



Get Active and Get Growing

by Phil Chatfield

IT IS NOW five months since the lockdown was introduced. As I write in early August, many of the limitations have been lifted, although with conditions. Evidence of the effectiveness of face coverings has grown, and the World Health Organisation supports their use. They are now required in shops and other public enclosed places. For those who have been shielding, it can be quite a shock to see so many people in public places wearing facemasks and avoiding close contact. We have also seen social distancing signs appearing in our streets and council workers regularly sanitising railings, bins and other surfaces. Some pubs and restaurants have reopened, although



Scarecrow hunt – Snakes and Ladders

photo P Chatfield

with limitations on numbers to ensure social distancing. It was good to see the boards over the windows of the White Horse in Emmer Green removed and customers enjoying the fine weather. Following the summer break, there will now be a focus on education. This is a special year for New Bridge Nursery School, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary in Caversham – *see this page for more*.

In July, parents at the Heights school organised a fund-raising 'Scarecrow' trail around Caversham Heights, with a board game theme. Drives and houses were decorated with chess sets, Hungry Hippos and Snakes and Ladders. Many families cycled or walked around more than 40 participating houses. Almost 400 tickets were sold and with match funding they are hoping to donate over £500 to each of seven charities they were supporting.

The last few months have not only seen traffic levels increasing, but have also witnessed severe congestion as a result of gas main renewal on Reading Bridge and the Henley Road. Perhaps those who have taken to bicycles have managed to avoid the worst of these delays. This month has been designated as Cycle September (*see our What's On feature on page 5 for details*). We are encouraged to fit more active travel into our lives (*see page 9*), although cycle shops are still reporting a lack of bicycles to buy!

It is also Organic September, promoted by the Soil Association to encourage people to try organic food. In addition to organic produce stocked by our local supermarkets, we are fortunate in having the True Food Cooperative in Emmer Green, which specialises in value for money organic products. We profile the shop on *page 15*.

During lockdown, some people have taken to growing their own food and are now starting to reap the benefits. Nothing tastes quite like your own fresh produce. We asked our readers what new and different things they had done in the last few months and we had a range of responses – *see page 14*.

Local businesses have played a key part in supporting us all over the lockdown period and we would like to encourage you to use them where possible. Our October edition will include a 4-page supplement with information on local craft producers and service providers. If you would like your business to be included in the supplement, please contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org for details. With the cancellation of the annual Caversham Arts Trail, shopping locally is particularly important this year.

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New Bridge to a learning journey

MORE than 5000 Caversham children have passed through New Bridge Nursery School since its move to the former St John's Primary School buildings on Montague Street 50 years ago. This year the school is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its relocation in 1970 from Bridge Street, Reading, after which it is named.

The school provides early years education for up to 90 3-4 year old children who spend up to 5 terms at the school before moving on to primary school. The current Executive Head Teacher, Joanne Budge, is passionate about the value of nursery schools, with their ability to focus on specialist early years provision for children, and the commitment of her staff. When interviewed, she said "We have three

qualified teachers and a special needs co-ordinator whose professionalism and caring nature support not just our children but also their parents. I am full of admiration for the way they have continued to nurture our most vulnerable children and children of key workers throughout the pandemic, whilst providing remote learning opportunities and support to all of our children."

The school provides a rich, exciting and broad curriculum where children have fun learning through play, exploring and understanding the world around them, gaining independence and forming strong friendships. The traditional school

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Newbridge Bridge welcome

photo New Bridge School

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Space to breathe

TOWARDS the beginning of the lockdown, I read a disturbing thought on my old friend Matt's Facebook: "We are the virus, corona is the cure." It is a disturbing thought for a few reasons. Firstly, it might well have annoyed half of the readers of this column enough that they have already stopped reading. It is disturbing because it makes us out to be a virus, but also because it forces us to confront the damage we have done to the planet and each other. It is deeply disturbing because of the irony of the creatures destroying the planet's ability to breathe being attacked by a virus that destroys our own ability to breathe. In *The Matrix* (a 1999 film by the Wachowskis), the darkest of the characters says, "Every mammal on this planet instinctively develops a natural equilibrium with the surrounding environment; but you humans do not. Instead you multiply, and multiply, until every resource is consumed. ... There is another organism on this planet that follows the same pattern... a virus." Its dark, I know. But it's true. I must admit that at first Matt's post annoyed me. Humanity is glorious in so many ways. We have endless creativity and ingenuity woven into the fabric of our being. Yet as I thought about it, we have a distinct ability to bottle up our humanity and invest it only in those we like, or choose. Too often we are inhumane towards animals, the planet, and each other. We are driven to consume more than



Talking Point by Martin Beukes

we need in the pursuit of comfort and 'happiness'. At our worst, we blinker ourselves from the difficult truth that our beautiful new thingamabob, which makes our heart skip a beat, came at its bargain price because a child in a third world country works for barely enough food to survive. Or worse, we shield our eyes from the brutality of a man who kneels in the neck of another human being while they

gasp for air, pant "I can't breathe," and take their last breath crying for their mother. And that is to say nothing of our failure to confront the horrific levels of domestic violence which destroy countless lives. All these seem unimaginable. But they happen because someone feels it their right to exercise their power over another human being. I want to be annoyed at Matt's post, but honestly, it is hard to be anything but humbled. So, what else have we 'discovered' during lockdown? I read of people who were amazed at how much they could hear the birds singing. Yet researchers have found that birds were singing more quietly because they no longer had to compete with the noise of cars. Birds had space to breathe. UK road travel dropped to below 1955 levels, as we went for a walk or taught the children to ride bikes. We had space to breathe. This year will represent the largest annual drop in carbon emissions on record. The Earth had space to breathe. And we had time. Time to be. Time to play, learn, read, and think. Time to garden, finish projects, and catch up on our chores. We had time to breathe! Will it last? Do we really want to go back to what was before? Do we want to do all the things we did? Do we want to work ourselves to death just to be replaced? Do we want to go back to the ever-increasing abuse of our planet and each other, God's gifts to us? Or, have we learned some of what it means to be human beings? Are you ready to learn to leave space to breathe?

Local clergy and church services

ANGLICAN
Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry
St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Rev'd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Rd
Caversham RG4 7AD
Tel: 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk
Rev'd John Dudley Tel: 947 0265
Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810
Rev'd Judith Ryder Tel: 947 3783
Rev'd Andy Storch Tel: 07365 555 905

Parish Office
Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX
Tuesday and Friday 9.30 to 14.00
Tel: 947 1703 e-mail secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Current service during lockdown
Sunday 09:30 – You Tube service - 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 Andrew
Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.
Tel: 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current service during lockdown
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 - vicar@standrewscaversham.org

St Barnabas Emmer Green
Rev'd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road.
Tel: 947 8239. www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

Office
St Barnabas Centre, Emmer Green
Tuesday and Thursday 8.30 – 10.30
Tel: 947 6310

Current service during lockdown
Sunday 09.30 - Morning Service on St. Barnabas Facebook & Website
Monday 14.00 - Busybees - for pre-school children and their carers on Youtube
Details on their web site - www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

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

Current services during lockdown
Sunday – 11.00 – Livestreaming on YouTube
Details on their web site at: <https://cpvc.org.uk:5152/livestream>

METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM
Rev'd Martin Beukes, 72 Highmoor Rd.
Tel: 0118 947 2223 <https://cavhmc.org.uk>
Rev'd D Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

Current service during lockdown
Sunday – 10.30 – Zoom service
E-mail the Minister for details martin.beukes@methodist.org.uk

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

Current service during lockdown
A link is placed on their website each week at: www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk and on their YouTube channel www.youtube.com/user/CavershamBaptist
Live broadcast starts at 10.30am each Sunday

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

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

Current service during lockdown
See their web site for details: www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD
Rev'd H R Gayle
Tel: 946 3009 www.ntcgreasing.org.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC
Our Lady and St Anne
Mgr Patrick Daly, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current service during lockdown
See their web site for Father Patrick's weekly homilies and details of opening for services at: www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

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

At the time of writing, church services are affected by the pandemic restrictions, disrupting normal worship. However, church communities have adapted to the circumstances and are alive and active in new ways. Some churches have re-opened in a limited way. Most have a range of on-line services, house groups and social meetings, using web based systems like YouTube and Zoom. For current information, see individual web sites for each church on this page or on the Churches Together in Caversham website: www.cavershamchurch.org.

The Caversham Bridge is a community newspaper produced by Caversham Christian News Ltd
Company details will be found on page 15

Future editions:
Contributions for the October 2020 issue should be submitted by 31 August and for the November edition by 5 October. These should be e-mailed to: editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 28 August for the October issue and 2 October for November. These should be e-mailed to advertising@cavershambridge.org

A Bridge to the future

by the Editors

WE ARE constantly considering improvements to the Caversham Bridge Newspaper and our on-line services to you. So we would like to understand you, our readers, better and find out what you expect of your local paper, along with any new features or ideas you think we should consider for future editions.

We have therefore launched our readers survey this month. The survey form enclosed with your September Caversham Bridge contains a series of questions about you, the reader, and your thoughts about the paper.

Are there features you particularly like or things we could do better?

Do you have ideas for features or articles you would like to see included or could contribute to?

What do you think of the format and design?

Should we make greater use of our web site and social media?

Is the advertising useful?

This is your chance to help shape the future of the Caversham Bridge and its place in our community. When completed, the form should be sent or delivered to Church House, 57-59 Church Street, Caversham. Alternatively, the form will be available through our web site at:

cavershambridge.org:5154/Readers-survey-2020

Whichever way you choose to reply, we want to hear your views. So please spare us a few minutes of your time to complete this survey to help us ensure the paper serves the needs and expectations of the people of Caversham, Emmer Green and the surrounding area into the future.

If the survey form did not come with the paper, please contact:

editors@cavershambridge.org and we will arrange for a copy to be delivered.

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Get Active and Get Growing

For more on this and to learn about Barbara, who makes jewellery, see our Creative Caversham feature on *page 12*

In recent months we have featured a number of articles on proposed developments at the Reading Golf Club site in Emmer Green. Our local MP Matt Rodda has recently repeated objections to the proposals and is asking constituents to complete a short survey on the subject, available online at <https://mattroddamp.com/content/reading-golf-course>

In order to maintain a balanced view and factual response on this matter, we will provide an update on this development and its impact on our local area when new information becomes available.

Our wordsearch returns this month, providing something to get your teeth into on *page 7*. Finally, we hope you have enjoyed the new look to the Caversham Bridge in recent months. Please take the time to complete our reader survey included with the paper this month.



Mosaic photos P Chatfield

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

Voices of Colour

by Phil Chatfield

THE STORIES of black, Asian and minority ethnic residents of Caversham featured in a Zoom meeting organised by Churches Together in Caversham on Monday, 20 July. More than 60 people from local churches and beyond attended the meeting which explored 'God's vision for a multicultural church in Caversham'. They heard stories of lives encompassing journeys to Caversham from Jamaica, Barbados, Nigeria and India. Some included aspects of the racism now being debated across the world, and the inspiring message to value all people as created equally in the sight of God.

Bishop Headley Gayle, pastor of the New Testament Church of God, brought the speakers together and started the meeting by describing his own experience of travelling from Jamaica to settle in the UK in 1960.

One theme which emerged from the meeting was the importance of taking an interest in people and their culture. For the churches, the need to be welcoming and accepting of people, irrespective of their origin, was emphasised by a Grace Church study.

The Rt Revd Olivia Graham, Bishop of Reading, attended the meeting and talked about the multicultural mosaic which exists in Reading and Caversham, and the importance of being non-judgemental. Those who attended expressed gratitude to the speakers for their frank and informative stories, and agreed on the importance of sharing them with their churches and communities.

'...we can all learn from and celebrate the diversity of Caversham'

During the discussion, one participant referred to a notice seen on a church in Guildford emphasising its inclusiveness.

'Here we practice the inclusive Gospel of Jesus Christ. This means you may be mixing with tax collectors, sinners, adulterers, hypocrites, Greeks, Jews, women as well as men, female as well as male priests and yes, even you, dear guest, are most welcome – in fact anyone like those who Jesus mixed with. So beware, this is not a private club.'

"This was a positive start to what we hope will be a continuing and growing conversation that we can all learn from and celebrate the diversity of Caversham and Reading," said Bishop Gayle.

Wherever you go!

WE MIGHT not have been able to go abroad or have the holidays we might have liked this summer, but the chances are we may have taken a few days away somewhere. Camping? To a lake? Up a hill?

Why not choose one of the places you have been to and read a Bible story based in a

by Anna Clarke



similar place! Here are some ideas you might like to use:

- near a lake: read about Jesus appearing to Peter and the other disciples in John 21:1-25
- up a hill or near a mountain: read about Jesus' amazing teaching in Matthew 5:1-12 (and more!)
- in a city: read about the new Jerusalem, the city in heaven in Revelation 21:9-27
- having a fire/BBQ: read about Elijah on Mount Carmel in 1 Kings 18:16-46
- by a river: read about God's people crossing the Jordan river in Joshua 3
- walking in a wood: read about trees in Genesis 2:5-9 and Genesis 3 and Revelation 22:1-5
- camping in tents: read about the special tent God's people made for Him in Exodus 26:1-37 and Exodus 33:7-11 (lots more about this in Exodus)

Material by GodVenture (www.godventure.co.uk)

Rediscover Bible stories

by Anna Clarke

EVERYONE loves a good story, right? And the Bible is full of them! Over summer we have been challenging people to make videos of themselves and their families retelling a Bible story.

"I wanted to come up with a fun way to encourage people to rediscover Bible stories," explains Anna, "There is so much we can learn from them - even from the stories we feel we know off by heart, so it's good to hear them retold in different ways."

Submissions have included Bible stories being acted out, read, narrated with stop-motion animation, built with Lego... and the list goes on! The videos are being shared on the CTM Parish YouTube channel so that everyone's creations can be enjoyed! Do have a look:

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLbhhev989hDI3ulQ03ncuPX0wgQUKTDER



David and Goliath

photo the Dunford Family

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Making a monkey for the NHS

by Pat Jones

ST PETER'S craft group, although not able to meet during lockdown, have been busy individually making PPE for the Royal Berkshire hospital – facemasks and hair bands with buttons to protect the ears of NHS staff from chafing, and scrub bags. We have been making things to support the hospital for over two years now – knitting cosy blankets, mischievous monkeys, dollies and teddies, as well as sewing eye masks to help patients sleep in busy hospital wards. A regular request from the hospital is for traffic light hats in red, yellow and green for premature babies to indicate how much attention they need,

and you can see from the picture we have been busy.

The group has also made poppy brooches for the Royal British Legion and colourful quilts for Project Linus - an organisation in the area that gives comforting handmade quilts to children who need a hug. A few years ago, we made a Caversham Community Quilt which we raffled - raising £1200 for a new Berkshire Women's Aid refuge in Reading.

We usually meet every other Thursday for coffee and craft, when we also make things for the Parish Summer Fete in Caversham Court (sadly not this year), and the Christmas Market at St Peter's Church. We are all looking forward to the time when we can get together again.



St Peter's crafts

photo Pat Jones

A HELPING HAND

It 'pays' to smile

by R Waddington

AND IT did literally for me! Whilst in Markand, our friendly chemist on the Henley Road, a young man and I did a little jig to avoid each other, smiling as we did so. Social-distancing, and all that!

He was behind me in the queue and, when it came to my turn to be served, mine wasn't a straightforward purchase. I was returning an item I'd bought mistakenly and wanted to replace it with the correct one. It turned out the new item was 50p more than I'd paid (by card - I've not used cash since Covid-19 reared its ugly head, and I had none), and Markand only accepts cards for £5 and above. I said I'd pop next door to the Co-op and get some cash, whereupon the young man piped up and said he would pay the extra 50p for me and insisted he didn't want it back. What a wonderful, kind gesture for which I humbly thanked him.

There were smiles all round in the shop, and I don't think the other customers and staff will forget this heart-warming little scenario.



Heartbeat connections

by J Gordon

CHILDHOOD memories came flooding back, when I read in CADRA's July monthly roundup that the phone box in Kidmore Road will be adopted by the Community Heartbeat Trust. Although we have lived in Caversham less than two years, I have a long held connection with this phone box.

On Friday 23 May 1958, my mother and I left Manchester in a coach, to travel down to Reading. We came to stay for a few days with an old friend of my mother's who lived on Kidmore Road. It was a long journey in those pre motorway times and we did not arrive in Reading until late afternoon. I remember I spent the whole journey in a state of anxiety, as this was the day the 11 plus results would be delivered to my home.

In order to catch the coach from Manchester, we had to travel by bus from our home in Handforth, leaving very early, before the post came. We had arranged to telephone my father in the evening after work. He would be at a neighbour's house; long before the days of mobile phones, we did not even

have a phone of our own. Neither did the friend with whom we were staying.

With my heart in my mouth, I walked to the Kidmore Road phone box, dialled the number (I remember it to this day!) and waited for the call to be answered. I pressed Button B to hear Dad's voice. "Why are you ringing?" he teased. "Did you have a good journey? How's Mum?"

"Dad...you know why I'm ringing. What does the letter say?"

"Letter? What letter?"

"Oh Dad! You know what letter. My 11 plus results...did I pass?"

"Ah yes. Let me have a look." There was a shuffling of paper, a cough followed by silence. My heart was pounding. I hardly dared breathe.

"Well done!" he said eventually. "You've passed! You can go to Cheadle Grammar!"

So now I can never see this iconic red phone box without recalling that day, 62 years ago. It has a special place in my heart.

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WHAT'S ON

ALTHOUGH the effects of the coronavirus are still with us, there are events planned in September and October which we can take part in. Our on-line events diaries are updated regularly, so it is worth checking to see what has been added at cavershambridge.org:5154/local-info/whats-on. If you have an event planned, please send us details.

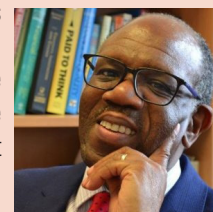
Organic September - a month-long campaign designed to encourage more people to try organic as a way to promote and educate people about organic food & farming practices. For details see www.soilassociation.org/organic-living/organic-september Many local shops stock organic products, and the True Food Co-Operative in Emmer Green specialises in organic products – see the article on the shop on page 15.

Cycle September - a fun, global competition to help more people realise the benefits of riding a bike. To find out how you can join in, visit www.lovetoride.net/uk See also our Ecotip on active travel, page 9.

Second-hand September – Oxfam campaign to help people and the planet. Pledge to say no to new clothes for 30 days – See www.oxfamapps.org.uk/secondhandseptember/pledge.html

Caversham Horticultural Society Autumn Show is cancelled this year. Next year's show will be Saturday 11 September at Emmer Green Primary School!

October is Black History Month - see www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk for more information. Churches Together in Caversham are planning an on-line event for the evening of 19 October organised by the New Testament Church of God. The guest speaker will be Dr Joel Edwards. Details to follow.



Make your money work for good



by R.J. Walker

HAVE YOU ever felt overwhelmed by the poverty in the world and wondered how you can make a difference? Imagine you could use a small amount of spare money to help provide financial support to farmers in disadvantaged communities. By pooling funds from over 11,500 members throughout the UK, the co-operative *Shared Interest Society* enables ethical investors to do just this. Last year alone, the organisation helped almost 400,000 individuals in 55 countries. And as it marks its 30th year, the social lender has received its third Queen's Award for Enterprise in Sustainable Development, as well as being named a NatWest Impact Management Champion and listed as one of the top 100 social enterprises in the UK.

I joined *Shared Interest* and made my first investment in 1993. Wanting to spread the word about the organisation and its work, after retirement in 2014, I became a volunteer ambassador. You may have read about the society in the Guardian newspaper or in the Big Issue, but if you haven't, here is a little more.

Shared Interest has its members at its heart. Without us, it would not have

been able to lend money to 174 producer groups in 2019, supporting a range of fairtrade products from hibiscus flowers in Burkina Faso to maize and kidney beans in Rwanda. With regional teams in Costa Rica, Kenya, Ghana, and Peru, *Shared Interest* has the local and cultural knowledge required to reach people in even the most remote communities. We know some farmers, working outside fair trade, live on around 75p per day, well below the World Bank's extreme poverty line of about £1.40. For example, cocoa producers currently only receive about 6% of the value of the global chocolate industry.

This is why fair trade is so important. The *Fairtrade Mark* guarantees a fair minimum price for farmers and demonstrates organisations are following the ten Fair Trade Principles, including the assurance of no child labour. Fairtrade has the highest fixed Premium of any independent certification scheme in cocoa, and this money goes directly to the farmers' co-operatives on top of market price. The Premium is spent on improving the local community, such as building schools, or improving healthcare. In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the *Fairtrade Foundation* has made these guidelines more flexible so the Premium can be spent on helping communities protect themselves from Covid-19.

'...interest rates can be up to 40%...'

Developing world communities are dealing with the health and economic issues of the pandemic as well as coping with climate change impacts. Now more than ever, they need their businesses to survive. This may mean diversifying their product offering. Some handcraft organisations are beginning to produce and sell face masks. To do this, they may need new equipment, and of course, this means they must have access to funds.

Unfortunately, the interest rates for borrowing money in many developing world countries can be very high (up to 40% in some). With little or no security to apply for a loan from their local bank, how can they access capital?

Well, this is where *Shared Interest* fits in. The Society pools my Share Account investment with those of other members to achieve their current £44 million in Share Capital.

To broaden its reach, a small number of non-certified producers who comply with the Fair Trade Principles are now financed. Businesses

supported range from individual producers to large scale coffee and cocoa co-operatives. Buyers are also supported to help fulfill their orders, pay farmers on time, or to purchase raw materials. One example is a group of mango growers in Burkina Faso, who were losing 80% of their crops, as it took too long to get the mangos from field to market. A loan enabled them to buy drying machinery and later a lorry to transport their produce. Their production levels increased and so did their employment opportunities.

Shared Interest tells its members: 'Your investment may not make you rich but it will enrich the lives of others.'

You can open an interest paying Share Account with £100 and add or withdraw funds as required. *Shared Interest* acts co-operatively, with each member having an equal voice and vote, regardless of account size.

For more information on *Shared Interest*, see their website www.shared-interest.com

For more information on fair trade, see the *Fairtrade Foundation* web site www.fairtrade.org.uk



Mango production in Burkina Faso

photo Shared Interest



Preparing mango, Burkina Faso

photo Shared Interest

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Happy Wanderer tells us...

Why we should respect our elders

SEPTEMBER is the elderberry month, and you probably won't have to go very far to find some, should you wish to. It sets seed and spreads itself around very readily, and it can be a bit of a nuisance when it comes in over the garden fence from next door. It is weedy, weak, and short-lived, neither quite a tree, nor quite a bush.

People have had some very strange notions about this tree. Books on plant lore have more to say about elder than about any other plant. It had to be treated with respect – it should not be cut down, lopped, burnt, or any part of it brought into the house, without asking permission of the 'Old Lady' – the spirit of the

tree. It was, after all, the tree from which Judas Iscariot had hanged himself, and the tree from which Our Lord's cross had been fashioned. It was probably the connection with Judas that gave rise to the naming of that strange-looking fungus which grows out of the branches of old elder trees, the Jew's Ear, which we now call the Jelly Ear.

On the other hand, the elder had its beneficent side. It could protect you from witches and other evil influences. Various parts of it could be made into cures for all kinds of ailments – from tuberculosis to toothache and warts.

To some people, the whole tree smelled bad, and it was believed that it repelled flies, so it was allowed to grow near dairies, slaughterhouses and outside lavatories.

But there are two seasons of the year when the tree is of culinary interest – in June when it flowers, and around now, when the fruit turns black. Despite the fact that to some, the flowers smell of cats, elderflower presse and elderflower cordial are popular now, and available in shops. Elderflower beer, low in alcohol and drunk while still fizzy, is a pleasant home-made drink and elderflower wine is one of the best of the home-made wines. September is the time to make elderberry wine.



Elderberries

photo Happy Wanderer

Back in the 1970s, like a number of friends, I went in for home wine-making. Most towns had a wine-making circle, and their members used to meet and sample one another's efforts. You could buy the necessary equipment and the yeast at almost any chemist's shop. Maybe the popularity had something to do with the awfulness of some of the popular brands of wine which were widely available at the time. Home-made elderberry wine was one which was reliably good, or so my wife and I thought.

I well remember being asked to Sunday lunch at the house of a friend, and taking a couple of bottles with us. Things were going well, and the wine was going down. Then between the courses there was a strange hiatus. What had happened to our friend who had cooked for us? I'm afraid to say that he was being violently ill in the bathroom, while we had been feeling perfectly well. Perhaps he had upset the 'Old Lady'!

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Keep calm and eat cake

by Carol Moloney

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Have your say

by Bet Tickner

THE ROYAL Berkshire Hospital Trust is formulating plans to redevelop the hospital and has won funding from government to develop a master plan as the first stage of a possibly major redevelopment of the trust. It has created a web page to explain the proposals to the general public, patients and Reading communities and to serve as a consultation tool to gather views, reactions and concerns.

The consultation runs through September, so please look at the proposals and have your say. See:
www.thefutureroyalberkshire.uk.engagementhq.com/royal-berkshire-fit-for-the-future for details and a link to the survey on the future of the hospital.

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ENVIRONMENT

Waste not ...

by Tricia Marcouse

READING Borough Council starts pilot door-to-door food waste collections from October, with a full scheme in place next February. If you are part of the pilot area, you'll receive a caddy for the kitchen, a larger lidded caddy for your weekly collection, and full instructions. The waste will go to a digestion plant in Oxfordshire, producing methane which will be burnt to generate electricity. Check scheme details at www.reading.gov.uk/article/12640/Food-waste-collection.

This may be the best solution for your household, considering your time and outside space, but please consider the alternatives.

Food waste and green waste can provide nutrients to the plants, mini-beasts and micro-organisms in your garden. So why give this resource to others and then buy fertilisers and composts? There are many alternatives which don't take up much space.

The first recommendation is food fermentation or the *Bokashi system*. All food waste is put into a sealed container, together with bran inoculated with the fermentation bacteria. A *Bokashi* kit includes two bins and the bran, so one bin is filled whilst the other ferments. After a few weeks, an acidic liquid and sludge remains which you can spread on the garden (a little smelly) or dig into the soil. You can also add it to your compost heap.

Another option is a *HotBin*. For smaller gardens, it is difficult to provide the volume and mix of garden waste to

keep a compost 'heap' at the high temperatures needed for weed seed/mould spore free compost. A *HotBin* provides a perfect environment for smaller volumes of food and garden waste to reach hot temperatures and produce good compost quickly. It needs management to keep the right balance of materials and moisture, but a thermometer in the lid helps you monitor how it is working.

For regular amounts of vegetable waste, a worm bin may suit you better. Treat the worms as your pets and they will convert vegetable waste to create more worms and produce a nutrient-rich compost that can be spread directly around plants or mixed with leaf mould and grit as a potting compost. They also produce a liquid fertiliser, which can be tapped from the bin and diluted with water for use. In theory the bin can take all vegetable and fruit waste, but the worms don't like masses of citrus peel, can't eat fruit stones, and it is best to chop up large waste such as cauliflower stalks.

Getcomposting sell British-made bins for all of these suggested methods and some others, and it is worth putting your postcode into their website to see if there are special, council subsidised offers. Sometimes this is in the delivery charge. Currently (early August) a *Bokashi* kit is about £25 including delivery. The other systems are more expensive.

Want to know more about any of these methods? Visit the www.getcomposting.com website or download factsheets from www.readingcan.org.uk for more information. You can also email nature@readingcan.org.uk and one of our gurus who has used them will reply.

Wildlife – Badger, my neighbour

by William Cecil

I WAS sitting on the patio enjoying the last of the evening sun when there was a disturbance in the undergrowth at the bottom of the hedge. The scuffling continued then a

pointed white snout with two black stripes appeared, followed by a bulky grey body. The badger sniffed then advanced across the lawn towards a half empty bowl of cat food on the patio. (Surely puss hasn't been tempted to eat elsewhere?). Brock sniffed again, then scoffed the lot and retired the way it came. Beyond the hedge there is a steep, wooded slope dropping down in the direction of Hemdean Road: ideal territory for a badger sett.

The next night I put out more cat food and awaited results. Sure enough, at twilight Brock reappeared, this time with a companion, and they have been regular visitors ever since, sometimes even with a young one in tow.

Badgers are tough creatures and can look after themselves,

but when very young they can be vulnerable to foxes and dogs, even buzzards. Are my badgers aware that a few doors away is the home of a couple of dachshunds, hounds originally bred in Germany for hunting badgers (dachs)? Their extra short legs meant they could be sent down into a sett to confront the badgers.



Caversham badgers

photo H Gale

How do you tempt a badger? They are not picky. They go for all kinds of vegetable. My son-in-law complains of gourmet badgers who raid his asparagus beds. They also eat worms, beetles, grubs and other insects, birds' eggs, small mammals and even chickens if they can get inside a hen house. The Wildlife Trusts also recommend unsalted peanuts.

Not everyone (like my son-in-law) is fond of Brock. Farmers suspect them of spreading TB, which affects

cattle who then have to be destroyed. But there are disputes about culling badgers to protect cows. 'Wind In The Willows' and sensible Mr Badger still has a powerful influence on the public mind.

New Bridge's learning journey

continued from page 1

building is set in extensive gardens, giving exceptional outdoor learning opportunities where children explore, climb, dig, cycle and discover all year round.

Joanne replaced the previous head teacher, Lisa Bedlow, just over a year ago and inherited a school which had achieved three consecutive 'Outstanding' awards from OFSTED. At the same time New Bridge was moving towards becoming part of 'Reading Early Years Schools Federation' with two other local authority nursery schools. The Federation was formally put in place in January this year, with a common governing body, and Joanne taking responsibility for all three schools. Joanne commented, "The setting up of the Federation with a single Head makes the best use of limited resources and enables the three schools to share best practices and resources."

The Federation had only just been established when the Covid-19 pandemic struck. The school remained open for the children of key workers and those who were vulnerable in some way. To make the best use of resources, children attending New Bridge were moved to the Caversham Nursery School site and staff worked on a rota basis, with a week in school followed by two weeks of self isolation. About 15-20 children were attending school every day. The parents of those who could not attend were able to use an on-line 'Learning Journey' tool to help support parents and children over this time, with suggestions for learning activities for parents to undertake with their children. This was backed up with weekly phone calls and the use of Facebook. For some parents it has been a worrying and stressful period, but Joanne is sure the regular support phone calls have helped.

Generations of local children have passed through the doors of New Bridge



Joanne Budge, Head photo New Bridge School

and it holds a special place in the hearts of many Caversham families. Joanne commented "I am thrilled to be leading New Bridge Nursery School as we enter our 50th year in Caversham. We are looking forward to welcoming new children to our school in September and showing them the full range of fun activities we have on offer in our school."

There are still some 15 and 30 hour spaces available for a September 2020 start at New Bridge. If you would like your child to experience a New Bridge education, you can register your interest here: www.newbridgenursery.reading.sch.uk/Registration-and-Visiting-the-School

With thanks to parents, staff and children at New Bridge for their help with this article and permission for the use of the photographs.

by Phil Chatfield

A Tale of Two Towns

OUR July edition included a piece about a new book by local writer John Mullaney which traces the origin of the Reading up to the founding of Reading Abbey. Despite Covid-19, he has decided to have the book printed, and has made a short YouTube video about it and how it can be obtained. The cost will be £12.00, (£14.00 inc p&p).

The YouTube link is:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=R2C2bDwiTvQ

Alternatively, search for

A Tale of Two Towns, Mullaney.

by John Mullaney



Children on the way up

photo New Bridge School

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ENVIRONMENT

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by Phil Chatfield

AS THE lockdown eases and we move back to travelling regularly for work or leisure purposes, it is worth considering what journeys can be made by walking or cycling. So called 'Active Travel' - the new phrase for walking and cycling - fulfils the twin objectives of improving health and well-being, while also reducing emissions which harm people's health and fuel climate change.

If you use the bus, could you get off a stop early to walk the rest of your journey? Could you take a relaxing stroll home, or hop on a bike and enjoy a cycle friendly route? You might have noticed changes to pavements in the area where new cycle routes have been created to enable you to maintain social distance and stay safe. If you didn't get (back) on your bike during the quiet period and feel a bit nervous now the roads are busier, HSBC UK Let's Ride has some fantastic resources and free events to help you build up your cycling confidence, including women-only bike rides (see www.letsride.co.uk/breeze) and games to help your child learn to ride (www.readyssetride.co.uk). Cycling charity Sustrans has also created an interactive map to help key workers find bike offers and services in their area (if that's you or someone that you know). See www.sustrans.org.uk/space-to-move

If you prefer exploring outdoors on foot, check your local friendly Ramblers group – website www.ramblers.org.uk

Adapted from an item in the A Rocha August eNews

In the long grass

READING Borough Council is experimenting with a new approach to maintaining road verges, which will include a number of sites in Caversham. In part, this is a response to its declaration of a climate emergency, but also it will improve the urban environment for flora and fauna. This 'Rewilding' project is part of the council's new Biodiversity Action Plan, which they consulted on earlier this year.

By changing the way verges are managed, where appropriate, the council hope to encourage more species-rich long grass in corridors along the highway. In Caversham and Emmer Green, the trial covers Peppard Road, large parts of Rotherfield Way, Buckingham Drive, Stuart Close, Emmer Green Pond and banks beside Southdown Road and Lower Henley Road. In experiments elsewhere in the country, traditionally closely mown areas have quickly developed a great diversity of plant life when mowing stops.

The council will review the trial at the end of the summer and are keen to have your views. You can email them at rewilding@reading.gov.uk to tell them what you like or don't like. They plan to try to take account of everyone's views in deciding on how they will manage these areas in the future.

For more details, see www.reading.gov.uk/rewilding by Phil Chatfield, based on information from Reading Borough Council



Rewilding Reading sign photo P Chatfield

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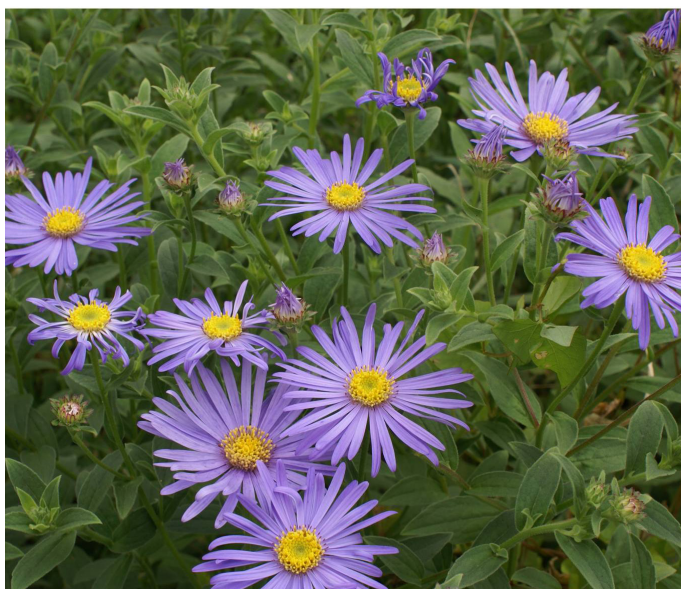
A Michaelmas tale



by Les Cooper

I WONDER whether anyone remembers an old friend of mine called Ronnie Watts, who died in 2009. Although he lived near Farnham, he would very often come to Reading

to give a talk on any gardening theme. Ronnie was a real gardener, with a lifetime's experience in horticulture. He started at the bottom, as a 14-year-old apprentice living in the bothy, then became a head gardener and a Royal Horticultural Society judge. I knew him as a delphinium expert



Aster Frikartii

photo Les Cooper

and remember being with him helping on the Delphinium Society Stand at the Chelsea Show. We were there to sell delphinium seed, and Ronnie could gather a crowd around him in moments. They

would stand agog to listen as he told them how to grow delphiniums from seed. His spiel could sell more packets of seed in seconds than anyone else would sell in a day. I have never met anyone else with such horticultural knowledge and expertise.

But his real achievement was his work with Michaelmas daisies, where he raised some wonderful cultivars. The odd thing was that in the 1960s, in catalogues advertising his plants his name was never mentioned only that of the woman who had introduced them. She was his employer and I once asked him if she was any kind of Michaelmas daisy expert. "No not at all," he answered, "She hadn't a clue about them." Things were different in those days!

Ronnie raised many wonderful Michaelmas daisies such as Coombe Violet, Coombe Rosemary, Coombe Margaret and Diana Watts - to name but a few.

I would like to tell you that I grow lots of them but I don't. I have in the past but I tend to think they are better in bigger gardens than mine. I do grow Aster Frikartii, which is of the same family and is a wonderful perennial, that I would suggest as suitable for any garden.

If you do happen to be in the Malvern area when Michaelmas daisies are in bloom, I would recommend that you visit Old Court Nurseries, Walwyn Road, Colwall WR13 6QE which hold the National Plant Collection of Autumn Flowering Michaelmas daisies. It really is worth a visit.



Another way....

IT'S SWEETCORN season again and time for some yummy, but messy, meals. Instead of boiling up a large pan of water and steaming up the kitchen, try this method to save time and energy. Remove the husks and silk, and wrap each cob in a piece of dampened kitchen paper. Microwave two cobs on high for four minutes. You can also microwave the cobs intact for 4 minutes and then take off the husk and silk afterwards, but that requires asbestos fingers!

by Tricia Marcouse

Allowed Out

by Jo Nicholls

Now, don't you think that you'd be free
To do just as you feel,
Picking up the threads of life
Is surely no big deal.
I've learnt to think a little more
Of the bigger picture here,
Adaptation of our lives
With many changes, have no fear.
Meeting family and friends
Just means so much to us,
We are, you see, a social lot
Not known to make a fuss.
Although at times life will be hard.
We are a stoic bunch,
Picking up the threads again,
I really have a hunch.
Let's don our masks
As we've been told
For our protection
We must be bold.
Vaccination, when it arrives
Is our salvation to restore our lives.



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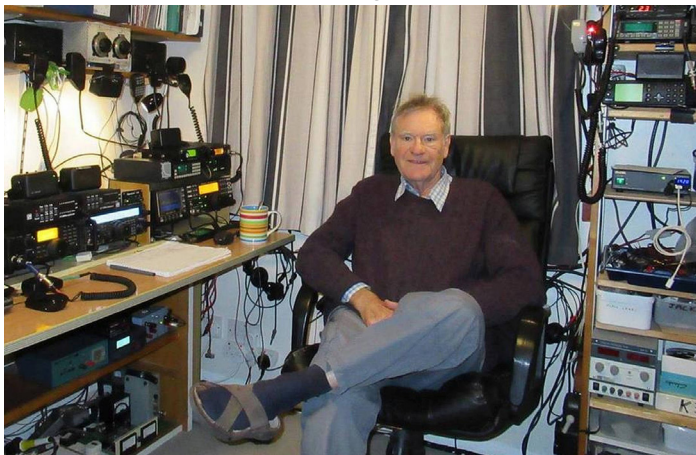


Hamming it up

by John Gumb

AMATEUR Radio is about exploring the magic of radio and communication. The hobby evolved in the 1920s and 1930s and is still going strong today. Reading and District Amateur Radio Club (RADARC) was founded in 1934 and now has around 70 members. Many have had professional involvement with radio, communications and computing. There are currently about 75,000 licensed radio users in the UK.

We are a worldwide community and international government co-operation allows 'amateurs' to operate. Being part of this global movement provides a chance to meet a diverse range of people. Creating and operating a transmitting station requires appropriate knowledge, so suitable qualifications are needed. The UK has a 'tiered' system of 3 levels, allowing easy access to beginners, for whom our club provides training.



G4JTR, Vin in Caversham Heights *photo V Robinson*

Amateur radio was boosted when 'CB' or 'Citizens Band' took off in the late 1970s. People wanted to learn more about radio. Radio is ubiquitous – from the early days of the BBC to pirate stations, from its use at sea and in aircraft to military use. We are even allowed to experiment with communications in space! Each amateur 'station' has a code name by which it is identified, for example G4JTR is the name for our member Vin's station in Caversham.

Amateurs can provide reliable communications when all else fails. Even today, the government and local authorities identify radio amateurs in their emergency plans as having a capacity to provide radio communications.

Adapting to new circumstances

In the 'old' world, we met twice a month, for talks in the winter and practical sessions during the summer. This changed with lockdown and our club had to adapt. We could not meet physically, so we moved to online and radio-based meetings. As we are used to communicating remotely, the online etiquette came naturally. Online meetings help

amateurs to exchange knowledge, and allow members who have moved away to attend our meetings wherever they are. They also enable us to see other home setups.

Some things have not changed. Amateurs still operate their radio stations from home. Someone speaks, everyone listens. In this modern world that is priceless.

'...loneliness and isolation have been minimised....'

Lockdown has caused our hobby to flourish and has inspired quite a few people to get their stations going. There has been a threefold increase in the number of people asking to sit licensing exams since social distancing rules came into place. A new interest has developed in using local radio repeaters, which means that someone who is not already a member can be listening and could be invited to join in.

For some, loneliness and isolation have been minimised by keeping in touch, and members have worked brilliantly together, even 3D printing and sending parts for each other and assisting each other with problems. Two of our members have written brief summaries of their experiences which are included with this article.

Simon, M0ZSU

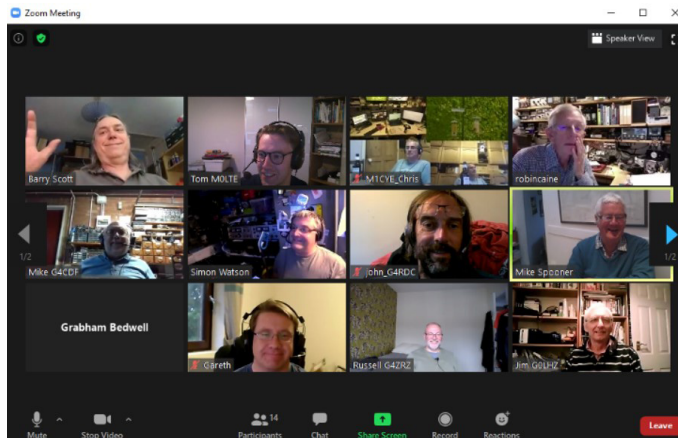
A few years back I discovered a visitor working at my workplace was a radio 'ham'. Having been interested in radios (particularly old valve-based ones) ever since looking in the back of my Nan's radiogram as a toddler, I visited the local amateur radio club, RADARC, which my new colleague was a member of.

At first it was hard to understand what people were discussing because, like many hobbies, it has its own 'lingo'. But the rich and diverse skills, experience and knowledge in the club were obvious.

With time I learned the 'lingo', and realised members had many other interests, from rambling and al-fresco cooking, to flying and space. These were often discussed at our meetings over a drink. When ham radio is mentioned, people have a stereotype in mind, but the hobby has a broad base, encompassing, for example, 3D printing, portable miniature computers and cloud based computing systems. There is even a sporting side, sometimes very competitive, called direction finding which is a kind of treasure hunt, searching for a tiny radio transmitter.

If you are interested in any aspect of radio or communications, computing, 3D printing, electronics or are just intrigued – RADARC is a very open and friendly club and would look forward to warmly welcoming you.

For further information please see www.radarc.org



A Zoom club meeting

Chris, M1CYE:

Whilst a life-long member of the RADARC, I do not currently operate a station. I passed my Amateur Licence in the 80s, but found the cost of big masts and powerful transceivers, and the prospect of talking around the world overwhelming. So, whilst I frequently attended meetings and listened attentively to the speakers, my actual 'on-air' operation was nil. But nobody said anything about that - I was just an 'Inoperative Ham', which is not uncommon.

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The Annual Caversham Arts Trail, normally held in May, was initially postponed until September but has now been cancelled. More than ever they need our support, so we intend to continue the Creative Caversham feature for the time being. For details of all the artists who normally open their studios to the public, see www.facebook.com/cavershamartstrail.

This month we meet Barbara, maker of jewellery with a twist, often from recycled materials.

Dearly pre-loved

by Elestr Lee

USUALLY, new works of art or craft are just that – new. However local artist Barbara Goodbun has for many years been creating wonderful works of art using old, recycled materials. Greta Thunberg – eat your heart out!

For a good 25 years, Barbara has been scouring antique shops for old pieces of porcelain, offcuts of glass, and discarded pieces of old jewellery, in order to create beautiful new items – necklaces, pendants, earrings and bracelets. Her interest began when she started to buy earrings herself, after having her ears pierced. Having lost one of a pair, she didn't want to throw away the remaining earring – and it occurred to her she could use it to create something entirely new.

"I was always interested in making something and, for a while before my interest in jewellery, it



Discarded china plates have a new life in Barbara's hands *photo B Goodbun*

was patchwork. But it really wasn't cost-effective, making things and trying to earn some money from it, as people could buy imported patchwork far more cheaply. When I started making jewellery people wanted to buy it, so for me it isn't 'just a hobby.' I need to set my costs right, I have to be sensibly priced, so I can sell and make something from it."

Barbara has developed her range over many years, and creates both very 'traditional' styles of jewellery, such as pearl necklaces using the pearls from discarded broken necklaces, as well as highly creative pieces, where she interweaves old brooches, beads, stones and other items together to make a dramatic fashion statement.

"For my jewellery, I use really varied materials. I use my drill to cut shapes from old plates and china, and I also use lots of offcuts of glass. I recycle old brooches,



Barbara uses a drill and a small kiln *photo E Lee*

earrings and necklaces. I like experimenting, putting together lots of little 'bits'. I rearrange things, until they look nice. It makes me so happy, and the end results seem to make my customers happy!"

As well as working with a drill, which Barbara uses to cut small shapes from old porcelain plates, selecting out attractive features, Barbara also has a very small kiln, which she uses to fuse together broken pieces of glass, to create new pieces she can incorporate in her jewellery making. One simple idea is to place the pieces of glass in cookie cutters, from which Barbara makes colourful brooches and pendants.

Occasionally, Barbara is commissioned by her customers. "I have been commissioned to create



Offcuts of glass make beautiful new pendants and brooches *photo B Goodbun*

new pieces from old, my favourites were my 'lovely ladies', as I call them! I was approached by them and asked if I could make a new piece for their mother, using pieces from their grandmother's jewellery. In fact, there was enough over, so I made a piece each for the mother and both her daughters."

As well as making items for her jewellery business, Barbara is a keen beader and member of Berkshire Beaders.

Barbara explains, "There is a long history of beadwork in Britain. Beads were used to make boxes and bracelets, as well as to decorate clothes, such as in embroidery – beadwork in Britain goes back centuries." Members get together to learn different patterns and stitches, although nowadays enthusiasts can find a lot of information online about the craft, which is also associated with North America.



A bracelet created from expertly drilled pieces of china plates *photo B Goodbun*

Nowadays Barbara sells her jewellery at arts trails in Caversham and the surrounding area, and she also has a cabinet in Antiques on High, in the High Street, Oxford. "It is interesting to note that American tourists tend to go for my 'big pieces' – made from lots of small pieces - whereas UK purchasers tend to prefer to buy 'classic-style' such as pearl necklaces. Young people tend to like something which is a bit 'different'."

Barbara has developed a keen eye for creating something beautiful from something discarded. "I look for things that no one else wants which I can turn into unique new pieces of jewellery. I suppose I was re-using and recycling things before it became fashionable! At one time, there was a sense of, so this is second hand? But now that has all changed."

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Supporting Chazey Farm Barn

by Helen Lambert, Chair of CADRA

LAST MONTH I outlined the history of Chazey Farm Barn. This month I look at its planning status and the works currently being undertaken. I am grateful for information from members of the Warren and District Residents Association (WADRA) committee and to the Reading Borough Council (RBC) Head of Planning.

The planning permission status of the barn is a long and complicated story! In 1998, permission was given for a 78-bed nursing home, including road improvements and restoration of the barn. In 2003 an application to extend the period for implementation by five years was refused by the Council, but later allowed at appeal. In 2004 and 2006, applications for a larger home were refused. In 2008 preliminary works were carried out, including flood alleviation works and passing bays on The Warren required to discharge the pre commencement conditions.

In December 2019 RBC indicated to the lessee their intent to issue an Urgent Works Notice requiring repair works to be undertaken. If these had not been agreed, the council would have carried out the works and charged the lessee. In 2020 the Council, after meeting with the lessee, advised the interested parties to submit a Certificate of Lawfulness to confirm that development had commenced in accordance with the time limit condition and not since abandoned. At the time of writing, this had not been submitted, so there is not yet any confirmation whether the approval is still valid.

After inspection of the barn in February by the RBC Head of Planning, the MD of the lessee *InMind*, an Inspector of Historic Buildings and a conservation architect from Historic England, it was agreed that work was required urgently to preserve the barn. Using powers provided in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a new schedule of works was drawn up by the Council, agreed by Historic England officers and *InMind*. This was then sent to all parties with a direct interest in the barn putting them



Chazey Farm Barn in July

photos P Chatfield

on notice to carry out the works. *InMind* Healthcare Group, the current care home development company, undertook to carry out the work. After a short delay with lockdown, work started in April. In May, the Head of Planning, Ward Councillor Ballsdon and Lead Councillor Rowland carried out a follow up inspection.

This work is not the full restoration, but a holding exercise of urgent repair works to halt further deterioration. A framework of scaffolding now supports and protects the building, stabilising the significant cracks and providing a temporary roof to stop water ingress. Rubbish inside the barn has been removed and it has been secured against ready access and vandalism. Any final programme of full restoration specified in the planning permission will depend on confirmation of what planning permission is in place and indeed its potential use by the operator. So there are still many unanswered questions on the future of this fine building.

WADRA, CADRA (Caversham and District Residents Association), Reading Civic Society and many others will be following this closely.



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SOMETHING NEW FOR LOCKDOWN

compiled by Phil Chatfield

LAST month we asked our readers to tell us what new and different things they had done in lockdown. Here are some of their stories.

Caversham in a new light – Martin



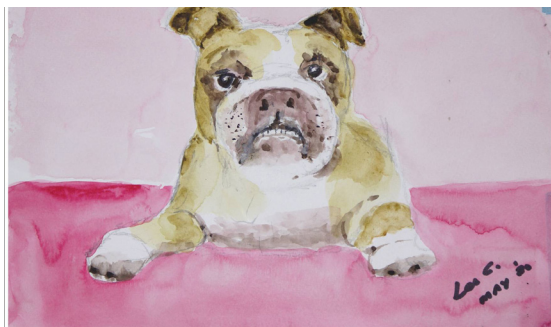
Martin in his studio

photo P Chatfield

MARTIN is a graphic designer, lecturer, painter and potter who lives close to the centre of Caversham. Very early on in the lockdown he noticed how clear the air was and an almost complete lack of traffic in the village. This put the familiar buildings in a new light.

Martin says, "There was an unusual clarity in the air, combined with the spring sunshine, which inspired me to capture this unique moment in time". Martin's paintings of the centre of Caversham feature the library, the shops opposite Waitrose, Church Street, and the area around the mini roundabouts at the junction with Gosbrook Road, all uncluttered by vehicles. He has deliberately omitted the shop names, as these change over time, but the streetscapes will be very familiar to Caversham residents.

Bulldog spirit – Les



Bulldog spirit

photo E Cooper

LES, WHO writes our garden articles, has naturally been gardening, growing new seeds and caring for old favourites. But with so much time to spare, he has done quite a bit of water colour painting. He usually says, "It's

not quite how I wanted it to look". However, he was quite pleased with the bulldog picture, so this is the one we thought he wouldn't mind sharing.

Getting ready for Christmas! – Brenda



Snowman ready!

photo B Caborn

I HAVE two small great nephews and last Christmas I knitted a jacket for each of them. The pattern I chose was more complex than I had realised, so I struggled to get them done in time. With lockdown looming, I thought this was the ideal time to get ahead and so sent two young relatives to buy the wool. I have now completed the smaller one, as shown, and still have at least five months for the bigger one, which should be plenty of time. Although restrictions are easing, I think we will still be spending more time at home.

Purple heron? – Eunice

I THINK quite a few of us have been gardening, the weeds are endless, a bit like the Forth Bridge. I had some rather tatty garden ornaments and decided to make them look a bit better - maybe! The Heron was



Garden delights

photo E Cooper

a gift from my son some years ago and the paint had completely faded, so I thought I would have a go and turn him into a purple heron. As you will see, it's not like a real heron in colour, a bit more like a 'Disney' heron. The rabbit was just plain concrete and when I went to pick him up his ear fell off, so I used super glue to mend him, and then painted him. I think he looks a bit like Thumper from Bambi. There is a concrete pug dog waiting to be brightened up, but he has moss growing on him so I haven't started him yet. I used acrylic paints and a clear varnish spray called Crystal Clear. It seems to work well. It's used for spraying painted pebbles.

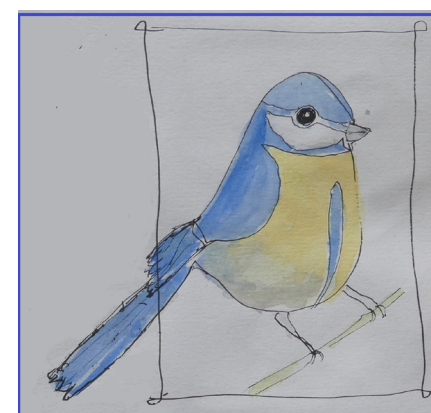
Lockdown illustrated – Jane

I LIKE to keep a diary of my holidays and include sketches of places or things which will trigger memories. At the start of lockdown, I decided to keep a similar record for however long it lasted. Each day I do a small sketch of something different, perhaps a flower in the garden or even something from a book or magazine which has struck a



Jane and diary photo P Chatfield

chord. Along with my written notes, these sketches or paintings are providing a memento of this extraordinary



Diary illustration photo P Chatfield

time. Although the notebooks are small, I have nearly completed my third, each with 100 pages of notes and illustrations. Most days I will just fill a page, but sometimes it can be as many as three.

Charity coverup – Mairead

DURING lockdown neighbours in Highmoor Road set up a WhatsApp group. It is a long road so you tend to know people one end or the other. With the new group it has been great to get to know neighbours the length of the road.

I started making face masks and offered them to people in the street. Then someone suggested I make them for charity. As a neighbour volunteers at Wyfold Riding School for the disabled, I decided to choose that as the charity. I advertised to the residents of the road, friends, family and via the Nextdoor site asking for a minimum of £3 per mask - to date I have made 80 masks and £300 for charity.

Shop local, shop organic

by Helga Bogisch-Francis

THE TRUE Food Community Co-operative is a not-for-profit community shop in Emmer Green which sells local, ethical, wholesome and organic food, toiletries and household goods. It is a co-operative, owned and run by its members. Many customers become members and volunteer their time to help run the shop. Any profits are re-invested in the business.

It began in 1999 when a small group of like-minded people wanted to buy organic and sustainable food in Reading. Initially they clubbed together to buy in bulk. It was formally registered as a community co-operative in 2004. For some years it ran a mobile shop which set up at a number of venues in the Reading area, including Mapledurham Pavilion but, in 2014, it became clear this model was no longer viable and it was decided to focus on the Emmer Green premises.

It's now a busy shop which, even in these odd times, provides a relaxed and personal shopping experience. In addition to fresh organic fruit and vegetables, locally sourced if possible, it sells many products loose from bulk containers, minimising packaging and reducing costs. Bring your own container for dry foods such as rice, sugar and nuts, or for environmentally friendly cleaning products such as washing up liquid or laundry detergent.

The shop aims to enable people to change their shopping habits and buy food and household products in a sustainable and environmentally friendly way. Around 95% of the goods are organic, helping to protect the environment and improve health.



Rebecca, Helga, the bread and the screen!

photo True Food Co-op

Whilst the shop serves local vegans, it does sell eggs, meat and dairy products from small organic farms, providing high quality food produced to assured standards. It also stocks bakery products from Astons Bakehouse in Inkpen, including a range of specialist and sourdough breads.

Eliminating our dependence on plastic is another target for the co-operative. The shop provides paper bags and re-usable sacks for those who do not bring their own containers for dried goods, fruit and vegetables. It also has a drinking water 'Refill' facility for maintaining hydration on the go!

As well as a small team of paid staff, we have around 100 local volunteers who work in the shop for at least one hour a month. As shop manager, it is my aim to offer affordable organic food. Because our customers buy exactly what they want, they have less waste than when buying prepacks at conventional shops, helping keep their costs down. We also sell reasonably priced 'rootle' fruit and veg which is past its best but still good for cooking.

Some products come from national suppliers which share our ethos, such as Suma and Infinity Foods. But local producers like Tolhurst Farm in Whitchurch take priority and we even have regular deliveries by cycle from Greenbroom Farm in Crays Pond.

We try to keep energy use to a minimum, with much of the electricity needed to run the shop generated by solar panels on the roof.

For a small shop we have a huge product range, so do give us a try! We are currently open from 10:00 until 15:00 every day other than Sundays and Tuesdays.

For more information and current opening, see our web site, www.truefood.coop

Playtime at the Weller Centre

by Hazel Bingham

DURING THE period of lock-down we have had around 1700 face to face interactions with people in the community. These were mainly about food parcels and lunches, but also people popping in for photocopying, printing and borrowing books, jigsaws and toys.

During August we ran a breakfast club for the Estate. Our primary aged children were able to come and 'dine in', whilst take-away options were available to the rest. We catered for 30 people a day. Included in the 'dine in' experience was a craft pack with activities for each child to do as they wanted when they visited. The food served included full English on two days and fresh fruit with waffles on another. Cereal, toast and jam were available daily.

Also throughout August we ran a weekly programme of activities

which included litter picking and a 'Memory Lane' Café - which had people sharing their history of Reading in many ways, from photos to memories. We ran scavenger hunts in the garden and Dingly Dell. Young people and their families really enjoyed the activities, and we look forward to October half term when we hope life may be a little more normal.

'...Launch of the Weller Activity Library...'

The start of August saw the launch of Weller Centre Activity Library. This is an ongoing project which lends out toys to residents on the estate, in exchange for a small deposit. These toys were donated by Reading Family Aid during lock-down, as they were unable to spend their money on the trips they would usually run. The toys range from footballs to giant chess.

All in all, it certainly has not been a quiet time at the Weller Centre in the last few months!

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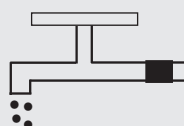
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