

Christmas Services at Caversham Churches



St. Barnabas, Emmer Green

Sun 3 Dec 9.30am Toy Service for Reading Family Aid

Wed 13 Dec 7.00pm Christingle Service with 89th Scout Group

Sun 17 Dec 4.30pm Lessons and Carols for Christmas

Christmas Eve 8.00am Said Communion BCP

Christmas Eve 9.30am Parish Communion

Christmas Eve 4.30pm Nativity Play

Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 8.00am Christmas Day Said Communion

Christmas Day 9.30am Christmas Day Family Communion

Christmas Eve 3.00pm Nativity Service

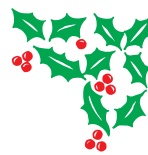
Christmas Eve 8.00pm Christmas Night Service

Christmas Day 8.00am Christmas Morning Eucharist

Christmas Day 10.00am Christmas Morning Eucharist

Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road for brief all-age worship and refreshments. Start at the beginning, or join at any point along the route!

Christmas Day 10.30am Family Worship



Our Lady & St Anne's UNCONFIRMED

Sunday 17 Dec 3.00pm Service of Reconciliation

Christmas Eve 6.00pm Vigil Mass for Christmas

Christmas Eve 10.00pm Midnight mass

Christmas Day 9.00am Mass of the Dawn

Christmas Day 11.00am Mass of Christmas Day

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Sunday 17 Dec 5.00pm Carols by Candlelight

Christmas Eve 11.15pm 'Midnight' Communion service

Christmas Day 10.30am Family Worship

St John the Baptist, Caversham

Sat 2 December 10.00am Advent Quiet Day

Wed 13 Dec 7.30pm Carol service

Sun 17 Dec 4.00pm Christingle

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Nativity Live!

Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day 9.30am All Age Christmas Communion

New Testament Church of God

Sun 17 Dec 6.00pm Carol Service

Sun 24 Dec 10.00am Christmas Morning service

Grace Church

Sun 17 Dec 6.30pm Carol service followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

Sun 24 Dec 10.30am Normal service

Christmas Day 10.30am Short family service

St Peter, Caversham

Sun 3 Dec 6.30pm Advent Carols

Sun 17 Dec 6.30pm Christmas Carol Service

Mon 18 Dec 7.30pm Carol Service in Caversham Court

Christmas Eve 3.00pm Christingle

Christmas Eve 4.30pm Christingle

Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight mass

Christmas Day 9.30am Festival Communion

Caversham Park LEP in Caversham Park Primary School

Sunday 10 Dec 11.00am Carol Service

Sunday 17 Dec 2.30pm Carol Service at the Milestone Centre

Christmas Day 10.00am Christmas Morning Worship

St Michael's, Sonning Common

Sunday 17 Dec 5pm The Pangbourne Silver Band will be playing a selection of Christmas favourites in the church. There is no charge but there will be a voluntary collection for our Advent charity 'Embrace the Middle East' that tackles poverty and injustice in the Middle East.

Monday 18 Dec 7.30pm Service of Reconciliation to help us prepare to celebrate Christmas.

Christmas Eve 4.30pm Carols followed by First Mass of Christmas at 5pm for families with young children. This service is very crowded so please consider alternatives.

Christmas Eve 7.30pm Christmas Carols followed by 'midnight' mass at 8pm

Christmas Day 10.30am Christmas Day Mass

St Margaret, Mapledurham

Sun 10 Dec 6.30pm Carol service

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Christingle

Christmas Eve 11.30pm Midnight mass

Christmas Day 11.15am Christmas Day Communion

Caversham Baptist Church (South Street) UNCONFIRMED

Sun 17 Dec 10.30am Family Nativity Service

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Nativity Live! (with other Caversham Churches)

Christmas Day 10.30am Christmas Day Service

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

Sun 17 Dec 10.30am Family Carol Service

Christmas Eve 4.00pm Nativity Live! procession with real animals, music and drama leaving Caversham Baptist Church at 4pm, procession travels via St. John's Church and ends at

St Andrew's, Caversham

Sun 17 Dec 6.30pm Nine Lessons and Carols

Merry Christmas to our readers



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Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN
St Barnabas
Revd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road.
Tel: 947 8239.
www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

St Andrews
Revd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,
Harrogate Road. Tel: 947 2788
www.standrewscaversham.org

St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Revd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Road,
Caversham RG4 7AD Tel: 9479505
rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Revd Marion Pyke Tel: 947 5834
Revd John Dudley Tel: 9470265
Revd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331810
Revd Judith Ryder Tel: 9473783

CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (LEP)
(Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and URC)
Contact: Dr Alison Johnston
Tel: 0118 947 5152. www.cpsc.org.uk

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY
Revd Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.
Tel: 947 2223
Revd D Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH
Transitional Minister Revd Jonathan Edwards
Church office tel 954 5353
Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptist
church.org.uk

RIVERSIDE CHURCH (Reading)
www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

GRACE CHURCH
(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)
www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk Tel 9474529

ROMAN CATHOLIC
Mgr Patrick Daley, The Presbytery,
2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 947 1787.
Deacon: Hugh Anscombe
Fr Michael Sharkey, St Michaels, Sonning Common
Tel: 972 3418

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD
Revd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009

The newspaper produced by the members of the Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

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The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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TALKING POINT

by Derek Chandler

Magic Moments

'Magic Moments' sung by Perry Como in 1957 is a song we may associate with Christmas as it was used to sell 'Quality Street' chocolates in Christmas advertisements in the 1980's. Christmas is a 'magic moment' that many people still celebrate each year. The trouble is it is often mixed with a lot of other stuff – overloaded - and not with presents. Tired? Troubled? Preoccupied with real life worries, so the magic moment of Christmas still feels perhaps - just out of reach?

Part of the problem might well be our upbringing. From an early age we are presented with the idea that Christmas is a time for children. Now don't get me wrong, I think the wonder and excitement that children bring to Christmas is brilliant, but it is not the whole story, and it reinforces the idea that Christmas is something you grow out of. I can understand why and that children's nativity plays cannot contain the complex threads of the original Christmas story. What do I mean? Well, you only have to read the Bible for yourself to get the salient points: Mary is an unmarried teenage mother, engaged to be married, who for shame her betrothed husband Joseph initially considers renouncing her. If Joseph had done so, Mary would probably have been stoned to death. When Jesus is born there is literally no human place on Earth for him to stay, he sleeps in a manger, an animal feeding trough. At the news of the Magi, King Herod murders young children, not that different from brutal dictatorships to this day. Joseph and Mary are forced to become refugees. The real Christmas is hardly a children's story!

For all the right reasons we protect children from the harsher elements of Christmas but for all the wrong reasons we forget what Christmas has to say to our adult world as we sentimentalise it. Sadly, that is only too clear to us when the bad things in life happen at Christmas: bereavement, illness, redundancy, homelessness, division. This is made worse by the reinforcing that we all have to be 'jolly' for a whole month of the year. Do you know how hard it is to be jolly all the time? All these anxieties of real life that have no room in our jolly commercial Christmas but are exactly the reason why God came to us, even when we make no room for Him, and not just at the Inn. Christmas is God's love making itself vulnerable to us in our troubled world. Christmas in the Bible is an enormous risk and that is no surprise because at the heart of the story is childbirth – with all the anxiety and hope that comes with that. So one thing I do believe is that Christmas is more than a capturing of childhood wonder – it is about a future yet to be born. And for those in the nativity story who can see that, they discover a magic moment – even though it looks to the rest of the world like just another poor baby whose parents can't even provide him with a bed for the night.

A while ago I went on a mindfulness course for clergy in Dorset. Mindfulness is a form of ancient meditation increasingly gaining credibility in medical circles. Basically it teaches the art of being in the present moment and seeing everything and everyone potentially as a gift. In other words, a 'magic moment'. This might be easy to scoff at, but the more I hear of increasing depression and suicide rates, or domestic violence, homelessness, or mental health issues, especially at Christmas – the more I firmly believe that we need to cultivate the art of discovering 'magic moments'. We certainly need to do something. Because what we are doing is literally making us ill. For me as a Christian it all begins at Christmas in a manger with a homeless baby and shepherds and magi and angels saying, "There is a magic moment – see it for all it's worth – it could just change your life, and help change the world."

However much we dress up the Christmas Nativity with tinsel and fairy lights, we cannot hide the real light that shines from the manger. Magic moments are not just to be discovered in church at Christmas, but in our life in the world – each day. For God loved the world so much that He dwelt among us in human form. His Spirit dwells among us now, and I am sure God provides magic moments for us to discover in the gift of each ordinary day. Just as God did over 2000 years ago in the birth of a child and all that followed from the cradle to the cross, and beyond. Magic moments that are like gifts, inviting us to receive and share them, helping to make the world a richer place for everyone.

Reverend Derek Chandler is vicar at St Barnabas church Emmer Green.



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SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am Holy Communion – BCP (first, second and fourth Sundays)
Matins – BCP (Third Sunday)
9.30am Holy Communion (second, third and fourth Sundays)
Service of the Word (First Sunday)
6.30pm Evensong (usually Choral on second Sunday)
Fifth Sunday – Parish wide service (check website for details)

St John's, Gosbrook Road

9.30am Holy Communion (first, third and fourth Sundays)
9.30am All Age Worship (second Sunday))
Fifth Sunday – Parish wide service (check website for details)

St Michaels, Sonning Common

5.30pm Saturday
9.00 and 10.30am Monday
St Margaret's, Mapledurham
11.15am Holy Communion (first, second and fourth Sundays)
Morning Worship (third Sunday)
Fifth Sunday – Parish wide service (check website for details)

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am The Eucharist
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)
First Sunday, Family Eucharist
11.30am The Eucharist first Sunday BCP

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

8.00am Said Communion (BCP)
9.30am Parish Communion
9.30am COGS for all ages (1st Sunday of Month)

RIVERSIDE CHURCH(READING)

Meeting at Hemdean House School, Hemdean Road, Caversham
10.00am Morning Worship & Teaching

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Meeting at Caversham Park School
11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)
Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)
All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH South Street

10.30am Morning Worship each Sunday
8.00pm House of Prayer (praise and prayer) –
2nd Sunday each month
3.45pm Messy Church – for all the family
Fourth Sunday of the month

GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am
6.30pm (second and fourth Sundays)

Gosbrook Road

10.30am

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

Saturday 5.30pm,
Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm
Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

Church Street, Reading

10.30am
(House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Church Street, Caversham

9.30am Sunday School
11.00am Divine Worship
6.00pm Evening Service

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the February 2018 issue should be sent to Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by **Monday 8th January**. The date for the March 2018 issue is **Monday 5th February**. Email address is editors@cavershambridge.org
Advertising copy for the February 2018 issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham by **Friday 5th January**. The date for the March 2018 issue is **Friday 2nd February**. Email address is: advertising@cavershambridge.org

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX
Tuesday and Friday 9.30am to 2pm
Tel: 947 1703 email: secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

ST BARNABAS

St Barnabas Centre
Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am-10.30am
Tel: 947 6310 Website: www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

News from St. Barnabas Church

On the last Sunday of October members of St. Barnabas Church welcomed people from Caversham Park Church at the combined Benefice Service.

The following Sunday reflected a full day at St. Barnabas. The theme of the Family Service at 9.30.a.m. was one of celebration. In the afternoon, as is now customary on the first Sunday of the month, games of table tennis took place in the Church Hall. The day was rounded off with an All Souls' Service in memory of the dearly departed.

Forthcoming events in December are the Christmas Fair on Saturday the 2nd at 2pm in the parish centre where refreshments will be available as well as handicrafts. The church hall will have stalls selling quality gifts, cakes, second hand toys, games and jigsaws etc and the ever popular raffle. New for 2017 will be a jewellery tombola and hand- made Christmas decorations. Father Christmas will once again find

time to stop over with his bran tub. Admission is by donation and the proceeds will support our chosen charities in Africa.

On the next day there will be a Toy Service. A Christingle Service with the 89th Reading Scout Group is being arranged for the 13th at 7.00.p.m. at St. Barnabas Church. The Christmas Carol Service will be held at 4.30.p.m on the 17th and the Nativity Play will take place on the 24th at 4.30.p.m. Later that day Midnight Mass will commence at 11.30.p.m.

St Peter's Churchyard

On the afternoon of September 5th, four environmentally friendly, spaces for secure cycle parking were installed in St Peter's churchyard.

In September 2016, Carol Moloney took part in the annual 'Ride and Stride' event, cycling around a large number of Berkshire churches, raising a considerable sum of money which was shared between the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust and St Peter's Church. Seeing PlantLocks at Peterborough Cathedral gave rise to the thought that they would fit perfectly in the space near the entrance to the churchyard. Having discussed the idea with the Rector Mike Smith, and Nigel Smith churchwarden, the PlantLocks were given the necessary approval by the diocese and Reading Borough Council with St Peter's Church generously agreeing to pay for the containers.

Richard Bisgrove kindly advised us on suitable plants which would tolerate the shady site and blend in with the churchyard, and he donated



cyclamen from his own garden. Richard, Doug, with Jane and Richard Havelock, spent a fun afternoon assembling the containers and filling them with gravel and soil, before our consultant plant expert, Richard carefully placed the plants in their new homes. We look forward to seeing what delights will emerge in the spring.

They have been well used from the outset by members of the congregation and bell ringers, and their attractive blending into the landscape has been much appreciated.

Harvest Mass at St. Anne's School

Monsignor Patrick Daly is the new parish priest of Our Lady and St Anne's Church, he celebrated the Harvest Mass for St Anne's School in October. This was Fr Patrick's first Mass in the school hall for the whole school and pupils were joined by parents, carers and friends.

Fr Patrick spoke to the children about the harvest being a gift from God, emphasising that not all people in the world have as much to eat as we have and that God's gifts must be shared.

The dry goods that the children had brought in to school would be shared by being donated to Readifood to be distributed among needy people in Reading.

As well as the tins, packets, jars, etc that were placed underneath the altar table, there was a display of fresh fruits and vegetables that had been grown in the school garden.

After Mass, the hall was cleared by the Hall Team of pupils quickly, quietly and efficiently and was ready to be used for school lunches in no time at all.

On 1st November, staff and pupils swelled the congregation in the church to celebrate the feast of All Saints. This Mass was the first school Mass celebrated in church by Father Patrick.



Father Patrick by the fresh produce display



Father Patrick by the donated dry goods

Bible Friends

A message for the shepherds

One night, some shepherds were on the hillside outside Bethlehem. Suddenly, there was a dazzling light and an angel appeared. The shepherds were very scared. "Don't be frightened," the angel said. "I have brought you some wonderful news. God's Son has been born tonight."

Lots more angels appeared in the sky. They sang, "Praise to God in heaven. Peace to everyone on earth."

When the angels had gone, the shepherds said to each other, "Come on, let's go and find this special baby." They left their sheep.

They ran down the hillside to Bethlehem. They found baby Jesus lying on a bed of straw, just as the angels had said. The shepherds told Mary and Joseph all about the angel's message.

The shepherds were so excited they told everyone they met the good news, "God's Son has been born!"

Luke 2:7-21



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SCOUT CHRISTMAS POST

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Scout Post 2017 – Starts Saturday 25th November

The 89th Reading Scouts are once again providing the highly valued Christmas Post service for the delivery of Christmas Cards to Caversham, Caversham Heights, Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village. We delivered nearly 3,000 Christmas cards last year.

The Scout Christmas Post is a community event that provides a cheaper service than the Royal Mail and, most importantly provides a great service to the local community. The 89th Reading Scouts have been running this service for over 35 years, raising funds for the Scout Group. In the weeks that lead up to Christmas, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers take on the responsible job of delivering Christmas Cards that have been posted in our Scout Posting boxes across the local area.

Our bright red wooden post boxes can be found at a number of locations in Caversham and Emmer Green including: Caversham Library, McColls Newsagents in Emmer Green, Balmore Park and Emmer Green Surgeries, Woodcote Way News, Uplands Road Post Office, St Andrew's, St Barnabas, St John's, St Peter's and Gosbrook Road Methodist Churches, Co-op stores and just inside the main entrances of a number of local primary schools.

You can post your Christmas Cards in these locations from Saturday 25th November and the last posting day will be on Thursday 14th December, guaranteeing delivery in time for Christmas.

We deliver cards across Caversham, Caversham Heights, Caversham Park Village, and Emmer Green communities. Please bear in mind that we are unable to deliver south of Caversham or Reading Bridges, Kidmore End, Tokers Green or Sonning Common.

Please use the service yourself for all the Christmas Cards you are sending to people in Caversham and Emmer Green, and let your friends know about the service too. This is a great opportunity to save money – at 30p per card it is half the price of a stamp for the delivery of your local Christmas Cards!!

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CADRA celebrates Trees in Caversham and 50 years

On 17 October 2017, the Caversham and District Residents' Association marked 50 years of existence. Around midday, with help from the Mayor of Reading, a copper beech tree was planted near the Caversham war memorial. In the evening, at Thameside School, Dr John Evans talked about Trees in Caversham. Caversham has a wonderful legacy of trees, with the period from 1860 up to WWI being the high point of planting. We now have a greater understanding of the benefits that trees bring, including not just the aesthetic benefits but also beneficial impacts on severe weather outbreaks, climate change and human health. Dr Evans concluded by explaining the threats to trees and highlighting some local initiatives to plant new trees.

Thoughts then moved to celebration with a look back at the period when CADRA was formed, a celebration cake and a toast to the team past and present and to the next 50 years. There will be more detail in the next edition or you can go to <http://www.cadra.org.uk/specialprojects.php>

Changing bus routes in Caversham

In October, Reading Buses launched a short consultation on some radical changes to services in Caversham. This prompted a massive response, a local campaign and public meetings with Councillors and Matt Rodda, MP. A second set of proposals was then issued with comments invited up to 10 November. A second public meeting was held on Friday 3 November. The latest proposals issued on November 22nd are:

- 25 frequency and route unchanged
- 23/24 re-merged into clockwise and anti-clockwise loop every 20 minutes
- 27/29 new routes into Caversham centre
- 22 will run hourly off peak and on Saturdays, no service on Sundays an hourly through link to the RBH Monday to Saturday by extending the existing route and merging with the 19 service.

See <http://www.reading-buses.co.uk/articlescaversham-consultation-revised-proposal/>

These changes are prompted by the losses incurred on the Caversham routes, partly as a result of low usage. Please support your local service; it is vital for so many people.

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The Glastonbury Thorn



Why, you may well ask, should I be writing about a hawthorn bush in the middle of winter? In fact, this is a rather unusual hawthorn, in that it flowers around Christmas time, as well as in May.

Whatever you may think about the many silly stories that have accumulated around the Glastonbury Thorn, or Holy Thorn, over the centuries, it does exist as a kind of hawthorn, and it does flower and produce new leaves in winter. Technically, it's a 'sport' of the common hawthorn, and it is known to occur in the Middle East, and around the Mediterranean. It now appears that it's a 'sport' which may occur naturally in this country as well: self-seeded bushes have been found, well away from the famous bush on Wirral Hill at Glastonbury.

A story grew up that the winter-flowering tree on the hill at Glastonbury had been brought here by Joseph of Arimathea, the man who according to the Gospels attended to the burial of Christ's body after the Crucifixion. The story of Joseph's visit here is first recorded in the history of Glastonbury by William of Malmesbury written around 1135: or at least in the versions of the history as altered by the monks of Glastonbury Abbey, keen to attract pilgrims and the donations they would bring. Over time, the story became elaborated: Joseph had also brought with him two silver flasks, one containing drops of Christ's blood, and the other with drops of his perspiration. By the nineteenth century, he was reckoned to have brought the holy grail here as well, and to have hidden it. He was the uncle (or great-uncle) of Christ, who had been a tin merchant, and who had brought his nephew (or great-nephew) to England in search of tin. Or he had travelled here after the Resurrection with the eleven disciples.

And did those feet in ancient times walk upon England's mountains green? Well ... pretty certainly not!

The first surviving record of the winter-flowering thorn dates from 1502; the

connection between Joseph of Arimathea and the thorn was established by 1645. At first it was said to have sprung from a piece of Christ's crown of thorns, but by 1722, the story of it springing from Joseph's staff where he stuck it in the ground was being promulgated.

Not surprisingly, many cuttings have been taken from the thorn, which is just as well, since the original thorn was destroyed in Puritan times.

Quinton, in Buckinghamshire, had another famous Holy Thorn, which caused problems in 1752. This was the year when we had 'lost' eleven days, to bring our calendar in line with that used across continental Europe. There was a custom there of people getting together on Christmas Eve, to gather sprigs of thorn at midnight. Should they gather on 24-25 December, or 5-6 January in 1753? They decided that the tree would probably go by the old calendar, so over 2,000 people turned up in January. It would have seemed almost blasphemous to suggest to them that when the tree flowered depended on the weather – though it has been observed to happen at any time between November and March!

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Reading Minster – A place of sanctuary

Reading Minster of St Mary the Virgin is a well-known landmark to all local residents, it has stood in St Mary's Butts for hundreds of years. Less well known is that it has recently returned to one of the former roles of many medieval churches, as a place of refuge and sanctuary. Today the Minster pursues an increasingly 'open-door' policy and is frequently open during the day to welcome visitors, school groups and host numerous activities for the local community including before Christmas the sale of charity Christmas cards and other items.

In the last year the church has also responded to the needs of the night time community, which if you venture into Reading town centre on a Friday or Saturday night, is remarkably busy and noisy until at least 3am. Thanks to a team of volunteers drawn from many churches around Reading, the Minster doors are opened every Friday and Saturday night from 9pm to 3am to provide a place of peace and sanctuary to a diverse range of people. In addition to welcoming many passers-by, this deliberately offers shelter and support to the more marginalized within our society; the lonely, the homeless and those suffering from intoxication, substance abuse and mental health problems. The church is filled with reflective music and beautifully lit

by candlelight to create a calm and inviting space which draws many people in.

On these nights the Minster also acts as a hub for other voluntary and professional groups serving the community. This includes the street pastor – Christian volunteers – who patrol the town centre providing help to those in need; they will bring people to the Minster where they can be assisted in safety off the streets. There are normally two groups of street pastors on patrol who regularly visit, in addition to one or two prayer pastors based in the adjacent church office. The First Stop initiative is also based in the Minster; these are volunteer first-aiders and a paramedic with the ambulance service who are able to assess and treat minor injuries or call for an ambulance if needed. To provide security, one or two police officers are always present. All the groups are linked by a dedicated radio network which also includes the doormen of all pubs and nightclubs, so that everybody is aware and prepared for any potential problems.

Each evening session is different and unpredictable but this would be a typical evening: At 8pm volunteers will set-up the church with music, candles and hot drinks; on Friday night the FAITH Christian group will also be in the porch serving food and drink to the homeless. At 9pm the main doors

are opened and a group of mainly homeless and lonely will happily sit at café style tables with volunteers to take hot drinks, share stories and enjoy the hospitality. Until midnight there is a steady stream of visitors, some call in specifically to reflect, sit quietly, pray or light candles; others are curious, drawn in by the candlelight and music and are welcomed by the volunteers who can explain the work of the Minster in serving the local community. There is no hard-sell, but volunteers are happy to listen to those who wish to share their story and pray with those who request it. Towards midnight the street pastor teams often bring in those who are inebriated, either on their own or with a gang of friends. It is remarkable how a loud drunken group outside will suddenly become hushed as they enter the church. The volunteers will try to sober them up with a snack and hot drink, then call a friend, a relative or a taxi as needed; first aiders are also on hand if their condition deteriorates. After endless cups of tea or hot chocolate, in the small hours the lonely and homeless tend to drift off towards their homes, hostels or places of shelter, leaving just a few to enjoy the warmth of the Minster before they venture out into the cold and rain. Overtly sleeping on the pews is discouraged but a few are quite adept at vertical slumber! Finally, by

2.30am the lights are turned on, the candles collected and refreshments are stowed away and any remaining visitors are encouraged to get ready to leave. The volunteers will lock the doors and leave by 3am but the street pastors and First Stop team will often continue for another hour or more if there is a need for their services.

The Minster sanctuary team of volunteers is drawn from many churches in the greater Reading area and typically serve an evening/night shift once a month. There is a great need for more volunteers to continue this valuable community service, which is much appreciated by the night time community. The police have recorded a drop in street crime since the sanctuary and street pastors have been active in the town. Would you, or someone you know, consider offering your services for this work? It's always varied and interesting, sometimes challenging but always rewarding. The time may be later than your normal bedtime, but the hours pass surprisingly quickly as you are kept busy most of the time. Induction and training will be provided. If you are interested please contact Vera on 0118 957 1057 or contact@readingminster.org.uk or just drop in any Friday or Saturday night to talk to the volunteers and see for yourself what good work is done in God's name.

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Candle Making

The busy production team of ladies from the Thursday Craft group making candles for the St Peter's Church Christmas market which will be on the 9 December from 10 till 12.30pm in the church. The first group led by Mary Tucker are melting the wax and making the candles and the second led by Sue McQueen are decorating the candles ready for Christmas.



Concerts in Caversham Christmas Concert by Candlelight

9th December 2017 – 7.30pm

St Andrew's Church, Albert Road
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Come and enjoy the annual Christmas concert featuring some of London's best musicians playing in the Caversham Ensemble Chamber Orchestra. They will perform an enjoyable mixture of seasonal and classical masterpieces and, to celebrate the newly refurbished Willis organ, Edward Reeves will play Handel's organ concerto – *The Nightingale and the Cuckoo*. As usual there will be mince pies and mulled wine to enjoy during the interval – all included with your ticket, as well as the wonderful candlelit atmosphere of this lovely church. A great way to begin the season of Advent, you would be advised to buy your tickets early as it is always an immensely popular event. Buy from Waltons the Jewellers (closed Mondays, cash only). £16, £18 in advance, £18, £20 on the door, under 16s free. 0118 9484112 www.concertsincaversham.co.uk

Christmas Carols in Caversham Court Monday 18 December

The choir of St Peter's church will be leading the singing for an evening of traditional Christmas carols in Caversham Court on Monday 18 December, at 7.30pm. Members of the Salvation Army Band will join them, and a celebrity MC will add to the festive cheer.

The floodlit gardens will be open from 6.15 pm and mulled wine, hot chocolate and mince pies will be on sale in the Tea Kiosk in aid of local charities. The church bells will ring out from 7.15pm.

Members of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens will be lighting your way in the magical floodlit gardens. Wrap up warm, bring a torch (to read the carol sheets!) and come along to sing in the festive season.

Christmas starts at Caversham Court and St Peter's Church

The annual sale of green Christmas trees, decorations and gifts at Caversham Court takes place on 9th December from 9.30 to 13.30 and the St Peter's Church Christmas Market is open from 10.00-12.30. Spend the morning at these events and get much of your Christmas shopping done in comfort.

In Caversham Court gardens there will be Christmas trees, holly, mistletoe, ornamental willow, decorated wreaths and stars, candles from local beeswax, Christmas cards, bird tables, FairTrade goodies together with hot spiced apple juice. Up the steps in St Peter's Church will be mince pies, coffee, games for all the family, home-made foods, a raffle, tombola, hand-made craft items, decorations for the home and much more.

The trees are cut as part of the management of lowland heath around Camberley to stop regrowth of Scots Pine shading out the heather. Lowland heath is a rare habitat in Europe and we are lucky to have a good amount in our area.

Scots pine trees are less bushy than the standard Norway spruce, but they have two huge advantages: they NEVER drop their needles and they smell great. If you are extra lucky, they are pre-decorated with pine cones!

All money raised goes to charity, with the tree sales paying for conservation volunteers in Reading to buy tools, get insurance and work on wildlife heritage sites, nature reserves and school areas, and the money from the church Christmas market will go to Myanmar refugees in Bangladesh.

Please remember that there is no parking at Caversham Court apart from a few disabled spaces, just enough space for one or two cars at a time. Park elsewhere and come in to choose your tree and gifts at leisure, leave them with us for safe keeping, and then come down with the car and we will help load. There will be another safe holding area for purchases in the church.

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Caversham WI

For the October meeting, we welcomed the Air Ambulance to hear about how they deliver such a marvellous service – with no support from the Lottery, NHS or the government. We also learnt that the Thames Valley Air Ambulance is one of only two that are able to run 24/7 for 365 days a year. (Hats off to all the good ladies and gentlemen that volunteer their time to make it all possible!) Next month, we will welcome a local speaker on the subject of garden wildlife – after which, I hope to be able to name a few more of the creepy crawlies I find whilst gardening...

As the weather turns properly into deep autumn, Caversham WI's craft group is coming back together again after a brief 'summer' break; and after taking inspiration from a recent National WI article on book clubs, we are also launching a reading club (which will focus on jointly reading more broadly than just a traditional novel and talking about what we've learnt).

Ladies are very welcome to visit our friendly group. We hold meetings on the third Thursday of the month, at 7.30 in the evenings – which helps avoid child-care issues. There is

usually easy parking and a lift to the first floor meeting room at Church House, (building works may be temporarily affecting the parking). More details can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/hwzj6zy> or search for "Caversham WI".

For enquiries please contact our Secretary, on 947 5176.

Caversham Heights Society

Since the end of September members of the society have had the opportunity to go on one visit and to listen to three very different talks.

On the 29th September a coach load visited Canons Ashby, an Elizabethan manor house with various additions and modifications, that has been the home of the Dryden family for the past 500 years but is now cared for by the National Trust.

Set in rolling Northamptonshire countryside, midway between Banbury and Daventry, it is a delightful gem which gives an atmosphere of timelessness. Until 1948 there was no electricity and even now the only water tap is to be found in the kitchen! The result is a dark, unostentatious and intimate family home that has hardly changed over the centuries. It is surrounded by magnificent gardens. Across the road is the Priory Church, which at the time of our visit was full of harvest fare and which is the remains of a large priory.

On the 4th October three gentlemen from the Trooper Potts Memorial Trust, Brig. Tony Verey, Capt. Andrew French and Richard Bennett, enthralled us by telling the story of the disastrous Dardanelles campaign and especially the battle of Gallipoli (1915); how the Berkshire Yeomenry [then Troop] came about; and how Trooper Potts, the only Reading man to do so, came to win the Victoria Cross. Through reading letters written by Potts' companions to their families describing conditions in the battle; by describing how Trooper Potts, under constant fire for over 48 hours, rescued a fellow soldier by pulling him on an old spade as a substitute stretcher; and by showing old photographs of the battle where 50% of the troops were injured or killed, members of the society were given a glimpse of the horrors of life in that campaign. We were also shown various items including a genuine Victoria Cross and a spade such as Potts would have used. We were also told about the educational role of the Memorial Trust and how the Trooper Potts Memorial on the Forbury came about in 2015, the centenary of Gallipoli. This proved to be a fascinating evening, even for those with little interest in military history and members of the Memorial Trust were warmly thanked for their efforts.

The next meeting, on 18th October, was a very different experience since it was largely visual. Nigel Glover White, a member of the Royal Photographic Society, delighted us with some of his pictures of the 5000 square miles of the Serengeti National park in Tanzania. Nigel showed superb photographs of the variety of birds and wild animals that can be found in the Park. The animals ranged from zebra, elephants, cheetahs, leopards, lions, hippos, crocodiles, wildebeest, impalas, gazelles to jackals and hyenas. We were also shown pictures of a variety of birds- different types of starling, eagles, egrets, herons, and roller birds. We were also shown the dry and dusty landscape with acacia trees and amazing sunsets as well as some Masai villages. Apparently there are rites of passage for the Masai from boyhood to warrior to elder. Only elders get a burial. Anyone else is left in the open to rot or be eaten by carrion.

The third talk, on 'the History of the Shrievalty and the role of the modern day High Sheriff,' was given on 1st November by Dr Christine Hill Williams, a former High Sheriff of Berkshire. In the hierarchy of constitutional figures after the Queen, the High Sheriff is the deputy to the Lords Lieutenant of each county and acts as the Queen's representative in every county plus London and Bristol.

The High Sheriff is responsible for law and order while the Lord Lieutenant is responsible for everything else! The position goes back into the dim and distant past. However it seems that the position of High Sheriff can be dated back to the 7th century, long before government as we know it was in place. Then the role of the High Sheriff was fourfold: 1. to defend the monarch; 2. to raise an army to fight for the monarch; 3. to collect taxes; and 4. to escort judges.

Needless to say over time the role has become largely ceremonial. Thus the High Sheriff escorts royal visits to his/her county; supervises citizen ceremonies; and acts as patron to the returning officer at Election times. A High Sheriff is appointed for one year only but four years in advance of taking up the post. A Shrieval Consultancy Panel seeks nominations and selects 4 people for the following four years. Nominees attend a special ceremony in the High Court in the Strand. It is up to each Sheriff to decide on his/her own particular interests to patronise.

The CHS meets on alternate Wednesday evenings at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church in Highmoor Road. Meetings begin at 7.15pm with tea and coffee and the talk starts at 8pm. New members are always welcome. Further details can be found on our website cavershamheights.org or by email to contact@cavershamheights.org

Caversham Heights TG

November saw the last evening meeting of the Guild. Henceforth we will become an afternoon Guild. Mr Tony King had an entertainment and railway theme for his talk entitled 'Hollywood to Broadway by train'.

The Social Studies were enlightened by a presentation by Pat Williams about the Amish People of Pennsylvania.

"Jolly Hockey Sticks" was an excuse for a group of us to up sticks and travel to Birmingham to see a parade of sports gear through the ages. Also on the programme were the hilarious recollections of an ex roly- poly(a dance troupe of ladies of a certain build!).

A coffee and mince pie morning was held at the home of our chairman, Mrs Hazel New.

The Amblers, ever eager to try something new, toddled off along the Thames to the new Lido for coffee and a nose round.

Luncheon, scrabble, and cinema clubs continue to be enjoyed.

The main club will next meet on Wednesday 21st of February at 2pm at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, 74 Highmoor Road. Any Ladies wishing to visit or join us will be very welcome.

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Reading Cinemas

Do you remember the ABC and the Odeon, the Savoy, the Vaudeville, Rex and Regal, Gaumont and Glendale? A book describing all the old cinemas of Reading, with photographs of most of them, has just been published. It's been written by David Cliffe, who for many years has been writing the 'Happy Wanderer' column in 'Caversham Bridge' on natural history and local history subjects.

David said: "During the two years I spent, on and off, writing the book, I also wrote short pieces about the two cinemas in Caversham - the Glendale and the Regal - for the 'Bridge'. This book covers all the Reading, Tilehurst and Caversham cinemas - more than 20 of them over the years."

The book goes back to the beginning of moving pictures, chronicling the technical developments and how they affected picture houses in Reading. Then follows the story of each cinema. Many of them were started by local entrepreneurs, but later fell into the hands of the big national chains. As a bonus, there are lists of films made in and around Reading, and of film actors and directors with Reading connections.

The title of the book is 'Picture Palace to Penny Plunge: Reading's Cinemas.' It costs £12, and is available at Waterstone's, W. H. Smith's, or direct from Two Rivers Press - www.tworiverspress.com.

SWITCH OFF

A CAMPAIGN to encourage drivers to switch off engines when their vehicles are stationary, other than when waiting in traffic queues, is being promoted with a poster designed by a local school pupil.

The Council ran a competition inviting Year 5 pupils to design a picture to go on 'anti-idling' signs outside schools, taxi ranks and other vehicle idling hotspots around the borough.

The competition was won by Leonie McKenzie, 10, of St John's Primary School, east Reading, and signs and leaflets will now be produced to support officers in getting across the 'no idling' message to drivers. The winning design by Leonie shows a parked car belching out exhaust fumes. Posters have been designed using Leonie's picture with the messages; 'No idling, Turn off your engine - children breathing.' Another message is 'Turn off your engine - it's the law!'

The campaign to encourage drivers to switch off their engines is part of the Council's ongoing Air Quality Action Plan as research shows that switching off a vehicle's engine when stationary for a minute significantly reduces harmful pollutants and improves air quality.

The signs will be erected outside schools and other idling hot spots and officers will follow this up with a number of campaign days to promote the no-idling message with drivers. Officers will ask motorists to switch off their engines and provide them with a leaflet warning of the harm that is done to health by idling.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued when drivers refuse to switch off their engines after being asked to, or to repeat offenders.

This will also be followed up with campaign event days starting next spring to be held in a variety of locations in the borough.

Cllr Tony Page, Reading's Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport, said:

"Unnecessarily running car engines while stationary pollutes the air we breathe, leading to an increased risk of heart disease, lung cancer and asthma attacks. It is also illegal on the highway.

"Stationary vehicles can produce up to twice as many exhaust emissions as when they are moving which is why this anti-idling campaign is so important. I must stress that vehicles caught in traffic jams will NOT be ticketed!

"The aim is to focus on hot-spots such as schools and I would like to thank all the children who took part in the competition to help promote the 'no idling' message."

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Why I am a Rotarian

About seven years ago I gave a talk to Reading Rotary Club about a local charity for the homeless at which I volunteer. I do not know what the Rotarians thought of my talk (although they still help the charity in many ways) but I was so impressed by the warmth of feeling and the work that they did that I immediately applied for membership.

Once inducted I was encouraged to have a look at the various teams into which Rotary clubs are divided -- including, Youth, International and Community -- and I decided that this last one was the one that suited me best. The team engages in projects helping homeless and other underprivileged people. We decorated a disabled lady's house, cleared an old lady's garden as well and raised funds for various local charities. We also take people suffering from arthritis to their monthly meetings and we sell poppies each November.

More ambitiously, just before I joined, the Club built Centenary House in Reading, which provides flats for seven otherwise homeless people and which is administered by a local charity. The project was financed with aid of a mortgage now paid off thus freeing rental income from the project to be donated to local good causes. Not content with the success of that we are now engaged in helping a local charity that assists women who are in danger of violence. We are building them an annexe that will provide accommodation for seven vulnerable families.

Our Youth Service team has helped with reading in schools, installed raised beds in a school for children with disabilities and each year through Life Learning provides dictionaries for children as they move from primary to secondary education. Each year we send young people to a week's leadership course in North Wales, a project in which our Club is heavily involved. Internationally we raise money for sand dams and for hospitals in various developing countries as well as contributing to Rotary's 'Shelterbox' scheme that provides immediate relief to victims of disaster such as the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean. Also, a few years ago a party of Rotarians including members from our Club travelled to Pakistan to assist with the programme of vaccination against polio, which campaign was instigated by Rotary International in 1979 and which has led to the near disappearance of the disease worldwide.

As well as each being endowed with a large dollop of altruism, Rotarians are social animals. We meet weekly for lunch at a local restaurant and these are not the ultra-formal occasions of yesteryear. We have visiting speakers, some but not all of whom may be seeking our help for their organisations. We have parties, weekends away and biennial exchange visits with our sister club in Normandy.

All of this is based on my own experience of Rotary but there are Clubs up and down the country, including eight in the Reading area, where men and women of varying backgrounds meet at different times on different days and do great work. If you are already a Rotarian I send you greetings. If you are not and this account of my experience chimes with you, then Rotary may be for you and I recommend that you visit website <https://www.rotarygbi.org/>

Eric Moyse

President

Rotary Club of Reading

Caversham Horticultural Society

The Society's Christmas talk and social get-together takes place on Wednesday 6th December. Steven Desmond will give a talk entitled 'Within these Walls: The Kitchen Garden'. Starting at 7.45pm this takes place in our usual venue, Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road. Refreshments available and the entry fee for non-members is £3.00.

Caversham Community Safety Survey

A safety survey is being carried out across Reading with the purpose of seeking views from residents about issues such as crime and disorder, litter, parking and anti-social behaviour (ASB) so as to establish the key priorities. These priorities will be looked at in conjunction with those identified by the RBC Community Safety Partnership body and Thames Valley Police. This community focus is carried out every two years, so it is now time for Caversham and Emmer Green residents to have their say and assist in prioritising the local issues to be worked on in the next couple of years.

The survey is only available online and is open up to Friday 15th December. Please visit <https://consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/community-safety-survey> for completion of the document. Where needed, in order to assist residents in the completion, Neighbourhood Initiatives officers will be on hand at The Weller Centre, Amersham Road on Wednesday 6th December, 11:00 to 12:00.

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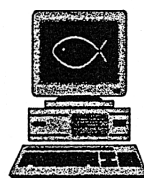
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Chat Mats arrive in Caversham

Taking time over a quiet coffee can be just the thing but sometimes a chance to chat can make all the difference. Chat Mats at the 3Cs Café in St John's Church on Gosbrook Road ensure both are available every Tuesday morning.

Chat Mats were the brainchild of Caroline Billington and spread throughout Newbury. Now, as part of the Coffee Companions project, they are available from Caversham to Cornwall.

It's a simple idea. Order your coffee, tea or soft drink (snacks also available). Ask for a Chat Mat. Put it on your table red side up and the message 'Not today, maybe another time' ensures your uninterrupted coffee break. Leave the green side showing 'Say Hello and have a chat' and a Coffee Companion will join you.

Everyone has had times when they feel lonely and would appreciate the warmth of human company. The numbers of people for whom

loneliness is a real difficulty has been recognised as a major ill in society today. Yet, to go out and break into a new gathering feels out of the question. Other people enjoy striking up a conversation at any time. Whatever your style, that is where the Chat Mat comes in.

Leave the mat by you on the table with the green side up if you would like someone to join you. And the red side if you would prefer to enjoy your drink, reading the newspaper or working your smartphone uninterrupted. People aren't mind readers and these mats are a way of gently broadcasting the message.

The idea has been received with enthusiasm by patrons of all ages at the 3Cs (Caversham Community Café). From the oldest to the young mothers and child minders popping in after nursery, all recognised there are times when others aren't around and they just want to get out for a bit of grown-up chat.

The Transition Minister at St John's,

Revd Penny Cuthbert is enthusiastic: "The Chat Mats are a brilliant idea. It's not always easy to tell who would like a chat and who would rather be left alone, but the chat mats make that clear. The 3Cs café is a great place for people to meet and make new friendships, and we hope the Chat Mats will help that to happen."

Cafés like the 3Cs increasingly have a regular weekly Companions Hour when you can know that someone will be there to talk to. Watch out for posters and stickers. At 3Cs it's from 10.30am – 11.30am.

Working together, Caversham churches and Reading Voluntary Action (Champions to End Loneliness) plan to see if Coffee Companions and Chat Mats can be rolled out across all the cafés in Caversham.

Ask at the till in the 3Cs for a Chat Mat. It's open every Tuesday from 9.30am to 2.00pm.

3Cs Café, Church of St John the Baptist, Gosbrook Road, Caversham RG4 8EB

Caversham Champions to End Loneliness are taking action!

Champions to End Loneliness is a Reading wide campaign, led by Reading Voluntary Action in partnership with different community groups around Reading to raise awareness and support action to reduce loneliness and a neighbourhood level.

On Tuesday 26 September, 40 people came together at Caversham library for a *Caversham Champions to End Loneliness Workshop*. The workshop was open to everyone and run in partnership with local Methodist and Anglican churches. The workshop highlighted information on loneliness from national and local research, encouraged discussion on what we as a community could be doing and heard from several local organisations already taking action on loneliness locally.

The organisations we heard from included:

- **Engage Befriending** - providing befriending to housebound and lonely people in Caversham and around Reading
- **Feed a Friend** - offering company and cake or a hot meal to people in need in Caversham.
- **Caversham Good Neighbours** - who offer volunteer car drivers to enable people who otherwise couldn't get out and about to get to medical appointments and social engagements.
- **Coffee Companions** - a scheme to encourage people to chat more and strike up conversation with others in cafes.

Initiatives that have already started locally are:

- 'Companions Hour' at the 3Cs cafe, that invites people to come along for coffee to meet people, even if they don't know anyone.
- Pledge cards and an **online pledge board** to encourage people to commit to taking small actions to help reduce loneliness.

There was so much enthusiasm within the group that it was decided we would trial meeting on a monthly basis to form an 'Action Group' to focus on how we could take action to reduce loneliness in our communities and encourage others to do so too.

On Monday 30 October, 16 people met at Topsy Bean to chat about what this group could do and how to take it forward. So many ideas were brought forward from promoting the organisations that need more volunteers, to developing the Coffee Companions initiative in Caversham, and holding some kind of reducing loneliness fair so people can find out about the wide range of activities, social groups and services available in Caversham.

The group was full of enthusiasm and will continue to meet on a monthly basis and take action to help make Caversham an even friendlier place!

The next meeting of the Action Group is 3pm, Monday 4 December at Caversham Baptist Church. Everyone is welcome.

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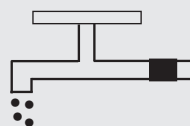
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