

**The Parish Magazine of
Whitchurch-on-Thames
and Whitchurch Hill**



February 2005

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Dear friends in Christ,



The problem with copy deadlines for monthly magazines is that world and local events rarely fit in with the publication schedule. So if you read my letter in the January magazine you might be forgiven for thinking that we in Whitchurch did not know or care about the tsunami disaster: in fact, of course, it happened some days after the magazine had gone to press.

So let me thank you now for your generous response to the various appeals for help, whether in cash, blankets, tents or giving your time. In fact the desire to help in some way has been immediate, worldwide, overwhelming and sustained, so much so that some aid agencies have actually now had to ask people to stop sending any more.

The sheer scale of the losses and damage caused by the tsunami has also prompted governments and businesses to work to create longer-term solutions for the problems faced by developing world, by strengthening fragile economies, cancelling debt, supporting trade justice, improving flood defences and early warning systems, and rebuilding houses and communities so that they will be less vulnerable in future.

The awesome force of the earthquake and the wave which followed serve to remind us of our own insignificance, and perhaps give us pause to reflect on those 'big questions' about life, its meaning, our priorities and relationship with the created world. So (depending on our point of view) we might think that these unselfish responses restore our faith in human

nature; or, that God is present in the midst of human suffering and is able to redeem it by bringing good outcomes from bad events.

Meanwhile we can offer thanks to God for the safe return of Rosemary and Graeme from Sri Lanka and their reunion with their two sons Patrick and Matthew and Graeme's parents. Please also hold in your thoughts and prayers those in our parish who are still waiting for news of missing loved ones.

These and other world events (for example a new president in Palestine, continuing violence threatening democratic elections in Iraq, the inauguration of George W Bush for a second term) may be far away in the geographical sense but they affect us closely and personally, because as John Donne reminded us, "we are involved in mankind". So as we reflect on them, we may also be asking ourselves what difference it makes that we are Christians: to the way we perceive and respond to events, the way we meet setbacks and suffering; the ways in which we relate to our neighbours near and far.

They may also encourage us to believe that each of us can make a difference, that by adding our small individual contributions together we can change the world and make it better. And as the saying goes, "and let it begin with me".

In closing, let me offer sincere condolences on behalf of the parish to our friend Peter Mottley on the sad loss earlier today of his mother Mrs Elizabeth (Betty) Mottley, and ask our loving and merciful God to walk at his side through the coming days and weeks, and so lead him out again 'from darkness into light.'

Yours in Christ Jesus,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Peter", with a horizontal line underneath it.

FEBRUARY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY.

4 th /5 th	7.30pm	Ipsden Panto: Cinderella
6 th	10am	God At Work: guest speaker Mr Grant Mottram , Head of Whitchurch CP School
	4pm	Family Service at St Mary's
9 th	7.30pm	Ash Wednesday: Team Service for the beginning of Lent at St Mary's Church Ipsden
11 th	12.30-2.00pm	Lent Lunch—see list page 9
13 th	10am	Celebration of marriage for St Valentine , at St John's Whitchurch Hill: Opportunity to renew vows especially for couples recently married in Whitchurch
16 th , 23 rd , Mar 2, 9, 16		Lent Course 8pm, Rectory Cottage, (dates TBC)
18 th	12.30-2.00pm	Lent Lunch—see list page 9
19 th	4pm	Wedding at St Mary's: Jessica Lee to Simon Morris
25 th	12.30-2.00pm	Lent Lunch—see list page 9
27 th	4pm	Team Healing Service , St Mary's Ipsden jointly with the United Benefice of Goring and South Stoke

Diary dates for the whole of 2005 (as known so far) are now available on sheets at the back of both churches: please do take a copy home.



Betty Mottley

Betty was a lovely lady who I first met in Church some time ago, About 2 years ago we discovered that we both came from the same town, East Ham, in East London.

Betty would often tell others that she & I were 'East Hammers' as opposed to West Hammers and we talked of what it was like in the old days and how it has changed in character.

She will be missed in her usual pew on first and third Sundays. Our prayers and thoughts go out to Peter.

Tony Voysey

All Churches Together in Pangbourne and District

All Churches together in Pangbourne and District consists of St James in Pangbourne, St Mary's in Purley, St Mary's in Whitchurch and St John's in Whitchurch Hill, St Bernadette's Roman Catholic in Pangbourne, St Nicholas in Sulham, St Lawrence in Tidmarsh, Pangbourne College and St.Stephens in Upper Basildon. All Churches together events move round the participating churches but all members of all the churches are invited and encouraged to attend all events. It is a way of showing Christian unity and fellowship regardless of denominational affinity.

Forthcoming events:

Ash Wednesday Service - 9th February at 8pm at St.Stephens Upper Basildon. All welcome.

Final joint meeting of the various Lent Groups in the District on Wednesday 23rd March at 8pm at St.James in Pangbourne. All welcome.

There is to be a March of Witness on Good Friday starting at 10am to be located this year in the village of Purley. Starting point to be announced. This is an annual event which is hosted by a different church in the district each year and usually lasts a little over the hour. There are usually hot cross buns and a cup of tea afterwards and is an excellent way to get to know members of other churches in the locality.

Further information on any of the events please contact Paul Witcher Tel: 0118 9844959



Lent Lunch

There will be a Lent Lunch at 6 Wayside Green Woodcote (01491 681483) on Wednesday 16th February from 12 noon to 2pm. The lunch will cost £2.50 and will consist of soup, bread, coffee and biscuits. The money will be donated to Christian Aid. Janet Casson and Sue Udell

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LENT LUNCHES

Once again we will be holding six lent lunches starting Friday 11th February.

The money collected will this year be divided between Graham Hutt, Norman Hutt's son, who is a missionary in Europe and Africa (you will recall Norman was our organist for many years and some of Graham's work has been in the magazine for the last few issues) and a local charity for mental illness.

We hope you will support us and also enjoy some wonderful soup and sometimes more!!!

Lunch Dates

- February 11th** **Jo Adams** 984 3362
Windings, Goring Heath Road
Whitchurch Hill
- February 18th** **Valerie Kearney** 984 2437
Farthings, Goring Heath Road
Whitchurch Hill
- February 25th** **Leslie Landen** 984 2414
Coombe Lodge, Hartslock Bridleway
Whitchurch on Thames
- March 4th** **Geraldine Witcher** 984 4959
Shepherds Close, Hardwick Road
Whitchurch on Thames
- March 11th** **Mr and Mrs Nigel Grove** 984 2993
The Coach House, Duchess Close
Whitchurch on Thames
- March 18th** **Ingrid Dreweatt** 984 2251
Hill Green Cottage, Goring Heath Road
Whitchurch Hill



Electoral Role

It is necessary to revise the Electoral Roll this year.

Those who are already on the Roll will shortly be receiving a form with a request that it be completed and returned by February 27th.

For those persons not currently on the Roll and would like to be, please contact the Electoral Roll Officer, Tony Voysey, on 0118 984 3946, to receive an Application Form.

Tony Voysey

Children's Page

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

After God made a beautiful world, he went on caring for it and looking after the people he made. This poem tells the sad things that happened next.

Long, long ago God planted a garden
He made it so beautiful you wouldn't believe!
He wanted a special place of fruitfulness and beauty,
Somewhere for his friends to live – for Adam and Eve.

Long, long ago God walked in the garden,
Enjoying the flowers and the birds in the trees,
Talking with his friends in the cool of the day
And listening to the trees swaying gently in the breeze.

Long, long ago God told them in the garden,
'You can eat the fruit of each tree and bush you see.
But don't eat of that one, for the fruit of it will harm you,
It's important to remember, so listen to me.'

Long, long ago something happened in the garden,
The snake decided to spoil God's plan.
'God doesn't want you to be happy in the garden,
He's a mean old spoilsport,' said snake to the woman.

Long, long ago the snake looked round the garden
'All these fruits,' he said, 'and God won't let you eat.'
'Oh yes,' Eve replied, 'we can eat what we want to,
Each and every tree gives a lovely fruity treat.'

Long, long ago there was talking in the garden,
'We just can't eat of that one in the middle there, you see,'
'Oh God isn't fair – he knows if you eat it,
You'll be wise and clever – like God –and like me!'

Long, long ago Eve was thinking in the garden
'I'd love to be clever – and it looks tasty too...'

She reached out her hand, and she grabbed, and she bit it,
Then, turning to Adam, said ‘ Eat! I picked it for you.’

Long, long ago there was sorrow in the garden,
They looked at each other and they realised what they’d done.
‘We know what good and bad are, but it hasn’t made us happy,
I’m scared, and I’m cold, and the night is coming on.’

Long, long ago God walked in the garden,
Looking for his friends – but they hid away in fear.
‘We’re naked, we’re frightened and we’re full of shame and sorrow,
We just can’t bear now, to have you come near.’

Long, long ago God’s loving heart was breaking
He shut up the garden and sent them far away.
But he promised a way for there to be forgiveness
He would send a Saviour to redeem mankind one day.

You know the feeling when you know you’ve done something wrong and you don’t want to see the hurt, disappointed look on Mum’s face. It must have been like that for Adam and Eve – they’d let God down. Sometimes we are like Adam and Eve and hide away from God because we’ve done something we know he wouldn’t like. But that’s not the best thing to do – just like it’s better to confess and then when Mum has told us off and we’ve said sorry and we get a hug, we know she still loves us. God went on loving people and goes on loving people and wants us to come and say sorry and have a hug and know we are forgiven.

Geraldine Witcher

FAMILY SERVICES

Have you made any new year resolutions. Did you break them already. How about making a belated one - to be in church at 4pm on the first Sunday of every month for the Family Service. This is one resolution it's well worth remaking every month - and keeping. For more information tel Paul or Geraldine on 9844959

John's Short Story.

John lived in Checkendon, a small village nestling in the Chiltern Hills, between Reading and Oxford. He hadn't always lived there, but his family had moved when he was too small to remember, because his father had changed his job. John particularly enjoyed the large playing field that sprawled through the middle of the village which you could walk across to take a short cut between the shop and the school. There was a good adventure playground in one corner, and he would crawl through the tunnels and jump over the obstacles shouting "Look at me, Mum!". He was now in the big class at the Church of England primary school that was shyly tucked away behind the church and village hall.

One of the best things about Checkendon was all the places you could walk. They had a dog, Snowy – who was usually anything but white in appearance, and John and Snowy would often be seen, emerging dirty and scratched from some thicket where Snowy had spotted a rabbit, squirrel or mouse. John had no brothers or sisters, but he was friendly and knew an older boy in the village who would show him the latest computer games.

It was a crisp winters morning in the February half term. John and his friend Peter had taken Snowy down Whitehall lane, and round the woods at the back of Larchdown Farm. We shall draw a discreet veil over whether they actually used the footpath, but they eventually emerged out at Heath End, the trees white with frost, and took the lane back to the Four Horseshoes and the centre of the village. The gritters had not yet been through, and the road was treacherous and black.

Stacey was late. She had recently started her own business, but had not yet learnt to give herself lead time between appointments. Things had been going very well, and trade was beginning to build up. The last client had taken far too long, and it meant that she now needed to be in Henley in ten minutes. It would be tight, but she might just make it.

The tractor on the road at Whitchurch Hill had raised her tension level a little, and then the lorry coming ponderously the other way at the road narrowing just outside Checkendon had delayed her further. She resolved not to panic, but subconsciously her foot lowered a fraction on the accelerator.

She looked at herself in the driver's mirror for a second, the precise second her front wheel went into a sunken drain cover, and jolted her Frontera onto the ice.

Peter saw the car out of the corner of his eye, but only had a moment to lunge in desperation into the hedge. His fingers had grabbed for John's jacket, but they had slipped off the smooth nylon fabric. John did not have a chance. The four wheel drive lifted and broke him like a paper bag, on its way to ending up embedded in the wall by Court Farm.

John lived for twenty three more minutes. His mother was there when he died by the roadside, but his father, who worked in Staines, was still on his way. The whole village came to John's funeral, the vicar spoke about shattered lives and lost opportunities, and begged God's forgiveness for the violence that is built into the way humans do things. They buried John and Snowy together, in the churchyard not one hundred yards from where they were killed.

John's father and mother never recovered from the loss of their only child. They could not have any more children, and five years later were divorced, for reasons that on looking back, could be attributed to the death of their young son.

Peter remains to this day racked with guilt that he was not able to save his friend, and now remains withdrawn, and isolated. He does not walk in the woods anymore.

Stacey never made her appointment. She was charged by the police for dangerous driving, but acquitted on a technicality. Publicly she blames the council for inadequate road maintenance, and inappropriate traffic calming. Privately she knows she was doing almost 40 miles per hour when she hit the ice. She can't put her finger on it, but colleagues say that she has lost her edge, and some mutter knowingly among themselves of depression.

The characters in this story are wholly fictitious. Whether the events remain fiction depends upon you. Please, wherever and whenever you drive, allow enough time for you to drive with care. If you run over someone at 30mph, there is an 80% chance they will survive. If you are travelling at 40mph, there is an 80% chance they will not. And it will not just be one life that you destroy. Could you live with that?

Your Rector Kevin Davies

WHITCHURCH HILL W.I.

On Tuesday 18th January the group was delighted to hear a talk by fellow member Mrs Heather Baker. She told us about her early life in Northern England, the trials of being a war child and the mixed feelings of being an evacuee. She was brought down to the South of England from Lancashire as a result of her father's work and eventually Berkshire became her home. She married and had many happy days sharing mutual interests with her husband. Many of these interests involved nature pursuits and they both took an active part in local museums and history societies. It was a riveting talk and we related wholeheartedly to her war-time experiences.

Our next talk will be The Experiences of a Military Police Officer (humorous) by Neil Paxton on Tuesday 15th February.

Ann Bradley



IMPORTANT ADVANCE NOTICE

The **Annual Meeting of Parishioners** to elect churchwardens for the coming year will be held in St Mary's Church after Choral Evensong on Sunday 24th April. Mrs Jo Adams will retire as churchwarden for a very well-earned rest, so we are looking for the right person to become her successor and play an important leadership role as we begin to plan and develop the parish as we want it to be in 2010. **All parishioners are entitled to attend and vote at this meeting.**

This will be followed immediately by the **Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)** to elect members to the Parochial Church Council: one-third of the elected members of the PCC will retire by rotation so we are also looking for new members to succeed them and become part of the leadership team which will make the future happen. **Only members of the Church Electoral Roll are entitled to vote** at this meeting, but all are welcome to attend.

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A.G.M.

The 27th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Purley Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 16th February, 2005, commencing at 7.45 p.m. After the official business has been completed, Mr. David Penny will give a talk on "Changes in gardening in the last 50 years". Members are reminded that any nominations for election as an Officer or Committee Member (we have one vacancy for a Committee Member) must be made in writing to the Secretary, Mrs. P. Brightwell, 99 Devonshire Gardens, Tilehurst, RG31 6FF by 9th February, 2005.

Talk

On Wednesday, 16th March, Mr. Victor Scott will give a talk on "Springtime in the Cape". This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall commencing at 8 p.m.

Spring Show

This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall on Saturday, 2nd April. Schedules will be available from the Trading Store from late February/early March.

Coach Trip

We are hoping to organize a trip to R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley or the HDRA Organic gardens at Ryton, Warwickshire in July. A board will be circulated at the A.G.M. for members to put their names down if they are interested, but we will need at least 40 people to make a coach trip viable.

Trading

The Trading Store will reopen at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 5th February and thereafter will be open each Saturday and Sunday between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. until the last Sunday in October. Membership of the Society for 2005 is £1.50 and subscriptions can be renewed at the Trading Store when this reopens. If you have not already placed your seed potato order with Bob Hawkins you may hand it in at the Trading Store.

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Officers of the Parish

Parish Priest:

Reverend Dr Peter Steddon
Rectory Cottage, Whitchurch on Thames
0118 984 1473

Churchwardens:

Paul Witcher, Shepherds Close, Whitchurch-on-Thames
0118 984 4959
Jo Adams, Windings, Goring Heath Road, Whitchurch Hill
0118 984 3362

Vergers:

St Mary's	Alan Matthews	984 4489
St John's	Pat Turner	984 4200

Honorary Secretary:

Claire Drazin, Coombeside Cottage, Whitchurch-on-Thames
0118 984 1219

Organist and Choirmaster:

Julian Oxley, Applecroft, Upper Basildon, RG8 8NT
01491 671415

Honorary Treasurer:

Robert Plumb, Uplands Cottage.
0118 984 4838

Assistant Treasurer:

Tony Voysey, Mow Cop, High Street.
0118 984 3946

Captain of the Bellringers:

Stephanie May, 0118 957 2596

Editor, Parish Magazine

Sue Matthews, Ashdown, Duchess Close
0118 984 4489 or email: suematt@waitrose.com

Team Rector:

Reverend Kevin Davies
The Rectory, Checkendon, RG8 0SR
01491 680252
www.langtree.org

Services for

February

St Mary's

St John's

6th February

Next before Lent

10am

Parish Communion

Guest speaker Mr Grant Mottram

8am

Holy Communion

4pm Family Service

13th February

1st of Lent

8am

Holy Communion

10am

Parish Communion with
special celebration for
St Valentine's Day

6pm Evening Prayer

20th February

2nd of Lent

10am

Parish Communion

8am

Holy Communion

11.30 Holy Communion at Eastfield House

27th February

3rd of Lent

8am

Holy Communion

10am

Parish Communion

6pm Evening Prayer

6th March

Mothering Sunday

10am

Parish Communion

8am

Holy Communion

Guest speaker Mrs Elise Hoadley

4pm Family Service