

## ON YOUR BIKE

... and find new corners of Emmer Green and Caversham

by Phil Chatfield

IT IS MORE than ten weeks since the COVID-19 controls came in as I write. Although we have had some rain in the last few days, the weather has mostly been hot and dry, and people are now concerned about drought. It is difficult to remember we were worried about flooding in February!

Many of us have continued to use our exercise time as an opportunity to explore our local area. Even people who have lived here most of their lives have discovered corners of Caversham and Emmer Green they had not been to before. A number of friends have commented on how fortunate we are to live here.

I have noticed many more cyclists about in recent weeks. I met a friend who was trying out her bike for the first time in ten years. When I called in at AW Cycles, I was told they had been very busy and had few bikes left to sell. The government has encouraged local authorities to improve provision for cyclists and pedestrians, and Reading Borough Council has proposals for Caversham reported on *Page 5*.

Gardeners have been very busy and plant sales have been a feature of recent months. Caversham Allotment Holders and Gardens Association raised £400 for

NHS charities in May sales at their allotments and in a South View Avenue front garden featured *On this page*. WaterAid has benefitted from two plant sales. In Courtney Drive, Cathy Glenney raised over £130, and Pam and Phil Chatfield raised £1000 in their extended sale, with the generous support of Neil Asbury at Caversham Homecrafts. Local gardeners were relieved when Playhatch garden centre re-opened.

The Thursday evening celebration of key workers has ended, but there are still many posters and pictures in our front windows paying tribute to their efforts. In fact some are starting to fade now after so many weeks. A new feature on the streets is the appearance of painted pebbles and stones. A 'Stone Snake' has appeared on Highmoor Road outside the Methodist Church, placed there by the parents and children of Caversham Heights Pre-School. They have just re-opened in a very limited way, as have many of our schools.

Another feature has been boxes of toys and other items which are being given away at gateways. Normally these would have gone to a charity shop. This month we feature the work of three local charities and voluntary organisations and the impact of the lockdown on them. See *pages 14 and 15*.

Local resident Richard Heyes, who died in April, was very involved in one of these, Caversham Good Neighbours. See his obituary on *Page 13*. Changes have been made to our website to include information on local people and this has an obituary section. See [www.cavershambridge.org:5154/archives/category/obituaries](http://www.cavershambridge.org:5154/archives/category/obituaries) or select 'Obituaries' from the 'Local People' Menu on our home page. Here you will find a personal reflection on Richard by Peter Vallance, former Chair of Caversham Good Neighbours. This part of our website has also been used to publish an extended version of the *page 4* obituary of Len David, organist and choirmaster at St John the Baptist church.

Churches like St John's have also had to adjust to changed circumstances. The buildings may be closed, but the churches live on. See *page 6*.

continued on page 3

## Capture summer in Caversham

by the Editors

LAST month we published details of the winning entry in our Spring photo competition. The best entries can be viewed on our web site at [www.cavershambridge.org](http://www.cavershambridge.org). This month we have another entry, a photo of the family pet, Dazzle, taken by Caitlin Garratt, aged 12, in Caversham on 13 April 2020. Dazzle was excited because Caitlin was playing in the garden with him, rather than her going to school.



Excited Dazzle

photo Caitlin Garratt

Our summer competition is now open, with a £25 John Lewis Gift Card as the prize. The closing date is 1 August 2020. Can you capture the essence of summer in Caversham? Perhaps you can picture an event or activity which reflects this strange and unique time.

Please state where and when your photo was taken, and include the story behind it. Images featuring people are welcome, especially if they are engaged in some form of activity. But you must have their consent to the use of the photo and provide evidence of this. All entries should be taken in and around Caversham and Emmer Green between May and August 2020.

For full terms and conditions, go to [www.cavershambridge.org](http://www.cavershambridge.org)



Colin Froud and plant sale for NHS charities

photo A Froud

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# Caversham Clergy

## ANGLICAN

St Barnabas  
Rev'd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road.  
Tel: 947 8239. [www.saintbarnabas.org.uk](http://www.saintbarnabas.org.uk)

## St Andrew

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.  
Tel: 947 2788  
[www.standrewscaversham.org](http://www.standrewscaversham.org)

## Caversham Thameside Ministry

St Peter, St Margaret, St John  
Rev'd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Road,  
Caversham RG4 7AD  
Tel: 9479505  
[rector@ctmparish.org.uk](mailto:rector@ctmparish.org.uk)

Rev'd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331810

Rev'd Judith Ryder Tel: 9473783

Rev'd Andy Storch Tel: 07365 555 905

## CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (LEP)

(Anglican, Methodist, Baptist and URC)  
Contact: Dr Alison Johnston  
Tel: 0118 947 5152 [www.cpvc.org.uk](http://www.cpvc.org.uk)

## METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev'd Martin Beukes, 72 Highmoor Road.  
Tel: 0118 947 2223  
Rev'd D Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

## CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Colin Baker  
Church office tel 0118 954 5353  
Email: [secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk](mailto:secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk)

## RIVERSIDE CHURCH (Reading)

[www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk](http://www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk)

## GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)  
Pastor Keith Saynor  
[www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk](http://www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk) Tel 9474529

## ROMAN CATHOLIC

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

## St Michael

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

## NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev'd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009

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# TALKING POINT

by Father Patrick Daly  
Our Lady and St Anne



## Empty Churches and Communities Full of Faith

Since 20 March 2020 all our churches have been empty. They have been empty even when they ought to have been full. The silence has weighed heavily on the hands of those clergy who, to check that the heating was still functioning or that no one had left the lights on, popped their heads around the door. Our Catholic bishops requested that their priests continue to offer Mass in the church every day and, even in Holy Week and the Easter Triduum, the liturgy continued to be celebrated at Our Lady and St Anne.

Some churches have live-streamed their Sunday and daily services, others have not. And yet the church was empty, not even the rustle of the legendary church mouse disturbed the silence. A restaurant is a particularly lifeless place without the busy, merry chatter of patrons; a school is an eerie echo-chamber without the animated, excited buzz of children; and a church seems particularly adrift of its moorings when, on the Lord's Day, no one but the priest/parson or minister is present.

Silence is, of course, an integral part of all our religious traditions: monks live largely in silence, Trappist monasteries are precisely sought after because they are so quiet and, in the Reformed tradition, what Catholics call meditation or private prayer is often referred to as 'quiet time'. And it may well be that soon - even before the July *Caversham Bridge* goes to press - our churches may again be allowed to open their doors for private prayer.

Nonetheless, it is worth reflecting on what our experience of closed church doors has taught us. It is worth remembering that most of our churches are empty most of the time. I occasionally wander into Dorchester Abbey or Malvern Priory and love being alone there. And then I realise that I am not alone because, in a unique way, this is God's house, the prayer of past generations seeps out of the ancient stonework, our forefathers in the faith were baptised, married and buried from here, and they worshipped God here too in prayer and song. The same feeling I have when I wander into Our Lady and St Anne early in the morning or in the night hours. But then I remember that, as far back as the earliest pages of the Old Testament, God insisted that he was a 'god of the living'. His house comes alive only when the people are gathered there. *Ecclesia*/Church means gathering, assembly.

The buildings are important, many of them are structures of immense artistic and architectural beauty and, given they belong primarily to God, they are also houses which belong to us all. The parson, priest or minister may be the custodian, but he/she looks after our house as a caretaker. We do have ZOOM, we do have Facetime, and we have remained in touch through post and telephone. Covid-19, were it to arrive in the 1980s, would have had a different impact on our church life. And yet we are a little like the exiled Jews in Babylon, we find it painful to remember Zion let alone sing its songs, and we continue to pray to the Lord to deliver us from bondage (Ps. 137/125). These psalms can be our prayer, but it is important to recall that, when the exiles returned to Jerusalem, the first thing they did was re-build the Temple.

Once we return to our various churches, the re-building project will begin and yet, unlike the Jews of old, we have the additional advantage of knowing *we are the living stones* and that, while the church buildings were closed, we were still the Church, we were still the members of the Body of Christ.



## CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS

### 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.

[www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk](http://www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk)  
**0118 948 3466**

**Monday to Friday 9.30am – 11.30am**  
Church House 59 Church Street Caversham RG4 8AX



# CHURCH SERVICES

At the time of writing, our churches closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and normal worship is not possible. However, church communities are very much alive and active in different ways. They have adapted to the new circumstances very rapidly.

Most churches have a range of on-line services, house groups and social meetings, using YouTube, Zoom and other web based systems

For current information, see the web sites for each of the churches. You will find links to each of these through the Churches Together in Caversham web site at:  
[www.cavershamchurch.org.uk](http://www.cavershamchurch.org.uk)

Details of some services are listed below.

## CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM:

Sunday  
09:30 – You Tube service - [www.youtube.com/channel/UCYMgve\\_d64enHsm1FUfwntA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYMgve_d64enHsm1FUfwntA)  
10:15 – Zoom service – <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84366839832?pwd=M2xJSUtFbGkycG1DbEFxQ1JGYWRsQT09>  
11:15 – Zoom service - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82793512985>  
Wednesday  
09:30 – Zoom morning Prayer - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/786384026>

## ST. BARNABAS, EMMER GREEN:

Sunday 09.30 - Morning Service on St. Barnabas Facebook & Website  
Monday 14.00 - Busybees - for pre-school children and their carers on Youtube  
Details of both can be found on their website - [www.saintbarnabas.org.uk](http://www.saintbarnabas.org.uk)

## ST ANDREW'S:

Sunday – 18.00 - Service on the “St Andrew's Caversham” YouTube channel  
Tuesday – 20.00 - Compline service by Zoom. E-mail the vicar to join.  
[www.standrewscaversham.org](http://www.standrewscaversham.org)

## CAVERSHAM METHODIST CHURCH

Sunday – 10.30 – Zoom service  
E-mail the Minister for details  
[martin.beukes@methodist.org.uk](mailto:martin.beukes@methodist.org.uk)

## CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH:

A link is placed on their website each week at:  
[www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk)  
and on their YouTube channel  
[www.youtube.com/user/CavershamBaptist](http://www.youtube.com/user/CavershamBaptist)  
Live broadcast starts at 10.30am each Sunday

## CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH

Sunday – 11.00 – Livestreaming on YouTube  
Details on their web site at:  
<https://cpvc.org.uk:5152/live-stream>

## GRACE CHURCH

Check their web site for details at:  
[www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk](http://www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk)

## ROMAN CATHOLIC

See their web site for Father Patrick's weekly homilies and details of opening for private prayer at:  
[www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk)

## 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](mailto:secretary@ctmparish.org.uk)

### ST BARNABAS

St Barnabas Centre  
Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am-10.30am  
Tel: 947 6310 Website: [www.saintbarnabas.org.uk](http://www.saintbarnabas.org.uk)

## Caversham Bridge

The Caversham Bridge is available in Caversham at Caversham Emporium and Homecrafts in Church Street and in Emmer Green at the True Food Community Co-Op in Grove Road, opposite St Barnabas church.

The annual subscription price is £5.00 to have the paper delivered to your home monthly. E-mail [circulation@cavershambridge.org](mailto:circulation@cavershambridge.org) with your name and address.

### Future editions:

Contributions for the August 2020 issue should be submitted by 29 June. The date for the September edition is 27 July. These should be e-mailed to [editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)

Advertising copy for the August 2020 issue should be sent to [advertising@cavershambridge.org](mailto:advertising@cavershambridge.org) by 23 June. The date for the September 2020 issue is 21 July.



## Write to the Editors

WE ARE always pleased to receive feedback and ideas for the Caversham Bridge. We may not have space to print everything we receive, but liked this one! The following e-mail came to us 3 June 2020.

*Hello Editors, congratulations and huge thanks for the June 2020 issue of Caversham Bridge.*

*Lots of colour and photographs to cheer us up in these difficult times. Inspiring stories of Caversham and Emmer Green volunteers contributing to the national effort against the pandemic in so many innovative ways. Encouraging accounts of our Caversham businesses changing gear to meet the challenges of supplying the community during the lockdown. Plus parish and community news, tales of far-off lands and of the local environment, useful tips - and our favourite Happy Wanderer... what a treat!*

*Thank you, all involved in producing and distributing Caversham Bridge.!*

*Greetings, keep safe, looking forward to the July issue already, Vickie Abel*

We hope we can meet your expectations for future editions!

You can contact us at:

[editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)



## On your bike in Emmer Green and Caversham

continued from page 1

Last month we reported how some local businesses have adapted. Some of our restaurants and pubs have now re-opened to provide a takeaway service. Customers at the Fox and Hounds on Gosbrook Road have taken advantage of the good weather and the proximity of Westfield Park to enjoy some 'socially distanced' refreshments. For one new business this has been exceptionally challenging. 'The Collective', a new cafe and shop on the corner of Church Street and St Anne's Road is run by local residents Sam and Susie. They took on the lease for the property in December, little knowing how the pandemic would affect their plans.

They finally opened as a takeaway coffee shop on 4 June and reported a very busy first day. For more information see their web site [www.thecollectivecaversham.co.uk](http://www.thecollectivecaversham.co.uk).

Many of you will have stories to share of this strange time. Perhaps you have discovered a part of Caversham and Emmer Green new to you, or noticed changes in local wildlife. How has your local environment changed in the last few months and what are your hopes for our community as we come out of lockdown?

Send us your experiences and thoughts for inclusion in our next edition. You can e-mail them to:

[editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)



Mosaic photos P Chatfield

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Alternatively copies of this paper can be purchased from:  
Caversham Homecrafts in Church Street and in Emmer Green  
at the True Food Community Co-Op in Grove Road,  
opposite St Barnabas church.



# Motorcycles and Music – Len David

24 December 1948 – 26 May 2020

Leonard John David was born on 24 December 1948 in Caversham (Surley Row). He was born with two webbed fingers on each hand, and as a toddler underwent cutting edge surgery to have them separated. Who would have imagined he would grow up to be an accomplished pianist!

He attended Katesgrove and Cintra schools and was always up to mischief. He and his friends once used weed killer to blow up lampposts, and a chemistry experiment culminated in one of the gang being taken to hospital on the back of a motorbike. Bikes remained a passion throughout Len's life, along with his MG Magnette ZA.

On his first 'date' with Rachel, Len suggested a ride on his bike to a folk concert, but en route a van pulled out in front of them, and they both ended up in hospital with fractured legs. Len later commented that when he met Rachel's dad for the first time, he was worried her father might break his other leg! They married on 11 August 1973.

Len's working life was largely in computer networking with BT, but music played a huge part in his life. He learned piano from the age of 11, and added organ, clarinet and saxophone when he attended the London College of Music, where he was taught music theory by Andrew Lloyd Webber's father. He became rehearsal pianist for the Sainsbury Singers, occasionally appearing on stage with them, notably in Showboat. He also played piano for The Millstones Dance Band and led several choirs. In 1982 he became organist/choirmaster at St John the Baptist Caversham, a job which he loved. In addition to playing on Sundays and at weddings and funerals, he wrote and performed with other musicians a number of Requiems, performed the Easter musical Once

Upon a Tree, and was one of four organists who accompanied a combined Caversham Churches choir at St Andrews when over twelve hours they sang non-stop all 150 psalms.

Above all, Len was a family man. A loving husband to Rachel; and a wonderful, patient, funny – if sometimes annoying! – dad to Joni, William and Max, and their partners El, Jade and Hannah; and a proud grand-dad of Ariyah, Effie and Illy.

Len was a hugely popular and dearly loved member of St John's. He had a quiet but profound faith in God, and a desire to lead others in praise and worship of him. He will be hugely missed.

*"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."*  
(Psalm 116:15)



Len David and St John's choir

photo P Cuthbert

## Blessed be your name

by Anna Clarke



DEATH is such a hard topic to talk about and yet at the moment it seems to be all around us - on the news, in our communities and, for some, affecting us personally.

I was reminded recently of a Christian song called *Blessed Be Your Name* by Matt Redman. As I was listening to it, it struck me that this must be one of the easiest songs to sing, yet one of the hardest to live out.

OK, we probably don't have too many problems with the first verse: *'Blessed be your name when the sun's shining down on me'*. When life's going well it's easy to acknowledge God and *'turn His blessings back to praise'*. But how do we react when the real test comes? *'On the road marked with suffering, when there's pain in the offering'*, do we still cry out *'blessed be Your name'*?

The book of Lamentations in the Bible can be a bit of a depressing read. The title doesn't exactly sell itself as a page-turner! Lamentation – meaning 'the passionate expression of grief or sorrow'. But at the heart of the sorrowful poems which fill this book we find a flicker of hope showing how we can live through times of grief and pain.

Jeremiah pours out his troubles and then says: *'Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness'* (Lamentations 3: 21-23).

When we struggle to feel God, when we feel overcome by grief or when we feel weak and unable to carry on, we can

find the strength to move forward in remembering God's truths. His love is so great that we will not be consumed, His compassions never fail, He is unfalteringly faithful. When our changeable emotions lead us to believe that we're not strong enough, we have to rely on his unchanging grace.

A while back, I was struggling to come to terms with the loss of a friend. I found wisdom and comfort from a colleague who described a room to me: the light was on, I could see a table and some chairs. She dimmed the light: I could still just about make out the table and chairs. She turned the light out completely. "Are the tables and chairs still there?", she asked. "Well... of course!" I answered. I still believed that the tables and chairs were there because of what I had seen previously. This person helped me to see that it's not so different with God – what He reveals to us in the light is very much still true in the dark! And so by clinging onto the truths of God revealed to us in the light we can have the faith to move forward in periods of darkness.

To come back to Redman's song, the bridge says: *'You give and take away, You give and take away, my heart will choose to say, Lord BLESSED be Your name'*. As God places certain people around us to strengthen us and to help us grow, so too He also takes those who love Him to their home with Him. Grief does not lead us to naturally cry out *"blessed be Your name"*, but as Redman identifies here, it is a choice: *'my heart will CHOOSE to say, Lord blessed be Your name'*.

So my prayer for all those in our community who have lost loved ones and are grieving is they feel the strength that comes from choosing to turn to God, knowing He is a God who will walk with them every step of the way, who is always with them – through the bad as well as the good.



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# It's all happening

## National Trust Properties reopening

IN OUR May edition we highlighted local National Trust properties. As of mid-June, a number of these have partially reopened. Advanced booking is required, and only the gardens and parks are open. They are making some changes so they can open cafes and shops safely. Details of which facilities will be open are available on their website. The houses themselves remain closed and social distancing guidelines must be met. Properties open in our area include Basildon Park, Greys Court, The Vyne and Cliveden.

For detail of opening times and booking, see their web site: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-book-your-visit-and-what-to-expect](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/how-to-book-your-visit-and-what-to-expect)

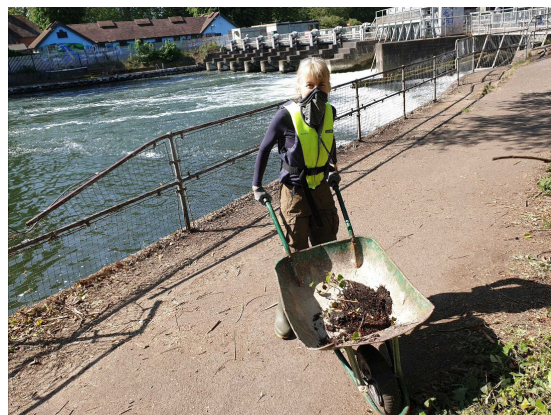


Basildon Park Garden

*A Palmer, National Trust*

## Reading Hydro

READING Hydro plan to install two Archimedes Screw turbines at the View Island end of Caversham Weir to generate enough electricity for 90 homes. After gaining final



planning approvals from Reading Borough Council and the Environment Agency, they started the initial clearance and preparation works on the site at the end of May. Two of the Directors, Tony and Sophie, with the assistance of members, Simon and Steve, started the tree clearing and wildlife box installation, as well as test dig work needed prior to any construction, in the required socially-distanced manner. Their plan for June is to continue to lay out the groundwork for all the measurements required to start building the fish pass and turbines, as well as to finish the clearance work required for site access and building.

For more details, see: [www.hydro.readinguk.org](http://www.hydro.readinguk.org).

screen cinema in part of their existing buildings behind Waitrose. The site, at 51 Church Street and Archway House, is currently vacant offices and a gym. The first and second floors of the property would be converted to a cinema, with the ground floor used as offices. The application includes a proposal to replace the existing crab apple tree close to the cinema entrance with a purpose-built tree pit and tree to the west of the current position.

See planning application 192009 on the Reading Borough Council web site for details: [www.planning.reading.gov.uk](http://www.planning.reading.gov.uk)

## One way to go

NEW provisions to encourage cycling and walking form part of plans to respond to the coronavirus pandemic in Reading. Some roads will be re-allocated, possibly permanently, in a series of schemes put forward by Reading Borough Council in response to government guidance released on 9 May 2020. This said local authorities should swiftly make significant changes to their roads to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians, as social distancing measures are likely to remain in place for a considerable amount of time in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim is to provide an alternative to driving and the use of buses.

The proposals also aim to help the council to meet its 2030 carbon neutral target and reduce air pollution and congestion, all key aspects of the council's local transport plans. Traffic and nitrogen dioxide levels both fell by around a third as the pandemic constraints reduced traffic levels in the town.

In Caversham, the main changes will be a one-way system down Westfield Road and along part of Gosbrook Road, along with new bicycle lanes. This is due to be completed before the end of June. Changes are also planned for Reading Bridge, removing one of the town bound lanes over the bridge to create space for cycle lanes.

The council is currently consulting on its draft Transport Strategy 2036. If you want to have your say on transport plans in the town, you have until 30 August to comment on the consultation at:

[www.reading.gov.uk/transport2036](http://www.reading.gov.uk/transport2036).

See the Reading Borough Council web site for more on the planned changes: [www.news.reading.gov.uk/more-space-for-walking-cycling](http://www.news.reading.gov.uk/more-space-for-walking-cycling)

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## Cinema for Caversham?



Proposed cinema entrance photo P Chatfield

THE OWNERS of St Martins centre in Caversham, Hermes (which manage pension funds on behalf of BT and the Post Office), have submitted new plans for a small, three



# Churches escape their buildings



by Martyn Strong

The 'lockdown' response to the Covid-19 pandemic has affected almost every aspect of life. For the church community it has resulted in the closure of buildings and suspension of normal church services. But this does not mean the churches are furloughed – they are still very active, although they have had to adapt to changed circumstances very quickly.

At Caversham Baptist Church, our first response was to ask how we could continue to care for people and keep in contact with one another. The leadership team and, in particular, our Pastor, made sure contacts were maintained – initially by phone. We are now using both phone and e-mail to keep in contact, and we are delivering around 10 DVDs of the service every week. Volunteers have helped with shopping, hospital and clinic visits and collecting prescriptions.

We then turned our attention to our services. In the past we had shared funerals and baptisms over the internet, especially when people had not been able to travel from abroad. We had the equipment already in place, cameras and microphones, and the infrastructure to broadcast from the church. So we gave it a try on 22 March, with the service available live through YouTube. The service was viewed by more than

100 people on the day and the recorded service was accessed around 400 more times over the next week. This should be compared with our normal congregation size of around 70-80 people.

We chose YouTube as the medium for our services for a number of reasons. Not only was it the system we were familiar with, but it is more accessible than the other alternatives. It also allows both a live broadcast and a facility for the recorded service to be viewed later. The disadvantage is a lack of interaction, which Zoom and Facebook both support. However, people can text prayer requests in during the service, allowing a degree of interaction.

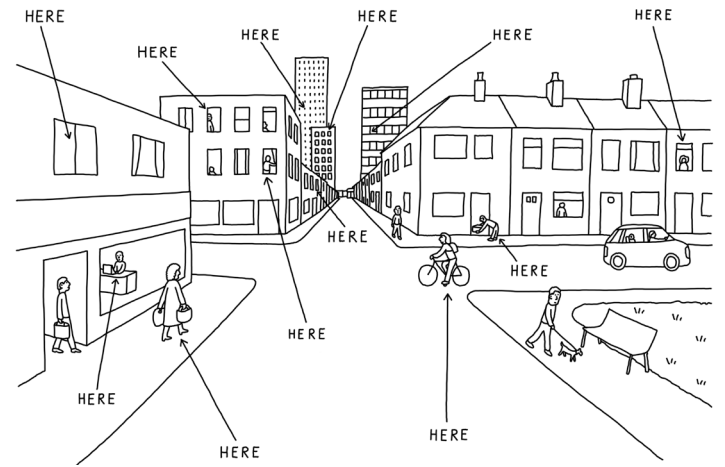
We were determined to produce programmes with both the sound and visual elements of a good quality. For example, Bible readings were recorded by individual church members and surrounded with attractive graphics on screen. In addition to YouTube, we also have the facility to produce DVDs of the service for those unable to access the internet. We have even made the services available on Amazon 'Alexa'! One consequence of having the service on-line has been participation from people around the country and from as far away as Thailand and the Philippines.

The on-line services are complemented by weekly notices, a mid-week bulletin with a prayer or Bible reading, and our Facebook page. We also have three home groups which are now meeting using Zoom. The leadership team is meeting using another system, Microsoft Team. In everything we have done, we have made sure we comply with the social distancing rules.

Perhaps the biggest challenge so far has been the production of a service for Pentecost, when we celebrate the foundation of the church. The churches in Caversham had planned a joint, open air service in Christchurch Meadows. As this was clearly not possible, Churches Together in Caversham decided on a pre-recorded on-line service. Each church was then able to use this as part of their regular on-line Sunday morning act of worship.

In response to the pandemic our churches have indeed 'escaped' from their buildings. Many are reporting increases in the number of people attending their on-line services. Individuals have learned how to use their laptops, tablets and mobile phones to access services and meetings. The church community has, in general, adapted remarkably quickly to the current constraints. The question we are now asking ourselves

## WHERE THE CHURCH IS



is 'where do we go from here?' At the time of writing, it is not clear when we will be able to meet in our buildings again. But, when we do, we will have to decide how to use technology into the future. Will we continue to broadcast services? Some people will want to have the choice.

Having shown what we can do, we have raised expectations. Suddenly the future for our churches is looking quite different and there are opportunities to reach out to society in a way not possible in the past.



Pentecost People

photo M Strong

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# Happy Wanderer tells the story of...

## *The healing Hart's Tongue Fern*

HERE'S a curious plant that you won't have to go far to see. In fact, there are some luxuriant plants in the wall by the staff car park behind Caversham Library, where they were photographed at the end of May. It also grows below the step of my back door, on the shady and damper side of the house. It's a plant that likes lime, and the lime mortar in old walls.

In sunnier and drier situations, the leaves grow about six inches long, like those at the back of Caversham Library. In damp and shady woods above the River Thames, they'll grow a good foot in length. But the longest ones I have seen were growing among the rocks in the limestone gorges of the Derbyshire Dales, over two feet long.

It is a fern but, unlike other ferns in this country, the leaves are not divided. They have rounded lobes on either side of the stems at the base, and then the edges are more or less parallel until, near the end, when they come to a point. I have to admit here that I've never seen a hart when it's had its tongue out, but presume that the fern was named by old country folk who had.

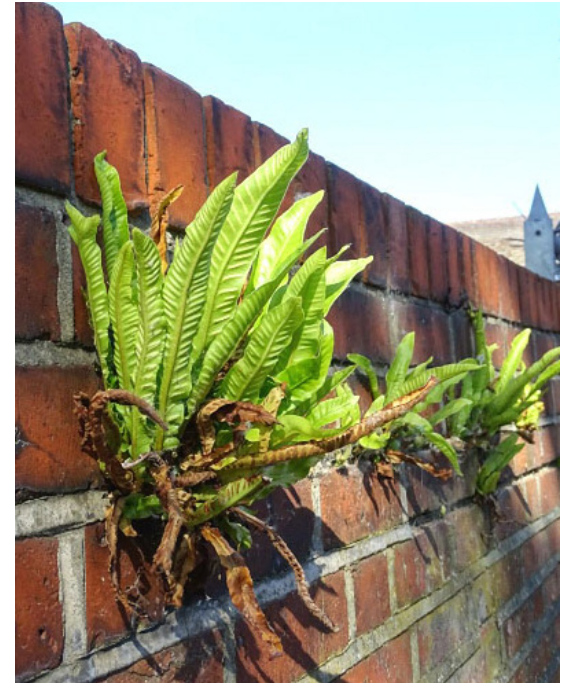
Since it's a fern, it doesn't flower. It sheds spores rather than seeds, which are so small as to be invisible to the naked eye, and they float around in air currents – which means that a fern can turn up in any suitable location. A spore, if it lands in a favourable damp spot, then roots itself and becomes a tiny green scale, technically called a prothallus. If you've ever

grown ferns in pots, you may have noticed the tiny scales. It is now that the sexual part of the plant's reproduction takes place. Presumably it could be seen through a microscope, though I was a bit disappointed with what's easily findable on the Internet. The male cells, on one side of the prothallus, migrate to the other side where the female cells are, lashing their tails in the film of moisture to propel themselves. With that accomplished, the fern can begin to grow.

The spores are carried in parallel lines on the undersides of the leaves. Here you can see them beginning to develop and, with luck, by the end of the summer, they will have turned brown, become more noticeable, and begun shedding spores.

In folk medicine it was believed that the leaves helped heal burned and ulcerated skin. They were fastened round the damaged areas, with the spores on the outside, the notion behind this probably being that the smooth leaf surface would soothe the hurt.

There is an old legend concerning this fern. In St. Luke's Gospel, 9:58, we read that "foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." The Hart's Tongue Fern obliged, and formed a pillow for Our Lord and, as a result, two hairs from his head run through each leaf-stalk. If you break a stalk, as I just have to make sure, you'll soon see the brown 'hairs'.



Hart's Tongue Fern

photo Happy Wanderer

## A breath of fresh air

by Pat Williams

WHAT a great pleasure during the time golf was not being played to be able to walk freely on our local golf courses. I was able to see the first blossom on the trees, bluebells, cowslips and the new leaves on the trees. Many Red Kites could be seen and Skylarks could be heard. People told me they had seen rabbits and

muntjacs, though sadly I did not. I did see many walkers with or without dogs, children playing in the bunkers and families just sitting in the sun enjoying the fresh air.

I gather that no vandalism had taken place, which I expect was a relief to the management and members of the clubs. At a time when many other courses were closed to the public local people were very lucky to have this facility for exercise while social distancing, and I thank the members and managers of the clubs.

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## Development on course

by Phil Chatfield

ACCORDING to campaign group Keep Emmer Green, the land at Reading Golf Club has not been sold. However, they report the club have entered into a 10 year agreement with Fairfax Properties Ltd giving them the rights to apply for planning permission on the whole of the course and, if approved for any part of the land, to broker the sale to a house builder. A £6 million advance has been paid, which will be repaid, together with interest, if there are sufficient proceeds from the sale of all or part of the course.

The most recent information from Keep Emmer Green, dated 2 June states no planning applications have yet been made to either Reading Borough Council or South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

The Reading Local Plan for the period to 2036, approved in November 2019, includes a small area of land (3.75ha) for between 90 and 130 homes, together with a provision for healthcare, a replacement clubhouse and subject to the

future provision of golf on the remaining club land. Since the public exhibition in February, the Golf Club and Fairfax have revised their plan, releasing a new indicative layout for 260 homes on the land in Reading.

**'...a new indicative layout for 260 homes...'**

The SODC Emerging Local Plan is due for examination by a Government Inspector starting 14 July. It does not include any provision for homes to be built on the golf club land within SODC, despite a request from the club. However Reading Golf Club have submitted a case for the Plan to be amended to include up to 350 dwellings on their land within South Oxfordshire. Details can be found on the SODC website:

[www.southoxon.gov.uk](http://www.southoxon.gov.uk)

For more information from Keep Emmer Green, see their web site at:

[www.keepeimmergreen.com](http://www.keepeimmergreen.com)

Report based on information from Keep Emmer Green



## ENVIRONMENT

# Homes for Wildlife



Holly Blue

photo BugBlog - Africa Gomez

by Tricia Marcousie

We'll be wandering around our local area and spending time in the garden a lot more than usual this summer. So please spend a little time planning homes for wildlife.

The usual short article on wildlife gardening advises planting flowers for pollinators to provide pollen and nectar from early spring to late autumn, and that is a wonderful thing to do. The Royal Horticultural Society provides loads of advice and a great list of plants on [www.rhs.org.uk](http://www.rhs.org.uk)

However, providing food for the adults won't boost numbers up to levels seen in

the past. To do that, we have to provide places for them to breed.

This is where it gets complicated. Each species has its own timetable and preferred food plants and/or nest locations and some of these require changes to the way we garden.

The first job is to work out which species are already visiting your garden, and which additional ones you see in the locality that might be enticed in if the perfect home is provided. If you have a decent camera, it is often easier to take several pictures of the target from above, below and resting, and then look up the species online or using a field guide when back home. There are great online resources for this. Try [www.ukbutterflies.co.uk](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk) or [www.bumblebeeconservation.org/identify-a-bumblebee](http://www.bumblebeeconservation.org/identify-a-bumblebee)

Look up the species requirements for a good home, and decide whether this is something that you are willing to offer and are happy to make the necessary changes.

Consider the Holly Blue butterfly. This species has two broods each year (sometimes three). In April, the first set of butterflies hatch from pupae that have spent the winter on ivy plants. These fly to holly bushes and lay eggs on the growing flower shoots. The caterpillars hatch, gorge on the flower shoots and make pupae. Later on in August/September these hatch, fly to ivy with shoots

**continued on page 9**

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## Wildlife takes a bath

by William Cecil

MY BIRDBATH is a constant source of joy, puzzlement, and exasperation. It started off as a conventional piece of garden furniture. Solid Corinthian column, decorated with concrete ivy, two field mice, a snail and a fat frog. The flat top of the column was crowned with a solid concrete bowl which just sat there until one day someone – who could that have been? – knocked it off and it shattered. This bowl was replaced by a succession of ceramic substitutes, which all met the same fate. Eventually I settled for prosaic plastic, held in place by a heavy boulder, sitting in the water.



My bird bath photo W Cecil

This rocky island is very popular with visitors to my garden who, after enjoying a splash around, use it for sunbathing to dry off their wet feathers.

Robin loves the birdbath. Indeed, he regards it as his own. The blackbird drops in for a regular rinse down, and the tits take a bath whenever they have the chance while Robin's away.

One mystery to me was the number of honey bees who congregated in the birdbath, then dried themselves out on the boulder. At times in April and May, it was more a bee-bath than a birdbath.

A bee-keeping friend enlightened

me. "Bees", she said, "need water, otherwise you don't get honey".

When a pigeon homes in that means trouble - big trouble. First, an ominous shadow looms over the garden, then it swoops down to make a landing on the rim. The bowl rocks and loses some of its water over the side. It steadies as the pigeon stoops to drink. It drinks more. Enough! Time to go. The pigeon gives a couple of flaps of its wings. The flapping speeds up. Still not enough for lift-off. One downward kick of its powerful legs and the pigeon rises gracefully into the air, and the plastic bowl, crashes to the ground beside the column. Warily I open the French window and plod out to repair the damage, replacing the plastic bowl on the plinth.

That's when I get exasperated with my bird-bath.



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## ENVIRONMENT

# Facemasks – a hidden problem

by Phil Chatfield

FROM 15 June 2020 it is mandatory to wear facial masks or coverings when using public transport in England. Many people are already using them in shops, or even when out walking or driving. It is inevitable we will see a massive increase in the use of PPE, or personal protective equipment.

According to an analysis by scientists at University College London<sup>1</sup>, if every person in the UK used one single-use mask each day for a year, an extra 66,000 tonnes of contaminated plastic waste would be created and have ten times more climate change impact than using reusable masks.

However, according to transport secretary Grant Shapps<sup>2</sup>, 'a face mask doesn't mean surgical masks, which we must keep for clinical settings, it means the kind of face-covering you can easily make at home'.

Using a washable, reusable face mask means supplies of clinical PPE remain available for the people on the frontline who really need them, and also we can massively reduce the amount of single-use plastic waste being created.

Facemasks are relatively easy to make and a number of simple designs can be found on the internet<sup>3</sup>. To find out more about the problem with PPE and buying and using a reusable mask, see the City to Sea web site at: [www.citytosea.org.uk/ppe](http://www.citytosea.org.uk/ppe)

1. [www.plasticwastehub.org.uk/#news](http://www.plasticwastehub.org.uk/#news)
2. [www.timeout.com/london/news/face-coverings-are-now-compulsory-on-public-transport-in-london-061520](http://www.timeout.com/london/news/face-coverings-are-now-compulsory-on-public-transport-in-london-061520)
3. [www.citytosea.org.uk/how-to-make-a-reusable-mask/](http://www.citytosea.org.uk/how-to-make-a-reusable-mask/)

Web sites accessed 16 June 2020

Based on information from City to Sea



## Homes for Wildlife

continued from page 8

preparing to flower and lay eggs that will hatch and eat the flowering shoots of the ivy.

To help this butterfly, it isn't enough to have female holly bushes and a vertical growth of ivy that is allowed to flower. The pruning regime needs to match the butterfly cycle. Ivy grows up until it reaches the top of wherever it is growing, which could be a metre high wall or a 6 metre tree and then flowers at or near the top. Low growth can be pruned at any time, because the butterfly lays eggs at height, but it is crucial that the ivy top growth, with the old flower heads, is not pruned until the first brood has hatched in April/early May. You'll see the blue male butterflies hanging around the ivy, waiting for the females to hatch. When they disappear, prune the ivy back as soon as possible, leaving plenty of time for it to develop flowers in the autumn. Holly is much easier for the gardener because the natural time to prune is late December/early January, when the red berries have disappeared, and this works very well for the butterfly too. Of course, there are always extra problems to overcome; please don't ask me when to prune the ivy if the robins have started nesting in it before the Holly Blues have gone!

## Poultry, pies and picnics

by Pat Williams



IN OUR June edition, we reported on how local businesses had adapted to the lockdown limitations. The Caversham Butcher is another local business supporting those who are unable, or unwilling to go out to the shops as a result of the pandemic. The butcher's shop is situated in the Caversham precinct in premises previously known for over 50 years as 'Jennings'. You can see from the photograph the old name is still in place above the shop.

The business is now owned and run by Roland and Mo, trading as The Caversham Butcher. Some of the well-known faces from the Jennings days are still employed there. Roland is a very experienced butcher, and Mo has previously worked as a chef.

In March, they started an on-line ordering service, which has been well supported both by existing customers and many new ones. Covering the whole of the RG4 area and Ascot and Windsor, deliveries are made 7 days a week. From an early surge of seven hundred a week, the deliveries have now stabilised at the 4-500 a week level. As well as the usual range of quality meats, poultry, pies, sausages, burgers and bacon, they also deliver a selection of delicious cakes. More recently, afternoon tea and picnic packs containing sweet and savoury treats have been added. More information about the products available for delivery can be found at [www.thecavershambutcher.co.uk/delivery](http://www.thecavershambutcher.co.uk/delivery) and on Facebook.

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## LES COOPER IN THE GARDEN



### Going to the dogs

I WONDER how much the media has influenced us gardeners with their garden programmes and experts. Rather sadly I am old enough vaguely to remember Mr CH Middleton on the wireless during the war. Then the message was 'dig for victory' and our Dads and Grandads toiled in their gardens and allotments to keep us fed. There was double summer



Monty Don and dogs

photo Gardener's World/Youtube

time so we kids had to go to bed while outside the sun was shining. I still remember eating spring onions in bed.

Later on we listened to 'Gardeners' Question Time' with Bill Sowerbutts, Fred Loads and Professor Alan Gemmell. They really did seem to know everything there was to know about gardening. I think of those days as ones where the

men grew vegetables, prize dahlias and chrysanthemums. At the end of Garden Society meetings after the men had listened to a talk on,

## Carry on Guiding

by Caroline Smith

GUIDING IN Caversham is carrying on despite the lockdown, with many units continuing to offer meetings online and keeping in touch with ideas of things to do.

Jessica from 2nd Caversham Rainbows has been taking part in the unit online meetings and has completed her Bronze Award. She is the first in the unit to achieve this since the advent of the current programme almost 2 years ago. To do so, she has completed interest badges and activities with the

other girls in the unit.

Jessica was awarded her certificate and badge on 15 May at a suitable social distance on her front doorstep by her Rainbow leader Caroline Smith.

Girlguiding in Caversham is popular, with over 100 girls on the waiting list for Brownies alone. Adult help is always needed. If you can offer help to a local unit please get in touch at:

[cavershamguides@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cavershamguides@hotmail.co.uk)  
or volunteer online at:  
[www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/register-your-interest/](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/register-your-interest/)



Caroline Smith and Jessica

photo Nigel Smith

perhaps, propagating dahlias, a couple of women were allowed to make the tea for them. Then television came in and we had Percy Thrower at his lovely garden 'The Magnolias'. Understandably, there was more focus on flowers, trees and shrubs. It was a pity Percy fell out with the BBC.

But my guess is that over the years the viewers' favourite has been Geoff Hamilton at 'Barnsdale'; he seemed so natural and down to earth in every sense, and he loved DIY and making things like pergolas. It seems to me that rose growing was at its peak then.

Do you recall Arthur Billett at 'Clack's Farm', Bob Flowerdew with his pigtail and Toby Buckland?

Along came Alan Titchmarsh, at 'Barleywood' whose era I rightly or wrongly see as the time of wood or brick patios and little streams.

Nowadays we have Monty Don in 'Gardeners' World'; which some viewers are not enthusiastic about but others are more upbeat. Personally I like him, but possibly because of the dogs, and wasn't it sad when Nigel died?

Now we are in an age when we need to worry about using peat or pesticides and Monty does seem to aim towards a more naturalistic style of gardening.

But how much have we been influenced by what we heard or by what we have watched? For better or worse, I believe a great deal. When I go to a garden meeting now there are usually more women than men. I just wonder whether TV has been responsible for this. Certainly I suspect there are now far more women gardeners than men. But thankfully they still serve the tea when the meeting ends!

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# A Valentine date

by Trevor Bannister

THE RECENT celebrations for the 75th Anniversary of VE Day have triggered some family memories. I wondered if the attached photographs, which were recently sent to me by my sister, showing VE Day Celebrations in Valentine Crescent and St John's Hall, might be of interest.



Valentine Crescent photo P Chatfield

I currently live in Earley and attend Earley St Peter's Church and my sister lives in Shropshire. We grew up at 27, Valentine Crescent, Caversham. Our parents, Doris and Alf Bannister, made their home here from their marriage in December 1940 until our mother's death in 2014, at the age of 95. Our father passed away in 2006. My sister and I were christened at St



VE Day Party, Valentine Crescent



Fancy dress party, St Johns Church

John's and attended the Sunday school as small children. My sister also attended St John's School until transferring to the Hill Primary School when it opened in about 1951.

The pictures of the street party obviously date from 8 May 1945, VE Day itself. I do not have a date for the Fancy Dress Party in St John's Hall. I presume that it must have been a party for the whole of the parish. Having said that, there are a good number of people that my sister and I recognise from Valentine Crescent. She, Sandra, is on the right hand side of the picture being held by our father. She would have been about 18 months old at the time. I didn't arrive until 1947. The gentleman with glasses located about 4 rows back from the 'Guardsman' is Mr Billingham of 23, Valentine Crescent. His wife is about another 2 rows behind him. He worked at Heelas in Broad Street and the family were linked to Gosbrook Road Methodist Church.

We have many happy memories of growing up in Valentine Crescent. As the pictures indicate, it was full of children. We knew everybody and they knew us, a very close community that hardly varied in make up until the late 1950s and early '60s when families began to move away. I hope readers of the Caversham Bridge will be interested in these recollections.

If you recognise anyone in the photos or would like to share your memories of the area, please contact the editors at: [editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)

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The Annual Caversham Arts Trail, normally held in May, has been postponed until 26/27 September in response to the pandemic restrictions. For the last ten years, the Trail has given visitors an opportunity to meet the artists in their own homes and studios, to see their techniques demonstrated and to buy work directly from them.

This month meet Nina, an artist who has illustrated books, painted in oils and watercolours and has more recently experimented with batik. For more details, see: [www.facebook.com/cavershamartstrail](http://www.facebook.com/cavershamartstrail)

## Reflections on a life devoted to art

by Elestr Lee

WHILST for many of us lock-down suddenly meant spending unfamiliar amounts of time at home, for others 'working from home' has long been the norm. For artist Nina O'Connell, her home-based studio is her workplace. Resident in Caversham for more than 40 years, she has devoted much of that time to art as well as to its healing powers.

Having spent some time working in schools, Nina undertook a fine arts degree at Reading University from 1985 – 1989. She quickly became a sought-after book illustrator, including for the 'New Way' reading series popular in many primary schools – featuring characters such as Ben the Dog, Jip the Cat, Sam the Fox and Meg the Hen – remember them?

Having volunteered as a Samaritan for 14 years, this work inspired Nina to take a post-graduate diploma in art therapy, and she used her combined skills as a listener and an artist to become an art therapist. "I worked with people with HIV, those with mental health issues, autism, and troubled children in schools, as well as prisoners at Reading Gaol," she remembers. Her techniques both helped resolve issues, but also encouraged her clients to use art to move forward with their lives. After 25 years, she retired at the age of 72, and for the past three years she has devoted herself full-time to her own paintings.

Nina's works, which she usually exhibits at the Caversham, Henley and Wokingham Arts Trails, are

predominantly landscapes. She is especially inspired by local scenes such as the River Thames, Dinton Pastures, and Burnham Beeches. Water, and its reflective quality, as well as sunlight dappled through foliage feature strongly in her art. Her landscapes are usually painted in oils, but she is also returning to watercolours, which she used mainly in her early work as an illustrator.

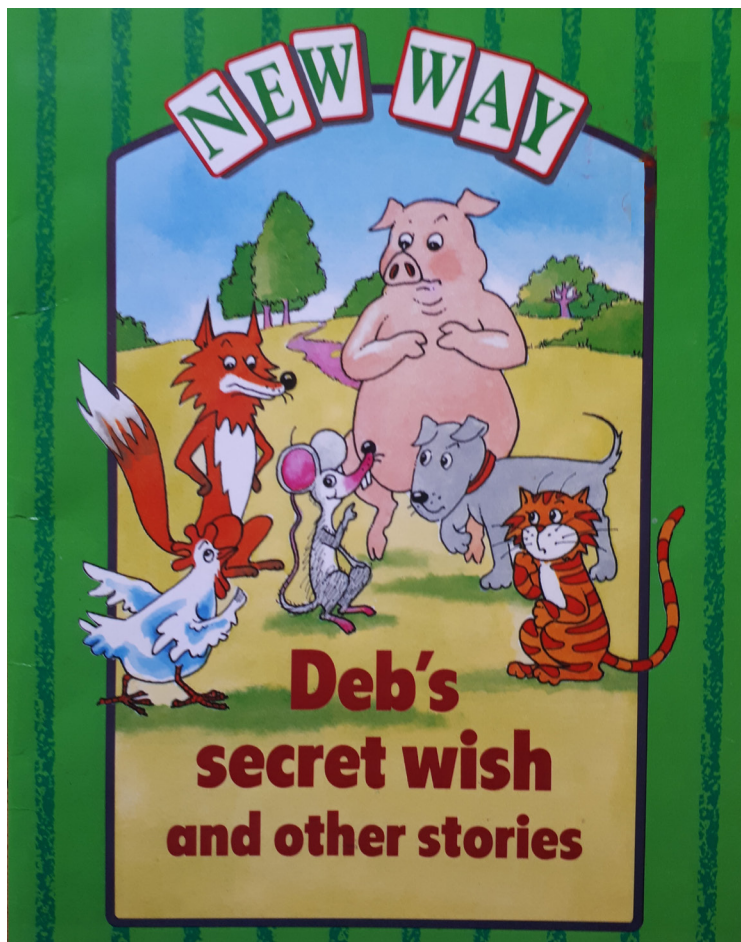
Around five years ago she began experimenting with batik, for which she uses special tjanting tools or brushes to create her images in wax. "This traditional craft originated in Indonesia, however I work in a contemporary way which is very experimental," Nina says. "I am inspired by light and colour and was looking for a way to create the effect of stained glass. Batik produces such a translucent quality. The effect I am looking for is like liquid stained glass."

Nina uses batik for abstract works – "I am trying to convey my inner thoughts about the state of the world – my own inner landscape, portrayed in an abstract way," says Nina. "It is very much an experimental process, and I make mistakes. But I like to work with my mistakes."

So how has lock-down affected her work? "My creativity has been falling over itself! However, there are days when it has been hard to focus."

Technology has provided some solutions: Nina has taken up Tai Chi online, as well as keeping up with an art group via Zoom. And, on the day we spoke, she had just finished her latest watercolour – 'Roses from the artist's garden' which she had photographed and posted on Facebook, and was quickly gaining 'likes'.

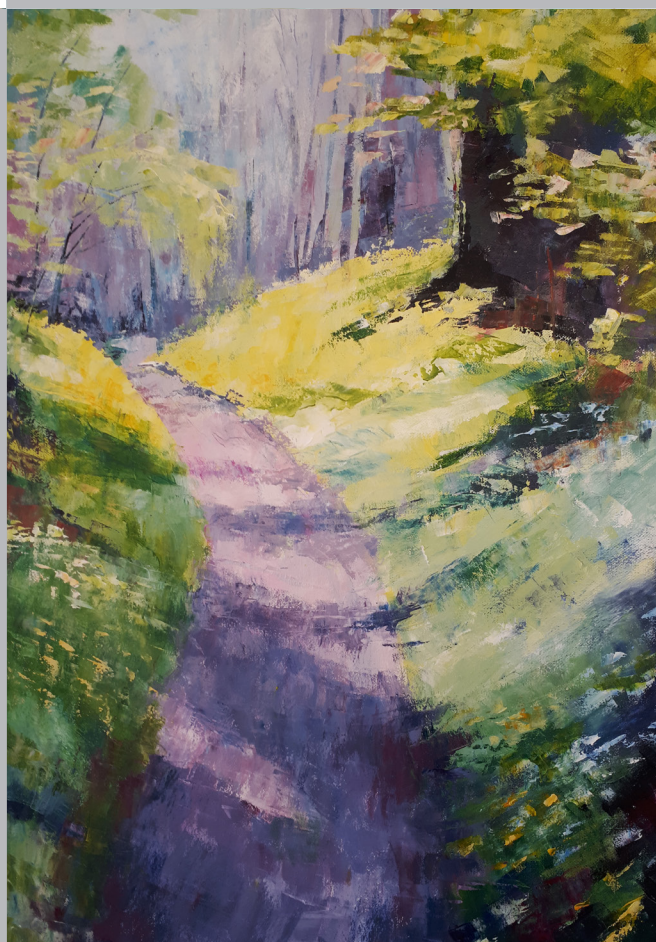
"This is the way we are now communicating!" she accepts. She is looking forward to the possibility of the arts trails resuming once again. "I have appreciated this time in which I feel I have been even more reflective and creative. But I have missed simple things, such as spending time with friends, tea and a cake."



New Way Book Cover



Nina with 'Roses from the artists garden'



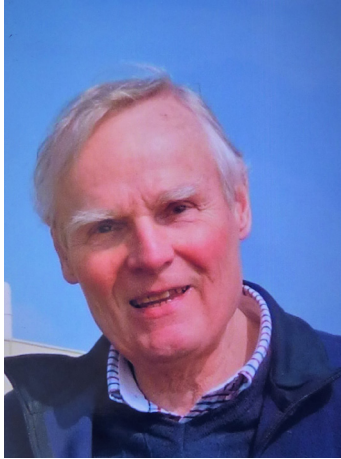
Top: Batik, above: Celendine Walk

all photos E Lee



# Richard Heyes – 1941 - 2020

by Lorna Heyes



RICHARD Heyes, who had lived in Caversham with his family since 1970, passed away peacefully in the Duchess of Kent Hospice in April this year, only two months after a diagnosis of cancer.

Richard was born in October 1941 in the family home in Tadworth, Surrey, the youngest of three boys followed by a little sister. Their childhood was spent roaming the fields and Downs, climbing trees and making dens. His schooling was at the local Primary School followed by public school and eventually Durham University.

He taught in a primary school for a short while, but realised he was more interested in young people and their families' welfare, so he trained as a childcare officer in Oxford and was immediately employed by Berkshire Social Services, where he remained until retirement.

Richard valued the teamwork of all the professionals involved with child protection. His career ended as an inspector of boarding schools for pastoral care and nursing homes. After retirement he worked voluntarily for Caversham Good Neighbours, where he enjoyed getting to know the clients.

Family was very important to Richard, he was married to Lorna for 49 years. They had two daughters, Rachael and Sarah, and four grandchildren. The extended family, four generations, spent many memorable holidays in Northumberland. Richard loved being outside and really enjoyed creating his garden. Music and reading were important to him.

Throughout his life he had an understanding for people who are struggling and a desire to help and care for them. Richard embodied the qualities of kindness, tolerance, and integrity. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him.

Peter Vallance, former Chair of Caversham Good Neighbours, has written a personal reflection on Richard. You will find this in full on our web site at: [www.cavershambridge.org:5154/archives/1928](http://www.cavershambridge.org:5154/archives/1928)

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# A Tale of Two Towns – Calleva and Reading

by John Mullaney



HAVE you ever wondered how far back we can trace the history of Reading? Why is it called Reading? Did

you know that the first time the name Reading is mentioned was as late as 871? Before this date, there is scant evidence about the settlement. Only a few miles away, Calleva, modern Silchester, had been a thriving town, even before the Romans. Under the Romans it became a transport hub, a crossroads for a network covering the south of the country. When and why did Reading replace Calleva?

## 'why did Reading replace Calleva?'

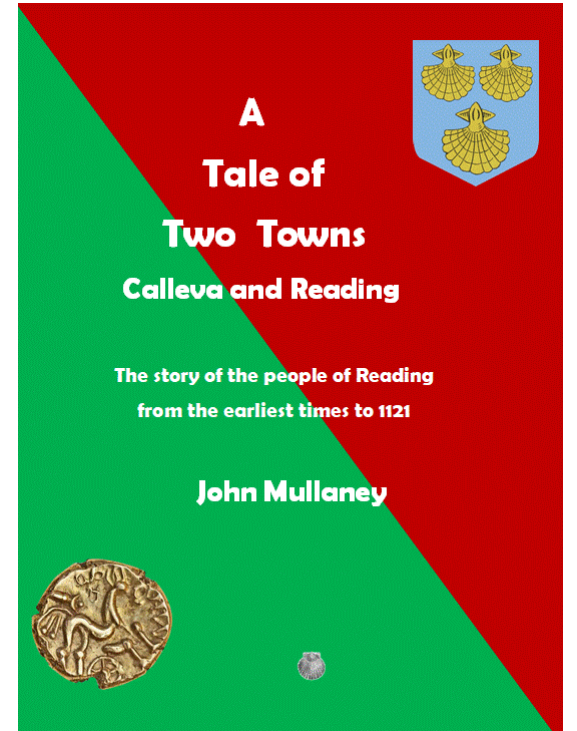
Using archaeological reports and the earliest written records, my aim in this book is to see what we can learn about this part of the Thames and the people of Reading from the earliest times to 1121. I examine the various excavations and historical records of early Reading. I then discuss how, and why, following the 'decline and fall' of Rome, and the arrival of the Saxons, Reading replaced the ancient Roman town.

The book examines various theories generated by the study of these events. This leads to some controversial points, such as the very origins, and meaning, of the name Reading. As far as I am aware, this is the first time an attempt has been undertaken to draw together, and critically examine, the various

## Fete intervened....

by Steve Jenkins

THE Caversham Church Fete, held in Caversham Court Gardens every year in early July, has been cancelled this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. This is the first time for many years the Fete, sponsored by Walmsley Estate Agents, has not been held. The organisers, Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish, say they stand ready to help Caversham celebrate when life returns to normal. While the three churches in the parish remain closed, they are providing a rich blend of worship opportunities online. Details are on the parish website at [www.ctmparish.org.uk/forthcoming-events](http://www.ctmparish.org.uk/forthcoming-events) Also on the CTMParish YouTube channel are original videos for younger worshippers, previous services and recordings of hymns and music under lockdown.



strands of evidence concerning the history of the two towns before 1121, and the founding of the monastery by Henry I. Much of the work has been written in collaboration with experts in their fields. I also quote extensively from various primary and secondary sources: these range from authors of antiquity right up to the most recent commentaries.

For more information contact John Mullaney on 0118 9470 478 or email [jgmullaney@aol.com](mailto:jgmullaney@aol.com)

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# Charities rise to the challenge

Charities and voluntary organisations have had to adapt to the changed circumstances in recent months. With charity shops closed, a valuable source of income has been lost. And demands for their services have also changed. We report here on how three local charities have adapted in recent months.

## Caversham Good Neighbours

Leigh Furlonger, Chair

CAVERSHAM Good Neighbours was established over fifty years ago and aims to provide help and support for people living in Caversham and Emmer Green. Those who use our service find it difficult to get out and about, and our volunteer drivers help them to access medical appointments or attend social clubs. In recent years we have seen an enormous increase in requests for help, and we have been taking up to 1300 trips every year. Volunteers work in our office in Church House; clients call in each morning and their requests for transport are put on to a computerised system and drivers contacted to provide help.

As a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, demand for our service has dropped dramatically. All the regular activities like lunch clubs, which our clients attended, have been suspended. Most regular medical appointments have been cancelled or conducted over the phone.

At the same time, government guidelines prevented many of our volunteers from offering to drive clients because the volunteers themselves had underlying health conditions or were over 70. However, we have been able to maintain a skeleton service and continue to help those in need. Our office has been closed for the time being, but calls from clients are diverted to one of our committee members who logs them on to our system from home. A number of fellow committee members then take it in turn each week to monitor demand and contact a core of about 12 drivers who are still able to help.

We also appreciated that some of our clients would feel very lonely under the Coronavirus constraints and, in order to try to reduce their sense of isolation at this difficult time, we have arranged for some of our volunteers to phone clients regularly.

As things get back to the 'New Normal', we expect requests to flood in once more, and we would be grateful for any new volunteers to work in our office or act as drivers. At the moment, government restrictions prevent us from interviewing volunteers or carrying out necessary DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checks, and so we are unable to undertake any recruitment. We do hope that this will soon change.

COVID-19 seems to have revived an interest in community help. As a result, something like 70,000 people volunteered for the national scheme to help the vulnerable. We would like to think that this co-operative spirit will persist after this crisis is all over! We would welcome any volunteers to join us in Caversham Good Neighbours, an organisation of which we are very proud for the service it provides for our community.

Contact details of Caversham Good Neighbours can be found on page two of 'The Bridge' and on our web site:

[www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk](http://www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk)

## Christian Community Action – CCA

Diana Lees

CHRISTIAN Community Action (CCA) was set up in 1992 to provide essential second-hand furniture for those in need in the Reading area. In addition, we aimed to help unemployed people find their way back into employment. Today CCA provides for those in need through recycling donations of furniture, clothing, bric-a-brac and household goods. In doing so, we are also helping to protect the environment and reduce the needless dumping of good quality furniture. We also provide kitchen and bedding 'starter packs' and emergency provisions for people in need, particularly families.

Much of our furniture is sold through our furniture shop in order to fund our services. In addition, we operate four charity shops and run two vans from our warehouse collecting donations and delivering furniture. Our Support Centre is based at our shop at 369 Oxford Road.



Chris from CCA collecting donations in Caversham

photo P Chatfield

With the introduction of the COVID-19 rules, we closed our shops and Caversham Drop-In Centre, and now have just one van making emergency deliveries of beds, starter packs and food supplies. This Mobile Response team enables us to respond rapidly to calls for help from individuals or households. The Warehouse and Support Centre staff are working from home, but twice a week a team comes in to sort the very generous donations of food and starter pack items we have received. To support our services, we appealed to the Reading community for bedding and kitchen items, and have had a tremendous response from individuals and organisations. Local churches, such as the Caversham Heights Methodist Church and St Andrews Caversham, have made repeated donations, which we have very gratefully collected. Some of these we have in turn given to households in Caversham who were in need, and for some we were also able to supply cooking appliances and carpet tiles to cover bare concrete floors for families with small children.

Before the pandemic, around 80% of our customers were able to pay for furniture from us, but now it is nearer 50%, with agency referrals increasing to make up the difference. Many more people are struggling to make ends meet, and we are supplying far more food parcels than ever before. I have never seen so much pasta!

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continued on page 15



# Charities rise to the challenge

continued from page 14

About 88% of the households we are helping currently are single adults, two thirds of whom are women. We have also helped several people who have been re-homed to escape domestic abuse. They arrive with almost nothing and we provide the basic essentials: beds, bedding, kitchen equipment and food.

We plan to re-open our furniture shop and one of our charity shops in mid-June. We anticipate a large influx of donations because people have had the opportunity to de-clutter in the past three months. We are working out how best to cope with this, as we need to ensure a three day 'quarantine' for donated items.

For the future, I anticipate there will be an ongoing need for more food deliveries. We would like to keep our Mobile Response Team operating permanently to provide a rapid response service for people rehoused at very short notice. Charity shops have struggled to maintain income over the last few years, and I wonder how they will fare in the future. During the current pandemic, many people have been extremely generous with their goods, money and time. People have rediscovered how they can volunteer to do something for society and the benefits it brings to all involved. I hope this reborn desire to help others will be a legacy of the pandemic.

For more details of the work of CCA, visit their web site at: [www.ccam.org.uk](http://www.ccam.org.uk)

in the hours we work. For our caretaker it's been more hours spent cleaning and ensuring we're kept safe, but also making the most of an empty building and giving it a fresh coat of paint. The fine weather has also helped us to grow more in our garden, including fresh vegetables, fruit and salad. We have some fabulous volunteers who have put in hours of weeding, cutting, planting and maintaining, which has brought the garden to life. Recently we have bought some flowers to add a dash of colour to the garden whilst waiting for ours to grow. People are more than welcome to come and sit in the garden and enjoy the colours – following government guidelines of course.

Other staff members have been working alongside our team of volunteers collecting surplus food from Tesco and Waitrose in the evenings. This has then been stored and later put to use either in lunches or in our care packs.

Over the last few months, we've helped people from all walks of life. Older people, single parents, those who have lost jobs or had pay cuts, families of key workers, families who are isolating or shielding, and people working from home whilst home schooling, trying to cook, wash, keep children alive etc! Feedback from some of those we've helped include:

"The Weller Centre really is the heart of the community" and "Words cannot express how much this means to me".

In all this, we have been supported by the people of Caversham, who have been amazingly generous. We've had not only donations of food but also laptops, a TV, clothes, games, books, DVDs and jigsaws to name some of the items. We've been able to meet the needs of almost all the families that have made requests, although one or two items have been just a bit too obscure! Local people have answered our weekly requests for food items ranging from cereals to jelly to cheesy snacks. We are very grateful to everyone who has donated to us. We've also started to raise funds for a defibrillator which we hope to purchase in the future. To check on progress and donate see:

[www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/weller-centre](http://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/weller-centre)

The Weller Centre has also been awarded a few grants to help buy some of the items for lunches and care packs. These include grants from Berkshire Community Foundation and Neighbourly.

Thinking about the longer term, during lockdown we've met many people we didn't know before. For us this has been amazing. We have enjoyed some Socially Distanced chats with residents, learnt about them and hopefully forged relationships we can build on in the future. We know it won't be the same as it used to be, but we feel positive about a return to near normal one day, except with a stronger community feel.

For more information about the Weller Centre and our work, see our Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/wellercentre](https://www.facebook.com/wellercentre) or website [www.wellercentre.co.uk](http://www.wellercentre.co.uk)

## Weller Centre in Covid – 19 times Hazel Bingham

THE Weller Centre in Amersham Road, formerly known as Amersham Road Youth and Community Centre, opened in September 2017 after a much needed revamp and extension. Before lockdown we ran as a community centre. We were about the community and for the community. Some of our rooms were hired out and, each week, hirers ran sessions for their groups. As well as our own Stay and Play sessions, these included Rhyme Time, Church groups, Slimming World and Musical Bumps to name a few. Since lockdown we've swapped all the people that we would have seen coming in and out of the building for boxes and tins. These contain items we use to make up care packs, and food for hot lunches, which we've been delivering across Caversham since March. Although we've been concentrating on Lower Caversham, we also check in with a few families in Caversham Park.

Our small team has responded well, although we've all seen an increase



Wella Centre staff photo H Bingham

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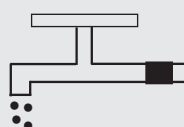
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