

The SSAFA Reading Gurkha Project – update 2018

The SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity) which has grown out of the Soldiers, Seaman and Air Force Association has a local presence in its Berkshire branch. The SSAFA helps veterans and service personnel, and their families, in the local community and relies on public donations to continue its work. SSAFA has a commitment to provide support with experienced, non-judgemental and friendly advice, as well as a variety of practical services which cover a range of social, family and financial issues. One of the main local activities supported is the SSAFA Reading Gurkha Ladies Project which supports women in the Nepali community and provides opportunities for developing literacy and for facilitating community integration.



The sharp end of the learning interface

The last week in September is the first week of term for the SSAFA Reading Gurkha Ladies Project. The volunteers have returned from their holidays fresh, energetic and ready to go. The ladies have also returned after their summer break with their huge enthusiasm and appetite for more learning absolutely undiminished! From being unable to hold pens they have moved on to having their own notebooks, in which they carefully make notes during teaching sessions, then passing them to their 'teacher' with great pride waiting anxiously for a tick and 'very good' written at the end of their work. A reading scheme used in primary school has been established and is run by qualified experienced teachers often assisted by students from Reading College. The more advanced students are reading fluently and the others are delighted to recognise and read key words.

Their first lesson of term is always 'Revision' when they are questioned on such essentials as days, months, years, seasons, telling the time, identifying and counting money, colours etc etc. They are always rather proud when demonstrating that they have retained what they were taught last term and are ready for new work.

During the holidays some of the groups met with their teachers for tea, for a walk or for a visit to the post office, to Forbury Gardens and the Abbey ruins and MERL (Museum of English Rural Life). They are interested to learn about British history and especially the history of their adopted home in Reading. You will recognise ladies from the project around Reading: they are often with a friend or alone shopping with



Very attentive learners with their tutor

confidence in the town - so different from the rather withdrawn, sad, quiet ladies of the past. As their confidence has grown, they no longer need a man to accompany them and they love their new freedom. We hear that the community is having to get used to the women's new attitude!



Sharing a group activity

All of this is due in no small part to the enthusiastic volunteers who work with them each week increasing their ability in the English language, understanding, cultural awareness and so much more. Many volunteers have been with the project since it started seven years ago, most of whom read about it in the *Caversham Bridge*, so this publication can really feel some responsibility for its success. However, we could not manage without the continuing support of Joanna Lumley who constantly encourages us in all we do. She visited us last year to see how things were going and was, as are most other people, amazed at the wonderful atmosphere of joy in watching the ladies acquiring something so precious - literacy.

Such is the success of the Project that we teach 100 ladies on Tuesdays and 50 on Thursdays. We are now in a position where we have to operate a waiting list, which is disappointing for potential newcomers who desperately want to join. Our 'Reception' group is at capacity, despite having three volunteers and a Nepali speaker allocated to the group. When they have been assessed, they gradually move on to an established group, leaving a space for one of the eager newcomers on the waiting list.

Some of our volunteers are qualified teachers, but other excellent volunteers are simply very good with people. Everyone loves coming, enjoying the company of the ladies and the other volunteers - it is great fun and Gurkhas have a wonderful and infectious sense of humour, which starts us all off!

If you would like to come along and see if you might like to join us, we meet at Wycliffe Church (on the 17 bus route) on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Tuesday group is split into two groups, one from 12.00 until 1.30 p.m. and the second from 1.30 p.m. until 3.00 p.m. The Thursday group starts at 12.30 until 2.00 p.m. If you are or have been a teacher, have experience in working with people in learning situations or would just like to be involved, we would love to see you. If you speak Hindi or any other language close to Nepali you would be especially welcomed. We would also love to have more volunteers who would be happy to operate the lap top and projector for power point presentations - training could be given for anyone keen to learn.

If you would like further details, please email pamreynolds@talk21.com. If you don't have e-mail, please get in touch with Caversham Bridge or SSAFA 0118 95 73393 (answerphone) mentioning the Gurkha Project and leaving your contact details.

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Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN

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

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

St Peter's, St Margaret's, St John's
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.cpv.org.uk

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

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH
Revd Colin Baker
Church office tel 0118 954 5353
Email: secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

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

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

ROMAN CATHOLIC
Our Lady and St Anne's
Mgr Patrick Daly, The Presbytery,
2 South View Avenue. Tel: 947 1787.

St Michael's
Fr Michael Sharkey, St Michaels,
Sonning Common Tel: 972 3418

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

TALKING POINT

by Dr Alison Johnston

We are in November again a time that is very special to a number of us, a time to remember and reflect on the duties undertaken for Queen and Country in the recent past. But still we find in Church that our duty to lead a service is much tougher than some of the duties undertaken on active service, as Remembrance Sunday is a challenge for those of us taking a service where children are present. Many people in the congregation have no experience of living through a war; while at the same time there will be of course a mix of members of the church family for whom this can be a very poignant and emotional occasion. Increasingly such services include mention of wars more recent than the two major world wars of the 20th century, Falklands, Yugoslavia, including present-day fighting in the Middle East. It also includes prayers for those members of the armed forces, who are part of peacekeeping initiatives in a number of world trouble spots. Although it is called Remembrance Sunday there is also an increasing desire to complement the looking back with prayers for peace in the future.

For a lot of children Remembrance Sunday will be identified most easily as Poppy Sunday. Both in church and perhaps in school at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month and the two-minute silence to remember those who died during wars. Thankfully at least two generations in this country have not been part of a war that affected lives as directly as did the First and Second World Wars and therefore it is useful to direct their thoughts and prayers towards the theme of 'making peace'. I can say that through God's grace and from personal experience that great friendships are born out of getting to know former foe after hostilities ended and we now share experiences and look forward to a peaceful and long-lasting future in friendship and regularly meet at this time of year alternately in each other's countries.

Many see the poppy as a sign of hope, inspired as it is by the poppy fields in Belgium, where the flowers grew on the very land that had during the First World War been battlegrounds. From this we got to know the traditional poem 'they shall not grow old'. We can supplement this very special poem with a few words from the Bible for example as from Psalm 46: 9-10:

(It is God, who)... makes wars to cease to the ends of the earth.

He breaks the bow and shatters the spear.

He burns the chariots with fire.

Be still and know that I am God.

I am exalted among the nations. I am exalted in the earth.

As for us as Christians each Sunday is a Remembrance Day. It is the day when we remember the sacrifice of Jesus, who won for the entire world a different and deeper kind of peace. God's peace gift to us is Jesus. He is God's gift to all who will receive Him. Jesus makes peace with God for us and as we learn how to pass this gift on, we become peacemakers and peace-givers too. He empowers us to be peace-bringers. When generally we think of peace we think of peace with the other side, but there is a battle here at home, here around us. It is one undertaken by former service personnel who gave everything for their country and after being injured physically or mentally and discharged are left abandoned, without recognition. So, on this Remembrance Sunday may your prayers of peace be for all in need. Prince Harry gave us the Invictus Games which has highlighted the need and brought peace to those who have been given a chance. What can you do to be a person of peace and as we learn from Matthew 5: 9 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God.'

Dr Alison Johnston
Caversham Park Church



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Are you a people person?

Caversham Good Neighbours is a group formed to offer essential transport to the elderly and disabled in our neighbourhood. If you would like to give to the community by joining us as a volunteer driver or helping in our office, then please do get in touch with us.

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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 Holy Communion with Healing Prayers usually 1st Sunday, Evensong (usually Choral on second Sunday)

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 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
6.30pm 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)

St Michael's, Sonning Common

5.30pm Saturday
9.00 and 10.30am Monday

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 December 2018 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by Monday 5th November. The date for the January issue is Monday 26th November.

Email address is: editors@cavershambridge.org

Advertising copy for the December 2018 issue should be sent to Mr A. Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham by Friday 2nd November. The date for the January issue Friday 23rd November. Email address is: advertising@cavershambridge.org

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

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

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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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Elizabeth E.A. Franklin: can you help?

Kehinde Adeyemi has contacted Caversham Bridge in the hope that we might publicise her quest to find out more about her childhood carer Elizabeth E. A. C. Franklin. Elizabeth Franklin grew up in Bath near the Pulteney Bridge, before moving to Goring and Streatly where she worked with and for the international philanthropist Patricia Brenninkmeyer from the early 1980's at Warren Farm. Patricia Brenninkmeyer herself trained as a social worker in England and in the 1960s began work in Africa, in the newly-independent state of Uganda. She founded three charities in the fields of education and agricultural innovation, all of which still exist and which helped Ugandans to help themselves amid civil war.

Elizabeth also lived in Caversham in 1984 as confirmed by post cards in Kehinde's possession and an address at 326a Hemdean Road was given as a new contact address. Unfortunately Patricia Brenninkmeyer suffers from Alzheimers



Warren Farm: Elizabeth referees the tug o' war

and can no longer remember where Elizabeth is now. Elizabeth was a professional child minder and possibly cared for the elderly as well. Elizabeth had long brown waist length hair as can be seen in the photos. Kehinde herself is in the photos as a child with her brother. When Elizabeth worked at Warren Farm she lived at Rectory Road in Goring. It appears that Elizabeth's mother moved to Weymouth in Dorset and was a churchgoer there in Baptist or family congregation.

If anyone recollects Elizabeth herself or knows about her life situations, Kehinde would be very grateful to find out more about these and to make further contact if possible.

Contact Kehinde Adeyemi by email: kind_uk@yahoo.com



Old School Farm: Elizabeth Franklin with children

Have you been a Victim of crime or abuse?

Being a victim or witness of a crime can be an emotional and difficult experience.

Victims First provides free emotional and practical support to all victims and witnesses of crime or abuse, as well as for family members of victims. The service is available across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, and can provide help regardless of whether or not the crime has been reported to the police.

Helping victims find out about *Victims First* is very important, so a scheme called *Victims First Connect* has been developed. *Victims First Connect* consists of information points across the Thames Valley area in places such as community centres, shops, leisure centres, colleges, universities and libraries. At these information points, people will be able to find out more about the services available to victims of crime, receive crime prevention/safety advice, report hate crime and/or have someone process a referral for support on their behalf.

A *Victims First* officer can discuss any emotional or practical needs you may have and will work with you to put a tailored support plan in place. This could involve referring you to a specialist service such as those for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse.

The types of assistance available include telephone and face to face support, advocacy and therapeutic counselling. *Victims First* can help make referrals to other services such as sexual health clinics, drug and alcohol services, legal services and support through the criminal justice system (if you have reported the crime to the police).

A *Young Victims Service* is also available to anyone under 18 years of age and the service works with young people to help them to cope with the effects of crime.

To speak to a *Victims First* officer about any of the services and to receive support please call 0300 1234 148. You can also find more information or make a referral for support online at www.victims-first.org.uk

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Living well: staying healthy in body and mind

On Tuesday morning, 18th September, Balmore Park's Patient Participation Group held a workshop in Caversham Heights Methodist Church on *Living well: staying healthy in body and mind*. The church was busy with about 75 attendees and 7 speakers. The setting was informal with people sitting in groups around tables. There were displays from the speakers, and handouts to take home. Entertainment was provided by *Tea & Jam* an over 60's ukulele group and part of the local music charity *Readipop*. The group meet every Thursday morning for 2 hours of practise and finds it very sociable, brain-stretching and great fun.

Dr Tom Back from Balmore Park Surgery introduced the subject. Well-being could be defined as the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy. There are many challenges for well-being and health with an ageing population. With increasing physical health problems, it is harder to look after oneself, difficult to make positive lifestyle choices and to mix and interact with others. As a result people get lonely, anxious and lose their confidence. These problems are not just restricted to ageing; they often happen at times when people's lifestyle changes, such as moving home, starting new jobs, coping with young children on your own, or later when they grow up and leave home.

Dr Tom ended with suggesting five ways to promote wellbeing:

CONNECT ... BE ACTIVE ... KEEP LEARNING ... TAKE NOTICE ... GIVE.

Remembrance 2018

This year at Remembrance, as always, we will remember all those who lost their lives or suffered as a consequence of any War or conflict. 2018 is especially poignant as, whilst remembering all those who died or suffered in the First World War, we also celebrate the ending of this War - the War that was meant to end all Wars.

Caversham's Service of Remembrance will take place at our War Memorial in Christchurch Meadows by Caversham Bridge at 10.50 am on Sunday 11th November. The President of Caversham Royal British Legion, Mr. Ron Jewitt, will welcome those present and the Service will be conducted by the Chaplain of the branch, Dr. Alison Johnston.

Those Associations (all welcome) who wish to attend should assemble, with their Leaders, in Christchurch Meadows at the Wolsey Road entrance and parade along to the War Memorial. At the end of the Service they will assemble under the supervision of the Leader of the Army Cadet Force in Caversham, proceed along Bridge Street and Church Street then, after the salute, at

The next speakers, Fiona and Matt from Age UK and Michelle Berry, the Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for Well-being Services for Reading Borough Council, then talked about the variety of services and activities Age UK and RBC provide for the community. These range from activities like Walking Football, Adult Jigsaw Clubs, Befriending Services, Lunch Clubs, Money Matter sessions for Older People, Dragon Racing, Pop-in Coffee mornings, and affordable Foot-care at Happy Feet sessions. *Stable'n'Able* is a new Posture, Strength and Balance class, focusing mainly on seated exercises, is to start on Monday afternoons at Caversham Heights Church hall from 1st October - more details from Lucie on 07843 652 754.

During the interval for refreshments, there were opportunities to network and find out about the *Caversham Belleplate Ringers*, playing croquet and to chat to the speakers.

In the last session members of Reading Voluntary Action talked about their work in the community helping to manage the Social Prescribing service and their partnerships between statutory agencies and charities which aim to improve the lives of people in Reading. The group also help connect people who want to volunteer with charities seeking assistance. To conclude the session, the speakers moved around the tables answering questions.

Caversham Library, will turn into Wolsey Road and march to Christchurch Meadows where they will dismiss.

Orders of Service will be distributed at the Service, but if any Group wishes to have them in advance they will be available from the end of October.

For any Group wishing to lay a Wreath these will also be available from that date.

Contact Pauline - email: porkypeppard@hotmail.co.uk Or phone 0118 947 5345.

After the Service and Parade, Royal British Legion Members will be at the Prince of Wales public house in Caversham to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the end of World War One. Brakspear's Brewery have donated beer for the occasion, there will be light refreshments, a raffle and various Poppy items available. It will be 100 minutes, to mark 100 years, with 100 pints at 100 pence. Anyone will be welcome.

All profits will be going to the Poppy Appeal in Caversham.

Remembering a loved one at a time of Remembrance

Two Caversham churches are inviting people to come and remember a loved one in a peaceful service of prayer and reflection. On Sunday November 4th St John's Church on Gosbrook Road and St Peter's on The Warren will remember loved ones who have died. The St John's service starts at 3.00pm while the service at St Peter's is at 6.30pm.

All are welcome on a day called *All Souls* in church calendars.

A week later, on Sunday November 12th St Peter's and St John's will mark Remembrance Sunday, with services beginning at 9.30am and ending in time for worshippers to join the ceremony at the Caversham war memorial. Our sister church St Margaret's, in Mapledurham, will mark Remembrance with a service starting at 10.50am at the war memorial.

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Exhibition at The Caversham Picture Framer

Hannah Elizabeth is a Reading-based design studio. It was launched in 2017 by illustrator Hannah McCague whose love of the natural world and the local environment inspired the collection.

Hannah Elizabeth graduated with a degree in Illustration from Bristol in 2007. Since then she has been working freelance as an illustrator as well as teaching art. Her work is produced digitally using a drawing tablet, providing a contemporary twist to a popular art form. Through her artwork, Hannah hopes to encourage others to connect with wildlife that surrounds them and the places they love. A selection of Hannah's prints illustrating Reading and the surrounding areas will be on show at The Caversham Picture Framer from 17th November to 24th December 2018.

Location: 7, Church Road, Caversham (Across the road from The Griffin public house).



Harvest of the Seasons at Gosbrook Road

The Harvest Festival theme this year was *God's Gifts* to us throughout the year. People were asked to provide items for the food boxes for *Readifood*. The idea being that food items would be placed on an appropriate table for each season.

There were four tables at the front of the church, for *Spring*, *Summer*, *Autumn* and *Winter*. Each table was decorated in the traditional colours: Green for Spring; Yellow for Summer; Orange for Autumn and White with sparkles on for Winter.



Items such as tins of peaches, pineapple, and chocolate biscuits, were put on the *Spring table*.

For the *Summer table* there were tins of corned beef and Spam, peanut butter and other fillings that could be used to make a picnic.

The *Autumn table* had tins of soup, tinned meat pies, pot noodles and spaghetti to name but a few.



with beautiful daffodils, snowdrops, ducklings, and boxing hares included in the *Spring* category. *Summer* had gardens, boats, sea scenes, and "gone fishing". *Autumn* brought a variety of beautiful trees, and cornfields. *Winter* was well represented with a snowy sparkling church, robins, icicles, snowy post boxes and squirrels.

The Revd. David Shaw led the service combining the theme by choosing hymns from all the seasons. David spoke about clearing up plastic at the beach where he spent a holiday week, and concern for our planet. Global warming will have a marked effect on all our lives, and as Christians we need to do what we can to help to reverse the damage already done.

After the service the congregation joined with Caversham Heights Methodist Church for a 'bring and share' lunch which was a very pleasant sociable occasion and enjoyed by all who attended.

Eunice Cooper



Finally the *Winter table* had all the things to make a nice warm stew, tinned steak and kidney pies, meatballs and curries.

The Gosbrook Road Art group provided 43 paintings on the Seasons theme, which the congregation enjoyed looking at after the service. The paintings fitted the theme well,

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History of Reading Society: Amelia Dyer and the Baby Farm Murders

The subject of the September talk was Amelia Dyer and the Baby Farm Murders. The speaker was Angela Buckley who, after a career in teaching modern languages, is now a writer on the subject of crime history. A keen family historian, she is the Chair of the Society of Genealogists.



'Caversham Lock and Lock Keepers cottage'

Humphreys left his mate at the Lock with the parcel and ran to the Borough Police Station at the foot of London Street to report what he had discovered. Later, Humphreys returned to the Lock with a police constable to collect the package and deliver it to the town mortuary.

The mortuary surgeon, Dr William Maurice, examined the infant, a girl aged between 6 months and a year, and concluded she had died of strangulation. A murder investigation was launched by the police; it was led by Superintendent George Tewsley assisted by DC James Anderson and Sergeant Harry James. After a search, more bodies of babies were found in the river at Caversham.

An important clue was discovered on the parcel paper: it bore the faded stamp of the Midland Railway Company with the date 24-10-95 Bristol Temple Meads and was addressed to a Mrs Thomas at Piggott's Road, Caversham. Detective Constable Anderson took the parcel to Reading Railway Station where a clerk remembered it and knew the recipient's real name to be Mrs. Dyer who had moved to Kensington Road, Reading.

Dyer's home was put under observation and enquiries with the neighbours revealed that one had given some string to Dyer on the same day as the child's body was found. On the 3rd April, police arrived at the small terrace house in Kensington Road to arrest Amelia Dyer. A search was made by officers who found: string that was identical to that used to tie the package; the same cord that was used to strangle the child; a box that bore traces of having contained a

corpse; and letters from parents who had put up their children for adoption by Dyer.

Dyer's principal source of income was to care for the children of parents forced to give them up for adoption, usually those born out of wedlock; she received a fee of £10. Many of the children in her care were allowed to die of malnutrition, later, she turned to homicide as a means of disposing of them.

Amelia Dyer was sent for trial at the Old Bailey in London where she was charged with the murders of Helena Fry, Doris Marmon and Harry Simmons. The investigating detectives, after reading the letters found at Kensington Road, concluded that the first body found at Caversham Lock was probably Fry's; she was the illegitimate daughter of a domestic servant. After the judge's summing up the jury took just five minutes to reach a verdict of guilty and she was sentenced to death. Amelia Dyer was hanged at Newgate Prison on 10th June 1896.

At Reading on the 30th March 1896 a gruesome discovery was made in the river Thames when bargeman Charles Humphreys and a colleague noticed a suspicious object floating in the water near the Clappers Weir footbridge at Caversham Lock. Humphreys managed to fish the object out of the river and on closer inspection it was revealed to be a brown paper parcel tied with string. Contained within it was a brick and the body of a baby: the body was wrapped in newspapers and had a cord tied tightly around the neck.



'The Clappers weir looking west'



'Turbulent water downstream of the Clappers weir'



'Amelia Dyer's home at Kensington Road, Reading'

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Rivarate, a decade of making music in Caversham

Rivarate is a well-known choir in Caversham, which originated in Sonning where it had been a popular for many years as a ladies only ensemble. Then, in 2008, the Sonning choir, in effect, closed down. However, a number of committed members wanted to continue singing together and, as many of these were from the Caversham area, they convened a meeting at The Griffin public house in Church Street. A member from Highdown School suggested that her music teacher might be interested and so began Alison Golby's enthusiastic and visionary relationship with Rivarate. A radical decision taken at this meeting was to invite men to join in future. The first man to enlist was Roger Hartley-Booth, who still sings with the choir today.

Thanks to Alison's energetic recruiting drive, forty people attended the first rehearsal in St. Andrew's Church on the first Tuesday of September 2008. Thus was Rivarate in Caversham born. Rosie Parker agreed to be the accompanist but her work commitments meant a successor soon had to be found. Alison approached Pam Asbury, a talented pianist and singer, well known to music lovers in Caversham. And so began a magnificent partnership between Director and Accompanist. By the end of the second year, the choir had grown to seventy five members, with some twenty-five men and, by the summer of the third year, the choir held its first public concert.

Alison's connection ended in 2015 when she and her family moved to Devon. By good fortune, another, gifted musician was attracted to Rivarate and so Sarah Scotchmer became the second Director of Music. As a student, Sarah had studied music at Bristol University and at The Royal College of Music and had recently retired as Head of Music at The Holt School in Wokingham. So began a new blending of vision and leadership between Sarah and Pam.

The choir now meets at the Methodist Church in Highmoor Road, on Tuesday evenings. It is an inclusive, secular choir which incorporates in its repertoire modern and traditional songs and also familiar sacred pieces. There are no formal auditions but prospective members should be able to sing in harmony and sustain a musical note.

The choir recruits new members at this time of year and has a number of places for all four voices. Prospective male members may feel encouraged to apply, knowing that there are currently twenty-six regular tenors and basses. The next concert will be on Saturday 17th November, followed by a free Christmas concert on Tuesday 11th December, both at the Methodist Church Caversham Heights. Details of these performances are on the Rivarate website, as well as information for prospective members who are encouraged to come and observe at a rehearsal before making up their minds about joining. The website is: www.rivarate.org.uk

OBITUARY

Robert (Bob) Aggiss: memorial



Robert Aggiss, a well-known local gardener, died on 17 September at the age of 95 years. Bob was born on 7th July 1923 in the village of Binfield Heath and attended Shiplake School. He went to work for Wessex Electricity (later Southern Electricity) as a junior clerk but when war broke out he enlisted in the army and joined the Tank Regiment. With his country background his was the only tank that kept chickens for fresh eggs and a turkey for Christmas!

Bob returned home to his job and soon after met his future wife Gwen. They married in 1953 and moved to Caversham where they brought up their two boys, David and Peter. Bob was a good sportsman and played football for Shiplake and Cricket for Southern Electricity. He was also a keen gardener and was very successful in Shows and became a pivotal member of the *Caversham Allotment Association*. He became a well respected Judge specializing in Chrysanthemums and would give talks to garden societies, Women's Institute and church groups.

Bob and Gwen attended Binfield Heath Congregational Chapel where Bob was treasurer for many years. He stood-in as organist when required and also looked after the grounds. He retired in 1986 having completed 46 years with Southern Electricity and spent his spare time gardening. Bob reluctantly gave up his allotments four years ago when his wife was diagnosed with dementia and he looked after her at home until she had to go into care. His own health deteriorated this year and Bob was recently admitted to Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice where he passed away peacefully in his sleep. Bob was a popular man, kind and well-loved. He will be sadly missed.

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ENVIRONMENT

The Polygon

In March last year, I wrote about a café in Caversham Road called The Pagoda. This turned out to be what is now called The Gorge, and is on the corner of Richfield Avenue, opposite the Crowne Plaza Hotel. This month I am writing about another café with a strange name, *The Polygon*.

When I came across this photograph, I asked about it in my local Caversham pub, and people of my age and above remembered it well, and remembered exactly where it stood. The building was one of those demolished in the 1960s to make way for St. Martin's Shopping Precinct. Its unusual wedge shape was necessitated by the site, which was on the corner of a pathway called The Cutting. It ran from Church Street to Promenade Road, and the end of it nearest the river is still there. In the 1950s there was a large house set in its own grounds called *Abbotsmead* on one side, and there were allotments on the other. Today, the land on either side has been redeveloped, and runs by the apartment blocks known as *Abbotsmead Place*.

The Polygon Café existed from around 1940 to around 1963. The reason I have to say "around" is that old street directories in the Central Library have been used to find out how long the business was going, and the information in a particular directory may well have been gathered in the year before its publication.

In the 1950s, if you were to walk from the *Crown* pub in Bridge Street round the corner into Church Street, the first building in Church Street would have been the florist's shop of Wise Brothers, followed by the Caversham Telephone Exchange. The florist's shop is long demolished, and its site is now the yard beside the exchange.

After that came Frank Dunster's shoe shop, the house of a Mrs. Hill at No. 27, and No. 29, occupied by J. G. Brooks, a



The Polygon Café: a lost landmark

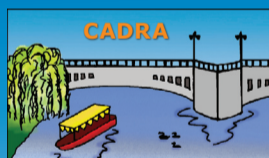
manufacturer of wrought iron. No. 31 was the *Polygon Café*. At first, the café was run by Mrs. Maud E. Holloway, and after 1947 by Mrs. D. Maynard.

Beyond The Cutting were S. H. Ware and Company, flooring contractors, and S. R. Barrance, wholesale drapers, in the building which had once been the Caversham House Academy. Then came the Regal Cinema, which opened in 1938, and closed in 1958. After it closed, the large building, known as Regal House, was occupied by the wholesale sweets and tobacco warehouse of Alfred C. Drew. The Waitrose supermarket was built on the site, opening in 1984.

Fraser and Robinson occupied the three-storey building which is now Waitrose's beer, wines and spirits section, which many will remember as a shop selling beds. Next came Edward Morgan's chemist's shop, now a gent's hairdressers.

There is a well-known French saying that goes, '*Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*' This means something like, '*The more things change, the more they remain the same.*' I am not at all sure that this is always so, but in this case it is. Standing on the site of *The Polygon Café* today, is another café - a branch of Costa Coffee!

Happy Wanderer



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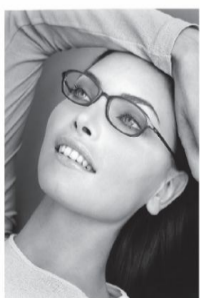
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Mapledurham Playing Fields: an archaeological update

Archaeological surveys have been carried out at Mapledurham Playing Fields over the summer, as part of preparation work required for landscape improvements at the site, and have continued into October.

In June, the Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee approved a Landscape Masterplan for the site, at the same time as agreeing to lease part of the playing fields to the Education and Schools Funding Agency (ESFA) for a permanent new site for the Heights School.

The Council has been working closely with Berkshire Archaeology to survey and record the archaeological landscape of the fields. An initial phase of archaeological surveys took place in late July and August, as part of the pre-work needed for the landscape improvements agreed by the Trustees Sub-Committee.

The recently completed archaeological site investigations identified an early-Roman cattle enclosure and some Roman remains at its western edge, including broken pottery and animal bones dating from the 1st-2nd centuries AD.

Further archaeological investigation is now required of the underlying gravels, to search for Palaeolithic remains. This has involved key specialists who can examine the gravel for Stone Age tools in the hope of providing new insights into this period of human prehistory. The availability of the experts meant that this work took place as a second separate phase starting in October.

Visitors to the fields at the start of October may have noticed a series of deeper exploratory pits. Up to ten 2m x 2m square test pits were dug across the site, each one up 3m deep. The location of these pits did not impact on the site's football pitches.

The work described will contribute to the archaeological understanding of the area, recording any findings and, as is standard in any

pre-development work, will inform the planning submission for the future landscape works agreed by the Sub-Committee.

Separate to the Council's archaeological work, the ESFA is expected to begin its own archaeology investigation work on the footprint of the proposed school site in late 2018.

Cllr Debs Edwards, Chair of The Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee, said: "We are working proactively with Berkshire Archaeology, the statutory planning consultee on archaeology matters within the county, to ensure this site has a thorough archaeological survey before we move on to the next stage of preparatory landscape work. It will be fascinating to see what historical information the survey will reveal about how the land was used in the past. The site investigation work taking place in October and previously over the summer, forms part of the pre-work leading up to a planning submission for the landscape works on this site, as agreed by the Sub-Committee. The latest work is estimated to last around one week, with the planning application potentially submitted early 2019." *Caversham Bridge* will continue to report on developments at this community location.

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Probus

The speaker at the September meeting of the Reading and District Probus club was Brian Skillen whose subject was *A Line in the Sand – the Fall of the Alamo and the Rise of Texas*. The Alamo has been the subject of two films, in 1960 and 2004.

The Alamo in San Antonio in Texas was originally built in the mid-18th century as a Roman Catholic mission, which closed in 1793. It later became a military stronghold, but at that time Texas was part of Mexico. The Texans sought independence from Mexico, and wished to join the United States. In 1836 the Mexicans invaded, and a siege followed which lasted from late-February to early-March.

Eventually the Mexicans took the Alamo, and around 200 Texans died in the battle, along with several hundred Mexican troops. Brian told us of many of the personalities involved, of whom probably the most famous was Davey Crockett.

After the battle, the Texan army rose up and defeated the Mexicans, and Texas became independent of Mexico and later joined the Union. The Alamo was used by the U.S. Army until 1877, when it was abandoned. The remains are now preserved as a museum.

This was a very interesting illustrated talk, in which Brian, an obvious enthusiast for, amongst other subjects, the American Civil War, gave a colourful description of the events of the time.

Probus is a club for retired men, who enjoy a meal once a month in the congenial company of other retired men. Lunch is followed by a talk on a variety of interesting subjects. The club meets at the Caversham Heath Golf Club.

For further information visit the club's website www.probusclub-reading.org.uk New members are welcome; if you are interested in joining, please contact the secretary David Laird on 0118 947 0709.

Chazey WI

St. Andrew's Church Hall was the new venue for the September meeting of Chazey WI. It was very successful with some new faces attending and some previous members returning. In place of a speaker there was a photo competition 'How well do you know Reading' which members enjoyed. Our tea hostesses were kept very busy with refreshments. It was announced that the WI diaries for 2019 had been collected by Julie and were available for collection, or will be available at the next meeting.

Social dates to note are as follows: a day out at the Milestone Museum Basingstoke on 7th November; a visit to the National Needlework Archive at Newbury to see the BFWI Centenary Needlework Exhibition (date to be announced); and a visit to the Mill at Sonning to see *Guys and Dolls* over the Christmas period.

For more information on Chazey WI please email: chazeywi@gmail.com

Caversham WI

Our September meeting was an informal occasion, following the summer break. Over the summer, two members hosted garden parties (both were very lucky with the weather!) and we also helped out with the Caversham Court Gardens tea kiosk. The food theme was carried over, and we celebrated the end of the summer season with home-made apple pies and a *harvest auction* of fresh fruit, vegetables and a few special extras – including a beautiful cake and delicate herb bouquets. We caught up on all the newly organised days out and upcoming WI activities, and discussed what we can do for World Kindness Day on Saturday 3rd November.

At our November meeting we will be hearing about the Thames crossings. And we look forward to welcoming back a couple of ladies that came to visit us for the first time in September.

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 nearby parking and a lift to the first floor meeting room at Church House, Prospect Street. More details can be found online at <https://tinyurl.com/hwjz6zy> or search for *Caversham WI*.

For enquiries please contact our Secretary, on 0118 947 5176.

Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club

We are pleased to announce that on Wednesday 14th November at 6.30 pm we will be holding our open meeting at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road, Caversham, RG4 7BG with our guest, the National Flower Demonstrator, Gill McGregor. The demonstration is called *Christmas Sparkle*. This is the highlight of our annual calendar and what better way to start the Christmas season of festivities than with inspirational floral designs and some refreshments.

We would love to see all of our members, regular attendees and some new faces.

Tickets are £12.00 in advance or £15.00 on the door, and the ticket price includes a light supper.

Please Tel 0118 947 8967 for tickets.

Caversham Horticultural Society

Caversham Horticultural Society's November talk will be given by Nikki Gammans of *Bumblebee Conservation* on the subject of 'Best Plants for Bees'. This talk will be held on Wednesday 14th November at 7.45pm at Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road. Cost to non-members £3.00. Light refreshments available after the talk.

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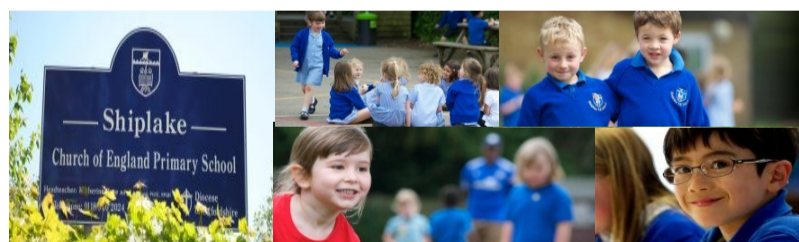
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Aid to the Church in Need: breakfast meeting at Our Lady and St Anne

With a view to developing a series of talks and discussions at Our Lady and St Anne (OLASA) in Caversham, a breakfast meeting was held on Saturday 15th September from 0800am to 0930am. The invited presenter was Nick Fogg MBE who is a representative of *Aid to the Church in Need* (ACN). He took as his theme the idea of '5,000 reasons to hope'. ACN has a global remit to support Christian communities in parts of the world where their existence is challenged. OLASA already has a *Friends of the Holy Land* (FHL) group so an opportunity to hear about the wider field of operations of ACN is always welcome and instructive. Both FHL (within Palestine and the West bank and Gaza) and ACN (more widely, but also very active in the Middle East) complement each other, so the theme of the talk was relevant for both perspectives.

The meeting started with a continental breakfast in the Cenacle giving those attending

a chance to take on some physical nourishment before moving to the spiritual. Edwin Raj as co-ordinator of the event introduced Nick Fogg MBE, who is involved with ACN as the Diocesan Secretary and is by profession a journalist, writer and consultant as well as being active in many community focused projects as a Councillor for Wiltshire Council.

Nick's talk set out to provide an orientation to the work of ACN which was founded in Germany in 1947 by the Norbertine priest Father Werenfried van Straaten. ACN is a Pontifical Foundation of the Roman Catholic Church and supports Catholics and other Christians wherever they are persecuted, threatened, undermined or destroyed and suffer need as a result. In the early days of ACN the focus was on supporting the Church behind the Iron Curtain. In the modern era persecution continues in many forms and ACN has responded by supporting thousands of projects since its foundation. Like *Christian Aid* and *Cafod*, the ACN has a global reach. It works across the Middle East too which is the historic homeland of the Christian Church and it is in this region that its interests intersect with those of the FHL whose target is the surviving Christian communities in the Palestinian West Bank, Gaza and Jordan. Nick talked about some of his experiences in the Middle East region and provided thoughtful insights to all those concerned about the welfare and future of Christian communities in that region. Iraq, Syria and Egypt are all countries where the church suffers from persecution. As the FHL seeks to foster the welfare of Christians in the historic core of the Holy Land we all must be aware and vigilant of the condition of those communities elsewhere and of whatever Christian denomination.

Monies raised from the meeting have gone to support the parish conference of the Society of St Vincent Paul. Meetings such as this one provide another means of linking the parish community to the wider world and to more awareness of highly relevant themes. (Stephen A. Roberts)

St John's Christmas Fair and Fun

St John's Christmas Fair and Fun is to be held on Saturday 17th November 2018, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at St John's Church, Gosbrook Road, Caversham. Stalls will be selling homemade cakes and preserves, toys, jewellery and books, and there will be a tombola. There will be a raffle, and you can relax afterwards with a cup of tea or coffee. New this year, there will be games and craft activities for all the family in Caversham Hall nearby. Admission is free.

St Peter's Christmas Market

This year St Peter's Christmas Market will take place in the church on Saturday 8th December from 10.00 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. to support the DEC Indonesia Tsunami Appeal. There will be wonderful handcrafted gifts - ideal for presents, homemade foods - cakes, puddings and pies, biscuits and chutneys as well as wreaths and table decorations. Enjoy mulled apple juice and coffee with seasonal refreshments in the Vanderstegan Cafe. There will also be Sideshows for children, a Raffle, a Quiz, Tombola, 'Guess the weight of the Cake', Hoopla, Buzzwire, Treasure Island and more. *Caversham Through the Year* calendars will be available. PLEASE COME, bring your friends and family, and help to rebuild the shattered lives of the people of Indonesia.

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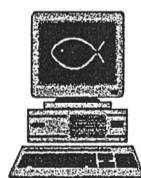
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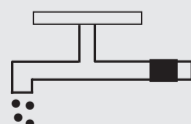
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