/she skip little words, such as and, the?

Does he/she miss out words when reading?

These are all potential indicators of dyslexia. The presence of any, most or all of them does not necessarily mean your child is dyslexic, but I would recommend further investigation if you have any concerns.

If a parent or carer suspects their child may be dyslexic what should they do next?

Speak to an educational specialist, such as your child's teacher. I can also be contacted for a confidential chat on 07721 368978 or visit my website for the Chilterns IDL Centre at www.cstraining.info

Corinna will be at Berkhamsted Waterstone's from 11am till 3pm on 21st May. She is on hand to show and sign her books and also to discuss any concerns to do with literacy with parents and carers. She has fun activity sheets to engage the children too. yB

Links

http://www.dancingkites.co.uk/dyslexia_test

<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk>

<http://www.dyslexiaaction.org.uk>

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My life as a foundling

John Caldicott remembers life as a pupil at the Foundling Hospital

This account of life as a foundling at the Foundling Hospital (now Ashlyns School) in Berkhamsted follows on from last month's article about the fascinating history of the school, as it celebrates its 60th anniversary this year.

My life in the Foundling Hospital started when my mother applied to the Hospital to accept me into their care as a far better option to my being brought up in a workhouse. At three months old I was taken to the London offices where I was given a number and christened with an entirely different name to the one given on my birth certificate. With my identity changed, and a tacit agreement between the Foundling Hospital and my mother that my origins would be kept secret, I was sent to a family in the country who would foster me for the first five years of my life. Life as a fostered child would be quite normal within a family environment. Most of the foster parents became very fond of their charges and treated them as their own.

At five years of age I was returned to the Foundling Hospital in Berkhamsted. On arrival in the main hall the foster parents spread themselves around, probably for privacy, to say their sad goodbyes to their foster child. I was handed over to a nurse in a starched uniform and my foster mother just disappeared.

For the first year the infant boys and girls were kept separate from the main school in an area on the girls' side and that is where I was taken with other children to be bathed and put into school clothes. The



following day the boys' hair was clipped very close so everyone looked much the same. The girls' hair was also cut, not quite as short as the boys, leaving a small fringe. We were now "Institution Children".

Life in school was very disciplined, regimented and predictable. The older children acted as monitors and dominated our lives. We were woken up at about half past six in the morning and would wash ourselves in the washroom, make our beds in army style - blankets neatly folded at the top of our beds with the pillow on top – and then in a line of twos go down to the dining hall for breakfast. The food was very basic but nutritious. After breakfast we would go into the playground or, in really bad weather, the playroom. The playroom seemed for anything but play. There were no toys as such and my memory is of sitting around the walls on benches and the children just looking at each other. As time went on, and we became older, we would find ways of making a ball from paper and string and would play football. *Continues overleaf*



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We would run around in gangs but were not encouraged to make close friends. School lessons, dinner and tea would follow and then to bed.

Whilst the general standard of education for the children was very basic we were able to benefit from a musical tradition within the school dating back to the 1700's. The boys were given the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and many would join army bands on leaving school. The children's choir was an attraction for visitors. Most of us found solace in the Chapel on Sundays where the harshness of the daily regime was left outside.

It is important to understand that the treatment of young children in the Foundling Hospital was little different to those in public schools. The obvious and crucial difference was that the children in the Foundling Hospital did not go home to parents for holidays. There was also the historic attitude to the children and their illegitimate birth. We were often reminded that we should be grateful to the Foundling Hospital and our position in life was to serve.

Soon after the Second World War there were a number of Government initiatives including two Education Acts and the Curtis Report. The Curtis Report in particular was critical of children being brought up in institutions as this was considered second best to a family environment. Following the retirement of the Headmaster, who had been there for many years, there was a succession of Heads and in January 1949, the Headmaster from a co-education independent boarding school was appointed to the now Thomas Coram

School. He made changes to almost every aspect of school life. No longer would Saturday be bath night with boys bathing two at time in the same bath, nor would the teachers have their own cooks for meals and eat separately to the children. The wards where the children slept were brightened, adding furniture and allowing the children to separate the beds into small units of five or six and to decorate the walls in bright colours. Discipline was relaxed and we were encouraged to be more natural with each other. We were able to return to our foster parents for holidays. With our own pocket money we were also allowed to visit the Berkhamsted shops. Being used to having every aspect of our lives controlled the effect on our behaviour was dramatic, and the staff found it very difficult to control us. Some of us went a bit wild and enjoyed this new found freedom.

In 1950 the school was sold to Hertfordshire County Council and in January 1951 local children joined the boarders as pupils at the newly named Ashlyns School. The boarders, or former pupils of the Foundling Hospital, were not told about the changes and, in the early days, found it very difficult to accept these "townies" into their home. However, integration through school activities of sports, music, art and drama soon broke down the barriers. By 1954 the last of the boarders had either left school or returned to foster homes. *yB*

Ashlyns School is open to all during the weekend of 14th - 15th May, with a celebratory concert on Sunday 15th May. For information and booking forms see www.ashlyns.herts.sch.uk/60-years.htm

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Petertide Promises Auction

St Peter's church held a very sociable and successful Petertide Promises Auction at the end of March as part of its season of fundraising for the wider community.

With auctioneer Donald Flatt, formerly of Cole Flatt & Sons Estate Agents, overseeing the bidding, an assembled gathering in the Court House competed against each other (and quite a few silent bids from those who couldn't attend!) to bid on all sorts of promises – from holiday cottages to Japanese folded patchwork lessons to jars of honey and lemon curd. Well over £3,000 was raised in just an hour so this year's Petertide charities – the local Sunnyside Rural Trust and the McCabe Educational Trust – will really benefit.

The next Petertide event is the Petertide May Dinner on Tuesday 3rd May at the Gatsby which all but sold out on the day the tickets went on sale. This will be followed by one of the highlights of the church's year, the Petertide Fair, on

Saturday 11th June 2011 in and around St Peter's church. This year marks the 30th anniversary of the first fair and is expected to be one of the best yet.

Petertide Fair Chairman, Judith Limbert, commented, "I am absolutely thrilled that our first Promises Auction for over twenty years was so popular and am delighted that we have already raised a significant sum for our chosen charities. Hopefully after the Fair this total will have risen considerably and will enable us to fund a new people carrier for the Sunnyside Rural Trust and give money to help a school in Nepal via the McCabe Educational Trust."

Anyone interested in helping at the fair, please contact Judith Limbert on 01442 873626. Please also consider donating items which can be sold at the bric-a-brac stall. Details of how to donate will be available in church or for further information visit the website: www.petertidefair.org.uk. yB

Service of Thanksgiving for the Lives of the Departed

Every Eastertide, the Pastoral Care Group at St Peter's holds a Service of Thanksgiving for the Lives of the Departed. As well as remembering our departed loved ones and giving thanks for them, the readings, prayers, hymns and anthem all reflect the Easter message of hope and resurrection. During the service there is an opportunity for members of the congregation to light a candle in memory and prayer for their loved one.

The service, which will be held on **May 8th at 6pm** will be led by Fr. Michael and the preacher will be Revd. Penny Nash, Vicar of Potten End. Some of those who have been bereaved in the past 2 years will receive invitations, but everyone is welcome. yB

Philippa Seldon

Buster of Ashridge

Buster the dog tells us about his life and recent exploits in St. Peter's.

Why are you called Buster when you're a Jack Russell?

In the 19th century a Parson, John Russell, bred and trained terriers for fox hunting. We went into fox holes and flushed out foxes without fighting them. Later we were crossed with bulldogs to flush out badgers, with their dangerous powerful claws. That tougher breed was Jack Russell.

Dogs have been man's best friend for centuries and now have many roles. What do you do?

We dogs have an incredible sense of smell and are intelligent. Sniffing for drugs, leading the blind, guarding, and rounding up sheep are examples. Many breeds are family pets and companions. Some breeds have been status symbols, such as King Charles lap dogs for courtesans and Dalmatians running between the wheels of aristocrat's carriages. Foppery! I explore the holes of rabbits, foxes and badgers.

So what did you do in St. Peter's church?

The buildings committee needed a water pipe from the east to the west end of the church to reach a basin thirty yards away. To get the pipe safely underneath the floor a working party planned to move heavy pews and lift firmly nailed oak floor boards. It was suggested that I go under the floor with a pull-through cord tied to my harness to save all this work. It was great fun. I was lowered under the floor, about two feet down, and explored in the gloom. I soon got a sniff of my favourite dog biscuit, however, and raced to light at



the west end. My handler unclipped the pull-through and gave me a biscuit, mission accomplished.

Were there any problems?

Yes there were. I was still under the floor and the vent exit at the west end was small. I needed help to lift me out but, disaster; my harness undid leaving me unattached and unable to get out. People above thought I would be lost under the floor, never to be seen again! Actually a sniff of a biscuit and my handler's call took me back to where I went down. I pulled myself up, and that was that.

What would you change in the canine world?

I'd wish people would recognise that a dog is a commitment for life, not just a Christmas present. I'm so pleased that the Chilterns Dog Rescue Society rescues and re-homes unwanted and stray dogs among all else it does for dogs' welfare. I enjoy a dog's life. Please see if there is a dog there that you could love and care for.

www.chilternsdogrescue.org.uk would like to hear from you. *yB*

The local beekeeper

Crispin Baker continues his monthly beekeeping diary

May, my favourite month, the countryside is new and vibrant, and so are the bees. The queen reaches her egg laying peak, and worker bees bring in the spring crop of honey. But there's a sting in the tail! May is also the month when the bees are most likely to swarm. Many people ask me why they do, and I wonder myself sometimes what it is that makes them leave their nice, comfortable safe hive and clear off down the road to move in to a smelly old oil drum lying in a ditch somewhere. It is of course procreation and their way of ensuring survival of their species, for by splitting the colony they have doubled their chances of surviving.

By swarming in May, perhaps June and sometimes July, a new colony has time to gather sufficient stores ready for the winter. So in a nutshell the queen bee packs her bags and sallies forth from the hive with most of the flying bees, leaving behind all the young non flying bees looking after the brood. It's worth mentioning here that when a bee hatches from a pupa it spends its first 3 weeks in the hive on cleaning, feeding and comb building duties before graduating to flying

duties outside, gathering nectar etc.

But the swarm will leave the old hive

without a queen, so before a swarm emerges the worker bees build what we call queen cells (these are about the size of a thimble), into which the old queen lays an egg which will eventually hatch into a new queen. So the swarm has left the hive still able to continue on its own as a viable colony.

I've been lucky enough to watch a swarm emerge from a hive – it's quite spectacular! The cloud of loudly buzzing bees however quickly settles

into the classic image of a swarm: a large ball of insects hanging from a branch. What to do now? Enter the beekeeper, and providing the swarm is accessible it can be collected. If you have a swarm in your garden do give me a ring and I can come and collect it as soon and as safely as possible, it's a fascinating process which culminates in the bees being given a nice comfortable safe home again.

That's all folks, next time we'll hear about what the new queen has to do! To have a swarm collected ring 07984 072666.

Bee friendly plants this time of year:
Rosemary, Apple, Cotoneaster. *yB*



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Did you know that everyone who works on bringing Your Berkhamsted to you each month is a volunteer? We would extend a warm welcome to anyone who would like to join us, whether you would like to contribute on a regular basis or just write a one-off article.

Features

We are always interested in discussing ideas for features about Berkhamsted life. These could be about the town's history, interesting modern day developments or local people of note (past or present).

Local groups

Bringing news from local groups to our readers is an important function of Your Berkhamsted. If you belong to a local group please let us know about your latest news and events. Please consider sending us an article about what your group does. Articles should be 500 to 900 words in length.

Fiction

Are you a budding writer of fiction or poetry? We want to showcase local writing and are looking for poems of up to 200 words and short stories between 500 and 1000 words.

Arts and culture

Would you like to write a review of an arts event taking place in or nearby to Berkhamsted? Let us know!

The last word

The last word is available for readers to send in approx. 500 words on a topic of their choice, and one that may stimulate debate in further issues.

Please email the editor for more details at editor@yourberkhamsted.org.uk. *yB*

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