

Caversham Bridge

No 682

www.cavershambridge.org

December 2021

CHRISTMAS PRESENCE IN THE PRECINCTS!

by The Editors

ONE OF OUR aims at the Caversham Bridge is to help build a sense of community and belonging for the people of our area. We have always carried advertisements for local businesses, from plumbers to estate agents, and have consistently supported local enterprises and the creative residents of our area.

On Friday 3rd December, starting at 17:00, Caversham Traders will be welcoming visitors to their annual Late-Night Shopping event. This year promises to be bigger



St Martin's Precinct, Caversham *Photo P Chatfield*

and better than ever. Caversham boasts a whole host of independent and family-owned shops, eateries and businesses, which makes it a great place to stock up on festive gifts and to eat out. Many of the shops, restaurants and pubs will be open and there will be stall holders from the Caversham Artisan and Farmers Market in the precinct offering you unique gifts for your family and friends. See the Choose

Caversham website:

www.choosecaversham.co.uk

and their Facebook pages

www.facebook.com/Choosecaversham

for more information.

Santa will be welcoming guests to his special grotto. He's a 'reverse Santa' which means he'll be accepting gifts from visitors which will later be distributed to local children who don't have much to look forward to this Christmas.

In the last 18 months or so, we have reported on the impact of the pandemic on local traders. Saturday 4 December, which is Small Business Saturday, is a good opportunity to celebrate their service and to 'shop local'. Local traders have a wealth of knowledge their customers can tap in to and provide a personal touch to your shopping experience. By choosing to shop in our local stores, we open up opportunities for local growth and employment and build a thriving local economy.

So this December, before you sit down in front of the computer or call an automated ordering service, ask yourself if you could find what you want locally. Deal with people you can get to know and do your bit to support the local economy and build a sense of community.



Emmer Green Precinct

Photo P Chatfield

Time to celebrate



Time to settle down somewhere warm

by Phil Chatfield

AS WE COME to the end of 2021, we are still living under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have all been affected in some way or other over the last 21 months, and it is not clear what will happen in the coming weeks and months. However, we have started to see more freedom, with many clubs resuming their activities and a

growing What's On section (p5). This month we report on events, such as the Halloween Costume Parade (p11) and the Fourbears Book Festival (p6) which would not have been possible last year.

We celebrate local enterprise in this edition, with the Cavmas Late Night Shopping event (Friday 3 December) and Small Business Saturday on 4 December (above). Other local businesses featured include the Caversham Health Club – Sophie and Isaac are the subject of our Community Connections article (p11), Fourbears Books (p6), CJ Barbers (p13), and Caversham's own Jam Lady (p15).

Our Creative Caversham page takes on a seasonal feel as we learn how to make wreaths with Sue and Tamalia Reeves (p12). The end of November marks the start of the season of Advent which, for many, is a period of preparation for Christmas. In our Talking Point, Mike

Smith reflects on the true meaning of Advent (p2). Happy Wanderer looks at how Christmas is celebrated and the changes in traditions over time (p7).

We have been very fortunate over the last 18 months to have benefitted from contributions to the paper from several new writers. This month we welcome Lauren Hampden, who has offered to write a regular 'Plant of the Month' feature (p10) which will complement our articles from Les Cooper (also p10). Louise lives locally and is the horticultural planning producer of Gardener's World. She is also a horticultural consultant and spends what's left of her time in her own garden.

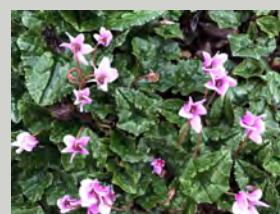
The Caversham Bridge is your trusted local paper, produced by and for local people. Do contact us if you have any comments, news to share or events planned which we can publicise. Write to us at editors@cavershambridge.org

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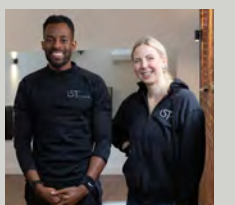
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Isaac and Sophie
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AT THE END of November, the Christian Church begins the season of Advent. For too many of us, Advent is no longer a season in its own right, but simply a time of preparation for Christmas. Might we spend a little time this year focusing on the true meaning of Advent?

The Bible ends in the book of Revelation with these words, "Surely I am coming soon. Amen, Come Lord Jesus" (Rev 22:20). Those words may be familiar, or they may not be. In Advent, we pray that Jesus will come again as God has promised - that he will come soon and save us from ourselves. But what do we really want? In his book *By Way of the Heart*, Canon Mark Oakley reminds us of the following hypothetical situation, first described by Father Gerry Hughes: Imagine that one day, Jesus did come to our house. He rings our doorbell, and we are delighted to see him, so we let him in for refreshments and dinner. We ring our friends to tell them the amazing news. You tell your vicar and bishop, and they invite him to address the national church assembly (insert your own people - I am an Anglican!). Jesus asks to stay with you. Of course, you are thrilled - at least for the first day or two. But then he starts bringing people back with him - they look dubious and



Talking Point – by Mike Smith

tatty, the sort of people your neighbourhood doesn't approve of. He is always being criticised for being in the wrong company and you start to see why. He lets these people stay a while, gives them things and listens to them endlessly, laughs with them, and doesn't seem to see in them what you do. Soon your neighbours are complaining - house prices begin to fall. They don't want prostitutes, dodgy-looking people, and all those foreigners coming to see this friend of yours. And

then the press turns up, because the things he is saying upset the Church, the Government, the lawyers, the academics, in fact everyone. So, after some thought, you realise you have a nice cupboard under your stairs - if you do it up a bit (carpet, paint), Jesus can go in there. That would stop him using the whole house. You can keep it clean, and ensure fresh flowers are left outside the cupboard door every day. You convince yourself that Jesus will be happy in there, and so will you. But how long will Jesus stay in there before his love forces itself out again?

We dare to pray that Jesus will come again - to our lives, to you and to me. Is that what we really want? If so, then be ready for John the Baptist's warning, for this Jesus was not one for aesthetics. He embraced untidy life - not whitewashed tombs. He wants relationships, justice and compassion to be more beautiful than anything that points to him. So, we had better sweep our stable and work out what must change in us.

Come, Lord Jesus!

Mike Smith, Rector, Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham

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: 0118 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk
Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810
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: 0118 947 1703 e-mail secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Current services

St Peter's Church –
1st Sunday of the month:
8:00 BCP Holy Communion
9:30 Service of the Word with junior choir and potential for baptism
2nd and 4th Sundays 9:30
Holy Communion using existing service booklets, with adult and junior choir and Sunday Club
3rd Sunday
9:30 Holy Communion in a new, shorter format with junior choir
18:30 Sung Choral Evensong.
St John's Church – 9:30
St Margaret's Church Mapledurham – 11:15
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: 0118 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current services

St Andrew's weekly services are Sundays at 8:00 and 10:00. The 10:00 is also livestreamed on the St Andrew's YouTube channel. Prayer Book Communion at 11.30 on the first Sunday of each month. More info on the parish website. www.standrewscaversham.org/services
Wednesday 8pm Compline (in church/vicarage)

St Barnabas Emmer Green

David Howell (Churchwarden)
Email: churchwarden@saintbarnabas.org.uk

Current Services

1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month at 9:30:
Parish Communion

1st Sunday of the month at 11:30: All Age Service
3rd Sunday of the month at 9:30: Service of the Word
Every Wednesday at 10:30: Midweek Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (LEP)

(United Reformed Church, Methodist and Baptist)
Contact: Dr Alison Johnston
Tel: 0118 947 5152 www.cavershamparkchurch.com

Current services

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 David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

Current services

Sunday – Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road – 10:30 – (also available on Zoom – email: martin.beukes@methodist.org.uk for details)
Sunday – Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road – 10:30

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

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

Current services

Sunday worship is at 10:30 each week
A link is placed later on Sundays at:
www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk
and on YouTube channel
www.youtube.com/user/CavershamBaptist where the recorded service is shown.

GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Pastor Keith Saynor
Tel: 0118 947 4529 www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for details:
www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

RIVERSIDE CHURCH (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev'd H R Gayle
Tel: 0118 946 3009 www.ntcgreeding.org.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne

Mgr Patrick Daly, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 0118 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for services at:
www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

St Michael Sonning Common

Fr Michael Sharkey, St Michaels, Sonning Common
Tel: 0118 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 are open in a limited way at present. 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

Future editions:

Contributions for the January 2022 issue should be submitted by 6 December and for the February 2022 edition by 1 January. These should be e-mailed to: editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 23 November for the January 2022 issue and 1 January for the February 2022 issue. These should be e-mailed to: advertising@cavershambridge.org



Scout Christmas Post 2021

by Robin Kent

THE CHRISTMAS POST service provided by the 89th Reading Scouts for the delivery of Christmas Cards in Caversham, Caversham Heights, Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village is back! We delivered nearly 2,500 Christmas cards in 2019, but could not operate last year.

The Scout Christmas Post, at just 35p per card, is much cheaper than the Royal Mail and provides a great service to the local community. The 89th Reading Scouts ran this service continuously for nearly 40 years until last year and it's great to be back. In the run up to Christmas, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, and Explorers take on the responsible job of delivering Christmas Cards to local residents posted in our Scout Post boxes across the area, raising funds for the Group in the process.

Our bright red wooden post boxes can be found at locations in Caversham and Emmer Green including shops, libraries, churches, and of course the 89th Scout HQ. The full list of posting sites for Scout Christmas Post 2021 will be on our web site at www.89th.org.uk.

Cards can be posted from Saturday 27 November, last posting day Thursday 16 December. They will be delivered on 18 and 19 December. Please bear in mind we are unable to deliver south of the Thames and we don't go out to Kidmore End, Tokers Green or Sonning Common. For more information email scoutpost@89th.org.uk.

Please use the service yourself for all your local Christmas Cards and let your friends know about it too. This is a great opportunity to save money – at just 35p per card it is almost half the price of a stamp!



The Caversham Bridge – a gift for 2022?

by The Editors

LAST MONTH we confirmed we would maintain the current price of the Caversham Bridge for 2022. We also provided details of how you can pay your annual subscription by direct bank transfer. A number of you have already done so – thank you. Details are repeated below for those who would like to use this option. Early payment is helpful, as we can then advise your deliverer you have paid your subscription.

We have had an enquiry regarding gift subscriptions. You may purchase a subscription for anyone in the Caversham area for just £5 – a small gift which will last throughout the year. Postal

subscriptions are also available at a cost of £15 per year for delivery in the UK.

The details required for a direct payment are:

Bank account name: Caversham Christian News

Sort Code: 30-91-31

Account Number: 01107366

To identify the payment, please use a reference made up of your postcode and house number (or house name). For example, 59 Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX would be RG48AX59.

For gift subscriptions, please contact subscriptions@cavershambridge.org with the name and address for the delivery and we will arrange payment with you.

We wish our readers a peaceful and safe Advent and Christmas.



UPDATE FROM OUR LOCAL SURGERIES

THESE ARE remarkably busy times for our local GP surgeries. They are working hard to provide the best care they can despite the vast increase in demand and staff absence due to illness and isolation. For example, Balmore Park surgery took more than 8,900 telephone calls in October. This demand is far greater than anything experienced before, and 30% above pre-pandemic levels.

Also at Balmore Park, there have been teething problems with a new telephone system. These are being resolved and waiting times, which are due to the number of people trying to get through, should improve. The system tells you where you are in the queue, which gives the option of waiting or calling back when the lines are not so busy. A message on their website reads as follows "Please do not shout or swear at the receptionist once you get through, it is not their fault. Many are reduced to tears by the end of their shift by the regular abuse they are receiving."

Our health service staff have been in the front line dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic for nearly 2 years. This has been incredibly stressful for all of them, and they need our understanding and support now more than ever.

For more information, see surgery websites:

Emmer Green Surgery: www.emmergreensurgery.co.uk

Balmore Park Surgery: balmoreparksurgery.co.uk

Based on information from the surgery web sites.

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Community Co-Op in Grove Road, Emmer
Green, opposite St Barnabas church

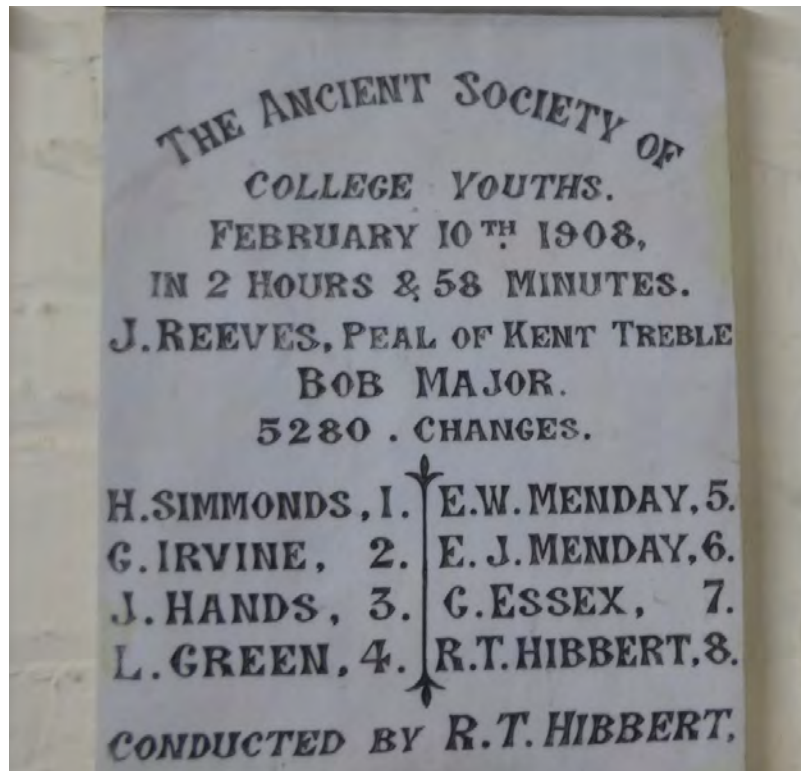
For whom the bell tolls by Doug Beaumont

THE AUGUST edition of Caversham Bridge, in the 'Prospect Street Shops' article, referred to Edwin James Munday, the newsagent at 20 Prospect Street.

To the bell-ringers of St Peter's church this is a very familiar name, as it appears on the marble tablets attached to two walls of the belfry recording peal performances by the ringers around the turn of the 19th/20th centuries. In fact, as well as Edwin, there was also an Ernest William Munday, and the two of them took part in many peals at St Peter's between the 1890s and 1920s. The photograph is of one of the peal tablets, showing Ernest ringing the 5th bell and Edwin the 6th bell.

It is not completely clear whether the two were father and son or brothers. But the dates of their membership of the St Peter's bellringers, recorded in the annual reports of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers, suggest they were brothers. One of them, recorded simply as E. Munday but probably Ernest, joined the Guild in 1884. According to the Reports, he was joined by Edwin from 1891. In 1908, Ernest appears as tower foreman, with his address given as 'Fern Cot' in Chester Street. Kelly's Directory¹ shows his address as 4 Chester Street so the two of them lived just around the corner from each other. Ernest ceased being tower foreman in 1934. In 1937, Ernest stopped appearing in the reports, with the final year of Edwin's membership of the St Peter's band being 1948. So our records show between them, they gave over 100 years' service as bell-ringers at St Peter's.

Any readers who would like to visit us in the belfry on a practice night to see the tablets and the



Peal tablet, St Peter's Belfry

photo D Beaumont

bell-ringers in action would be welcome. Although Covid-19 precautions are still in place, we hope this may be possible next year. Please email the secretary, David Sumner, on bells@stpetercaversham.org.uk to say you would like to visit. Our practice night is Tuesday, 19:00-21:00. A visit could last from 20 minutes to as long as you wish to stay at the practice.

1. Kelly's Directory was a trade directory in England listing businesses and tradespeople - a Victorian version of the Yellow Pages.

Windows on Advent

by Anna Clarke

ADVENT MEANS 'coming' and is a time when we remember the coming of Jesus into the world. During Advent we sometimes remember the long journey that Mary and Joseph went on to Bethlehem, and so this year, we are encouraging the people of Caversham to go on a journey (just a short one... and no donkey required)!

This journey will take the form of an Advent Trail which is being run by St John's Church in partnership with Thameside Primary School.

Twenty-five houses (split into 2 mini trails) around Caversham will display a special lit-up Advent window depicting part of the nativity story. Windows will be available for viewing from 1-25 December and will be lit roughly between the hours of 16:00 to 21:00.

There will be a map available, in due course, identifying the locations of the houses and perhaps even the opportunity to win a prize if you manage to find all the windows!

For more information, join the Facebook event: Advent Window Trail 2021 <https://fb.me/e/1qGCNxGsy>

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AND/OR
2) ATTEND OUR CRAFTERNOON ON
SUN 28TH NOV 3PM-4.30PM AT ST JOHN'S CHURCH
AND/OR
3) JOIN THE TRAIL IN DECEMBER (MAP TO FOLLOW)

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Building our community

Planning update from Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA), bringing you a summary of planning and transport matters affecting the RG4 area

Planning

READING GOLF Club and Beechcroft at Caversham Park have both held exhibitions on proposed plans, but formal planning applications have yet to be submitted. A revised application for the conversion of 2 Priory Avenue (application 211625) would leave all the bins at the front of the property which is a Building of Townscape Merit within St Peters Conservation Area. CADRA has raised concerns. A 20M lattice tower for 5G (application 211623) on the corner of the laundry site is proposed. This would require foundations near to the Lombardy Poplars and the trees on the George Street frontage and we have expressed concern for the trees. You may have noticed that the lights on Caversham Bridge have now been converted to LED. Further adjustments are being made. Refurbishment and conversion of the Reading Bridge lights is taking longer to resolve.

Bus Services

A bus service improvement plan has just been issued. The

overall vision is to deliver a comprehensive bus network in Reading, which means travel by bus is the natural choice for both residents and visitors. The plan is intended to pave the way to secure additional funding.

www.reading.gov.uk/transport/transport-strategy/bus-service-improvement-plan

Licensing

The review of the 2021 Reading Festival takes place early December with local residents represented. A License for Winter Wonderland on Hills Meadow from 12 November 2021 to 3 January 2022 was granted on 9 November. There are conditions which require the operator to prevent undue disturbance to local residents, to monitor and record sound levels and to be available to respond to nuisance-related complaints. The license is for one year only and the success or otherwise will influence decisions on future applications. We advise that any noise issues should be reported in writing to Environment.ProtectionTeam@reading.gov.uk. Or you can contact Licensing@reading.gov.uk.

WHAT'S ON

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to editors@cavershambridge.org For an event to be included in the printed paper, we need to receive details by the 10th of the preceding month. Later submissions can be included in our online What's On, which is updated regularly. To see what has been added check: cavershambridge.org:5154/local-info/whats-on

Many of our churches will be holding special services over the Christmas period. Please check their individual websites (see page 2) for details. At the time of writing there is still some uncertainty about any Covid-19 restrictions which may apply.

Caversham Library opening: 09:00 - 17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00 - 17:00 Thursday and 10:00 - 15:00 Saturday www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/all-libraries/caversham-library

December – January – Exhibition of small artworks – Geo Café in Prospect Street. Works by Caversham artist Liz Real (www.lizreal.co.uk) fellow Reading Guild of Artists member, Michael Garraway (www.garaway.co.uk) 10% of sales to Launchpad Reading <https://launchpadreading.org.uk> Liz's pop-up art gallery 'Art in the Arbour' is open by appointment for the purchase of cards for Launchpad (50% donated to the charity on any sales) and art. She has a new range of cards featuring Reading - including a Christmas card. For appointments email lizreal1@icloud.com or call 0790 9766733

Sundays – Farmer's Market and Artisan Fair 10:00 – 15:00 Caversham precinct: www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Mondays – Caversham Park Bridge Club – at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start. Phone Lin 9477820 for further information: www.bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Tuesdays – Rivarate Choir – 19:30 Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. Enjoy singing together. For details see <http://rivarate.com>

Wednesday 1 December – Rosehill WI – 14:00 St Barnabas Village Hall. Martyn Harrison (tenor) on Christmas Waits, as well as a quiz and general Christmas songs

Friday 3 December – Bereavement Café – monthly drop-in for the bereaved 14:00 – 15:30, St Barnabas Parish Centre, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA Every first Friday of the month. All welcome. Contact Gillian Wilson 0118 947 8772 for information.

Friday 3 December – Cavmas – Caversham's Christmas Shopping Evening – From 18:00 in the Precinct and along Church Street/Prospect Street. Reverse Santa and Pop-up bar in precinct.

Saturday 4 December – St Barnabas Christmas Fair – 14:00-16:00 Church Hall & Parish Centre Grove Road, Emmer Green Proceeds to charity. Everything you would expect and more, including refreshments and Father Christmas. To offer items for the fair (before the day) please call: Wendy Howell on 0118 946 1365

Saturday 4 December – Christmas trees at Caversham Court – 9.30-13:00 See page 9

Saturday 4 December – South Chiltern Choral Society Christmas Gala – 19:00 – 20:00 South Chiltern Choral Society celebrate their 70th Anniversary with a programme of Christmas delights at Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common, RG4 9LN For details contact Jane Pares. Phone 07764502621 Email: paresfamily@gmail.com Website: www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk

Saturday 11 December – Artists & Makers Fair – 10:00-16:00 – Caversham Methodist Hall, 272 Gosbrook Road. Local artists and craftspeople display their work for sale. Free entry. Phone Jean 07808 966928 for information. www.cavershamcrafts.co.uk

Saturday 11 December – Christmas Concert by Candlelight – 19:30 – Concerts in Caversham St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, RG4 7PL. Tickets available from The Caversham Picture Framers and Gallery - 0118 948 1610 and online at: www.concertsincaversham.co.uk

Tickets will be £22, £20 (60+), £16 (16-25s). Under 16s are free.

Thursday 16 December – Caversham WI meeting – 19:30 Church House (next to Waitrose). Every 3rd Thursday of the month. Jaye Windmill reciting Christmas stories. New members are welcome. Email: cavershamwi@berkshirewi.co.uk Secretary: Joy Kennedy on 07786642424

Saturday 18 December - Christmas carols in Caversham Precinct - Starting at 10.30 - Rivarate, the Caversham choir, will be singing. There will be a voluntary collection in aid of Launchpad.

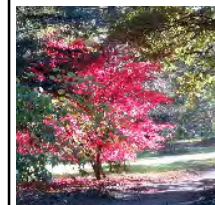


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For your bookshelf....



A magical time of year

Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews' where we briefly review a couple of titles chosen from our bookshop 'Fourbears Books' on Prospect Street. Christmas is nearly here. Please do pop in to say hello; we have lots of excellent gift ideas for every reader. We opened properly last December, so thank you for reading our thoughts over the last year and for all your custom and support.

by Alex Forbes



Four bears for Christmas

photo A Forbes

THIS MONTH'S books are all about Christmas for kids. It's a magical time of year, especially if you throw yourself into the Christmas spirit.

Tom Fletcher has been brilliant on Strictly, and he's written several books. His popular book 'The Christmasaurus' has been re-released in a shortened version picture book for ages 3+. 'The Christmasaurus' is about a Christmas dinosaur who can't fly to pull the sleigh with his reindeer friends. One night he

accompanies Santa to help with presents but gets left behind and meets a little boy and their adventure begins. This is a great story and, although it is more suited to the original longer format, it's still a lovely tale with beautiful illustrations by Shane Devries.

The second book is 'The Christmas Department Store' by Maudie Powell-Tuck and Hoang Giang. There's an old-fashioned feel about this book. It tells the story of Benji who is looking for Christmas presents for his

family. He discovers a wonderful shop where money doesn't work and you pay with songs and funny stories. The message of giving and love really comes through in this book, which is set to be a popular choice this year.

Next year is exciting for us. More events, another Book Festival, introducing a book club and much more. Happy reading, and please contact us if you have any book needs. Everyone at Fourbears Books wishes you and your loved ones a happy and healthy festive season.



AF Harrold at the store

photo C Routh

DURING THE Autumn half term, Fourbears Books hosted its first Children's Book Festival. It also had visits from authors Robin Ince, Tuesday

Fourbears Fest by Fred Smith

and Kaya Holder and Anita Frank.

There were 11 events in 7 days, which required a lot of planning. Children were able to meet and listen to several authors of children's books. AF Harrold, Iszi Lawrence, Kate Poels, Fiona Barker, Patch Pegg the portly Pirate, Holly Webb and Tim Tilley all took part. The week was supported by Reading Children's Book Group, who also run monthly sessions for children in the shop. Shop owner Alex Forbes was delighted with the response, which made all the hard work in preparation worthwhile. He has thanked all who came to the events, which had great feedback. He said, "Hopefully once we've found the right time it will be an annual event, which we can build on and expand genres and the target age range.

Fourbears Fest will be a thing!"

In the relatively short time since it opened, Fourbears Books has established its place as one of Caversham's independent businesses at the heart of the community. So next time you are stuck for a present or are looking for a book, call in and have a chat with Alex for some advice.

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Happy Wanderer celebrates Charles Dickens, Reading and Christmas

OUR WAYS of 'keeping Christmas' over the last few hundred years have changed considerably. During Cromwell's Commonwealth in the mid-17th century, it was actually forbidden to celebrate Christmas, and there are presently some Christian denominations who do not recognise 25 December as anything special.

Charles Dickens, in 'A Christmas Carol', reminds us of the situation in 1843 when the story was first published. Turkey was being consumed for Christmas dinner where, in the past, it had been goose, but Bob Cratchit, clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge, was still expected at the office at the usual time on Christmas morning.

'...not so ancient a custom...'

As a collector of old documents, I have several legal documents, discarded when solicitors were having a clear-out, which were signed and sealed on 25 December. The Christmas Day Bank Holiday had not yet come about, and the giving of gifts on Christmas Day is perhaps not so ancient a custom as has been assumed. After all, Boxing Day, December 26,

was once the day for giving Christmas boxes, and I have documents showing that early 19th-century employers were expected to give New Year boxes to their servants.

Dickens had friends in Reading, notably Thomas Noon Talfourd, the politician and lawyer. When in town, he is said to have stayed at the George Hotel, one of the coaching inns. It still possesses a chair in which he is supposed to have sat. It must be the oldest surviving inn in Reading: although the words 'Ye George MDVI' are painted on the front, the 'Georgesyn' is mentioned in the Will of Robert Bedewynde, a former mayor, signed in 1423.

In 1841, Dickens was invited by George Lovejoy, the bookseller, to stand for Parliament for Reading in place of Talfourd, but he declined. He did, however, appear on stage in the town on three occasions. The first of them was as an actor with The Amateur Company of the Guild of Literature and Art, at the Town Hall in 1851, at the invitation of the Mayor, W. S. Darter. This would have been in what is now called the Victoria Hall, but was previously called the Small Town Hall. Other members of the cast included Wilkie Collins, the author, John Tenniel, the cartoonist and



Great Expectations: Reading Public Rooms

The Illustrated News of the World, 1859

illustrator, and Mark Lemmon, editor of 'Punch' magazine.

His two later appearances were in the Reading Public Rooms, otherwise known as the New Hall. Dickens was President of the Reading Literary and Mechanics' Institute, which held lectures there, and had a library. The building, still in London Street, was later a Primitive Methodist Chapel, the Everyman Theatre, the offices and printing works of the 'Reading Standard' newspaper, and a centre for small business, before becoming a hotel and bar, Great Expectations, in 1998. The interior gives no sign of it having been a large auditorium, with a gallery at the back, capable of seating several hundred people.


In December 1854, Dickens gave readings from 'A Christmas Carol' and, in November 1858, extracts from 'Dombey and Son' and 'The Pickwick Papers'. Ironically perhaps, he did not read extracts from 'Great Expectations'.

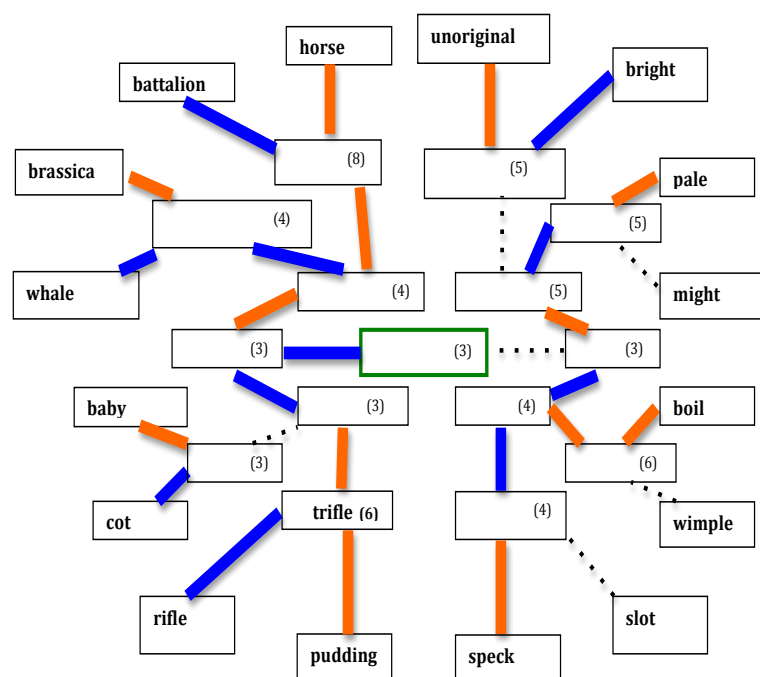
Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

WORD PUZZLE

Find the word that has the same meaning as the clue; or rhymes with; or has one letter that is different. For example: *trifle* has 6 letters, rhymes with *rifle* and means *pudding*.

Rhyme
Letter change
Meaning 

**Answers on page 15**

A CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

Can you find the 19 Christmas related words here?

E E S N E C N I K N A R F C
T M A R Y W M R Y O Y T J G
N J B B L I M R O O S E V C
S O E U I S D Y A U E C L N
A S T V S E G A K T J H H A
I E H R A M O C O S S R A T
A P L R O E L A O H E I D I
N H E D E N D M N E D S V V
G E H I O E R E M P H T E I
E B E H N N I L M H G M N T
L S M E D N K S I E H A T Y
S M A N G E R E R R N S C M
N H R R Y M V Y Y D S B M C
D R S T A B L E C S N R A O

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Angels
Bethlehem
Camels
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A new look for an old friend by Rob Sproule

MANY OF YOU will have noticed the evidence of construction work in progress at Caversham Baptist Church at the junction of Prospect Street and South Street. Behind the hoardings, work is going on to improve accessibility and to make other improvements to the building designed by famous Victorian architect, Sir Alfred Waterhouse. This follows a survey in 2016 of the church family, other building users and the local community. We appointed Caversham-based DLK Architects to help with the redesign and Reading-based Morris & Blunt Ltd to carry out the construction works.

A ramp will be installed to provide street to lobby access, and the alternative steps will be renewed. We've adopted a contemporary design making use of steel balustrades and glass panels. A new main door, wooden framed with etched glass, will be fitted using the original hinges, retaining and honouring the building's architectural heritage. A new doorway between the main worship area and the lobby will provide a view from the main door into the worship area. The lobby toilets are being renewed to include disabled facilities. The upper hall is being completely refurbished, including a new floor suitable for youth groups, exercise and keep fit activities. A new kitchenette/tea bar for serving snacks and drinks will be provided, and the toilet refurbished.

In addition, essential services, including heating and lighting, are being upgraded. At a time when we are thinking about our environmental impact, this will reduce our energy use. This work started on 22 September and should be completed by the end of February 2022.

When it is finished, the building will be easier for people with mobility problems and those using pushchairs to use. The new heating system will improve comfort throughout the building, and the new self-contained unisex toilets will meet modern standards and provide improved privacy. We hope the community will make use of the upper hall, which has its own access from the street via the tower. With its tea bar, toilet and storeroom, it will provide a fantastic, multi-purpose resource.

The building holds a prominent position in the heart of the community, reflecting our strapline 'Showing the heart of Jesus, in the heart of Caversham'. The refurbished entrance area will improve the street scene, offering a contemporary perspective of this Grade II listed building. We like to think we're taking Waterhouse's original design which was fit for purpose as a church in the 1800s and sensitively adapting it for 21st century Christian worship and community use.



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GARDEN GHOSTS

by Phil Chatfield, photos by Mike Lelliot

THE FRIENDS of Caversham Court Gardens used the Gardens and their Gothic features to set up a Halloween Trail this year.

The idea for this followed the success of the Caversham Halloween Trail organised in 2020 with support from the Warren and District Residents Association. For this, local residents decorated their front gardens and then registered themselves on an on-line map. Children could then enjoy hunting for the spooky gardens without any 'trick or treat', keeping Covid 19 risks to a minimum.

The historic riverside gardens at Caversham Court are owned and tended by Reading Borough Council with support from the Friends. With its ancient trees and yew hedges, it is a very atmospheric location for Halloween decorations. Most of the displays were made by Hester Casey, who used recycled materials and left-over scraps of



fabric, combining her hobbies of sculpture, textile art and theatrical costume making, to create these pieces. They were each designed to complement the surroundings and some of them float eerily in the wind. Hester recruited her neighbour Jill Knight to make an amazing knitted tarantula and 8 spiders. Hester said, "It was so lovely to see the gardens come alive, with children running around excitedly in the autumn sunshine as they discovered the different spooky displays hanging in branches and floating in the wind. There was a happy buzz in the gardens and a constant stream of people using the cafe."

We have reported before on the front garden displays put on by both Jill and Hester since the start of lockdown in March 2020. These have amused passers-by and given children something to look at which changes with the seasons.

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Put Up and Clean Up!

BIRD BOXES harbour fleas and other parasites from year to year. So if you haven't already had a look in your boxes and done the annual clean, now is the time to check the weather forecast and find a few dry days to do it.

Empty out any nesting material, unhatched eggs, or strange creatures sticking the lid down with webbing, and scald the inside of the box with boiling water. Leave the lid off (or wedge it open) for a few days to dry. If you can, put a handful of hay in the base that can provide both some warmth for anything using the box over winter and the start of a nest come the spring. PLEASE do not use cleaning chemicals or biocides.

No nest boxes in the garden? This is a great time to put one up and they make a perfect Christmas present. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) website:

www.rspb.org.uk, has masses of advice on what to choose and where to put them. They sell a range of bird boxes from their online store. The local RSPB group will have bird boxes for sale at the Green Christmas event at Caversham Court on Saturday 4 December (see below). University of Reading researchers found putting a bird box up near a bird feeder encourages predation by squirrels, so try to keep the nest box several metres away from a feeding station.



photo F Smith

Peeking into bird boxes to see how the chicks are doing is strictly forbidden, but you can buy yourself an extra present this Christmas and invest in a bird box camera:

<https://shopping.rspb.org.uk/nest-box-accessories/>
Tricia Marcouse

Green Christmas Tree Sale at Caversham Court Saturday 4 December 2021

PLEASE JOIN us for the annual sale of Scots Pine Christmas trees at Caversham Court on Saturday 4 December from 9:30-13:00.

These trees are the by-product of heathland management on the Camberley Special Protection Areas. Lowland heath is a rare habitat in Europe, and we are lucky enough to have most of it here in the UK. The trees hold their leaves, smell beautiful, but have a more open structure than the standard Norway Spruce. We'll also have holly, mistletoe, willow wreaths and stars, and bundles of ornamental greenery for sale.

Our charities selling environmentally friendly Christmas gifts are back this year: local honey and beeswax candles from Reading Beekeepers; RSPB with a range of goods including food and homes for garden birds; beautifully turned wooden bowls and light-pulls; and Fair Trade offering a range of food and gifts.

In addition, the garden kiosk will be open for hot drinks (including mulled juice) mince pies and the like.

We still have some Covid-19 restrictions. There

will be a one-way system through the site with entrance through the main gates on Church Road, with any queue on the pavement outside. There will be a track and trace system and hand sanitiser station at the entrance. There will also be an entrance for people to walk down from the churchyard.

The trees will be in size order, and the other decorations available as priced bundles near the cash point. We will have already washed and bagged change and stored £5 notes, so you don't need to worry about using cash. There is a card reader for tree purchases.

There is no parking at Caversham Court unless you are using the disabled parking bays. So please park elsewhere, walk in to make your purchases, and then bring your car down to load afterwards. We will have a 'tree crèche' for storing trees and someone to help load cars and keep vehicles and pedestrians apart.

Please check on the Caversham Bridge website for the latest Covid-19 information at the beginning of December, as Government regulations may change.
T Marcouse



Harvesting the trees

photo Econet

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A 'CHRISTMAS CAROL'



by Les Cooper

I KNOW this will shock you, but I have prejudices. I am talking about gardening here, not about the programmes on the television. No, I am moaning about flowers some gardeners love and ones which I am not so enthusiastic about. I dislike those huge dahlias which look like over-blown cauliflowers, and I have never really liked Hellebores. Other people raved about them and I thought they were quite pretty, but they seemed to me always to be holding their heads down in sorrow.

Then last Christmas one of my wife's friends gave her two large pots of Hellebore 'Christmas Carol'. You can imagine my reaction; "What does she want to give you those blinking things for?" I muttered as I trudged out

into a chilly garden to plant them. How wrong could I have been because they were delightful? They had beautiful large glowing white flowers for weeks. I had planted them in a partially shaded area, and this was a benefit too, because Hellebore 'Christmas Carol' it is not always easy to find good flowering plants for that kind of area. They flourished delightfully and were most obliging in not requiring a great deal of attention. Apparently next year I have to cut the old leaves back to the ground in January or February as this will show off the emerging flowers. That's not too bad.

I guess I am a bit low-spirited in December, mostly because the year has seemed to pass quickly and, like everyone else, I'm fed up with Covid. However, there will



soon be a lot to look forward to. A favourite of mine is the Viola, and I have grown a variety called 'Four Seasons' which will assuredly brighten things up for weeks. Also, I do like the little Anemone Blanda, perhaps because it is blue, my favourite colour, but chiefly because it seems to pop up in a cheery "nice to see you" way. Another winner for me is Iris Reticulata that flowers early in the year. I always grow mine in large pots and for my birthday I was given some bulbs called 'Scent Sational' (what a stupid name). Unsurprisingly, given the name, they have some kind of scent. I am not certain I am concerned about this, particularly if I have bend down to sniff its perfume. What a grumpy old man I am.



Iris Reticulata photo E Cooper

Plant of the month *Cyclamen hederifolium* by Louise Hampden



LET ME introduce you to one of the most enduring and surprising of plants that give at least six to seven months of pleasure throughout the autumn and winter months. Its name is Cyclamen hederifolium.

Each plant grows from a tuber, which is essentially an underground storage device from which the stem grows. They look so unpromising in their dormant state; flat, round, dark brown and quite boring really. It sits around doing absolutely nothing from May to late August but then suddenly, as if by magic, exquisite little nubs of flowers in pink or white emerge without their leaves and sparkle for weeks in the low early autumn sun, giving sustenance to bees and other pollinating insects.

Next come the leaves for which its species name 'hederifolium' gives the clue. 'Hedera' the Latin name for Ivy and 'folium' meaning leaves. What's so incredible is that for each plant, the leaves appear to be unique – more marbling in some, more silvery and grey in others – and the leaves will cover the ground throughout the winter months - slowly disappearing in spring. The tubers then rest throughout the summer storing up their energy and slowly expanding to sometimes magnificent proportions. I

cyclamen city started from two plants brought back as surplus from a filming shoot and they have done this themselves over the passing years. I have not the heart to reduce their numbers in any way, simply because of the utter joy they bring when summer starts to wane.



have some plants with tubers the size of saucers nestling just under the surface of the soil.

They seed around magnificently; the stalk of pollinated plants forms a springy type of structure with a seed on its end which drops to the ground and is often moved around by ants to form another little tuber.

Some gardens have problem places; for instance in the dry shade under trees or under hedges where nothing seems to grow. Not a problem for this plant. This is precisely where they will thrive, and I have often given tubers away to garden visitors or clients for them to try and they are amazed. The pictures accompanying this article are from my own garden, and this particular

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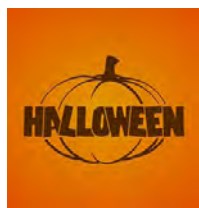
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A frightening competition

by Elisa Miles,
Chair WADRA

THE WARREN and District Residents' Association (WADRA) took to Halloween in a big way for 2021. Caroline Foulkes set up the Caversham Halloween Hunt in 2020, with some support from WADRA. This year the Association sponsored the event, along with a Halloween Costume Parade. Caversham residents certainly worked hard to treat the community to some creative and scary decorations.

The costume competition was held in the refurbished Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion – WADRA's first community event since 2016. The competition attracted around 60 children and adults on 31 October 2021. The entrants were definitely in the Halloween spirit, despite the awful weather!

Our winners were:

Under 5's: 1st Ivy Nickless, 2nd Wren Ansell, 3rd Matilda Evans,
Highly Commended Jack McKeane

Under 10's: 1st Rinaya Richmond, 2nd Finty Ansell, 3rd Jan Ural,
Highly Commended Jamie Evans

Pet and Human: Joint 1st Tabitha Landen and Amy Harvey

Under 16's: 1st Eliza Rowlinson-Widder, 2nd Ruby Cook, 3rd Reece Baskervine

Over 16's: 1st Scott Dudman, 2nd Ben Ansell, 3rd Jemma & Joanna Gale

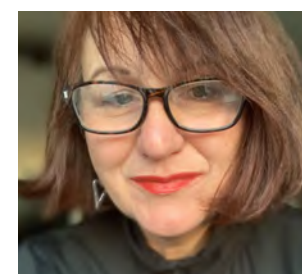
Best in Show: The Dudman's

WADRA would like to thank our judges, Vicky Baker, Helen Barnett, and Kim Brashares, for taking on the challenge, given the range of beautiful, scary, and creative costumes. The afternoon would not have been possible without our generous sponsors, Waitrose, Terry's, Art Jam Studios, Kim's Cakes, Fourbears Books, Fifi's Vision and Wrap & Bow, as well as our volunteers. They all deserve a very big thank you!

For more pictures of the Halloween Hunt and the Costume Parade, see:
www.wadra.org or visit the Caversham Halloween Hunt Facebook Group.



Community Connections



by Caroline Gratrix

THIS MONTH we meet the lovely young couple that are Sophie and Isaac from Caversham Health Club by IST Fitness, based in the heart of Caversham.



Sophie and Isaac

photo C Gratrix

This entrepreneurial pair are passionate about fitness for your body and mind, with a strong emphasis on a luxurious experience. They have poured their lives into creating a beautiful club and curated a varied fitness program and membership offers.

There is a healthy smoothie bar and complimentary fruit and snacks, so you can come in, do a class/work out, grab a bite for breakfast and even work from the relaxation area using their complimentary WIFI, not forgetting the free parking! Both are local, Isaac is from Caversham, a former Highdown pupil, and Sophie is from Tilehurst. They have been together for 7 years and now live in Caversham. Let's find out a little more about them.....

Tell us a bit about you.

How long have you lived in Caversham?

Isaac has been in Caversham for 25 years as his family live here, I (Sophie) have been here 7 years and I came here for work.

What's your favourite thing about Caversham?

The location and the family feel about the area. Also, we love that there is a thriving independent business scene here.

Caversham's best coffee shop?

There are a lot of great choices for sure! Typically we will go to The Collective or Geo Café.

Where to eat in Caversham?

We love Vegivores or the Last Crumb for their tasty pizza!

Where to shop in Caversham?

Terrys is great for all those bits and bobs you may need, Waitrose for the weekly shop, and Nood stores or The Collective for finding the perfect gift.

If you could bring anything to Caversham, what would it be?

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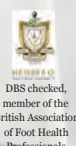
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Pine cones, berries and oranges add a touch of festive magic

If you venture down to Marsack Street, there's a great opportunity to become wreathed into the Christmas spirit...
Elestr Lee investigates!



WHILE many of us create hand-made cards, gifts or food items as part of our Christmas preparations (with varying success), it is also possible to combine enjoying a social get-together with learning a whole new craft - and coming home with a splendid festive ornament. Since the opening of Creativ.Spaces in Caversham just two years ago, owner, Tamalia Reeves, and her mother, Sue, have been offering Christmas wreath making workshops, which have been popular right from the start.

"When I opened the studio in 2019, I decided to offer a Christmas wreath making class. It was fully booked, so I added some extra classes. Last year, we had to be socially distanced, and again the wreath making classes were oversubscribed. It was a good thing that Sue was with me to teach as well, as people had to be spread apart," recalls Tamalia. "We are something of a double act!" adds Sue.

The evening workshops at the Marsack Street studio, in the Southview Business Park, kick off with a glass of mulled wine. The evening is a combination of the creative



Tamalia and Sue (left). Proudly hand-made festive wreaths (above and below)

all photos: T Reeves

with the sociable - those who sign up often turn out to be mothers and daughters, or groups of friends or work colleagues. Over the past few years some people are starting to make the evening an annual event. "Some people come along simply because they enjoy learning a new skill. For others, it's become a tradition - an annual get-together," Tamalia says. "One particular group have said to us, 'Can we come back again?'"

Artist and teacher Tamalia has long enjoyed making Christmas wreaths for fun - and now she gets a thrill out of passing on her skill to others. "When we start off, everyone just has a very simple metal ring. After that, virtually everything that is added is as sustainable as possible. Sue and I go out and forage for the things we need. We use spruce and ivy for the greenery, and we also go out collecting pine cones. For fragrance, we use dried orange or cinnamon sticks. We also find berries or even feathers for colour. People then bring items of their own to add - Christmas tree baubles or LED lights. But we never use Oasis or plastic frames," she adds.

Initially everyone starts off by mossing up their frames. Next greenery is added - usually spruce. Variations in how the final wreaths will look start to emerge. Some prefer a tight, neat wreath, while others start to become quite flamboyant. "Some of the wreaths can end up double in size!" laughs Tamalia. "We teach each step, so for example techniques to keep the decorations attached, using floristry wire. This kind of thing needs to be good quality, as we need the wreaths to last from early November, when we start the workshops, until Christmas Day.

"By the end, every wreath will look different. And they each reflect the personality of the person making it."

Tamalia and Sue are

keen to promote the positive mental health benefits of their workshops. "Especially for people who have been working from home - it's great for them to be able to come out, and to be together with others. Some people are still nervous or unsure of going to big parties, but this is a smaller scale gathering," comments Sue. "And because we have a fair amount of space, people can remain socially-distanced and be safe. We like to feel we are creating a relaxing and festive atmosphere for everyone."

They have five wreath making workshops to choose from. But for those who might prefer an afternoon workshop, Tamalia and Sue also offer Tea, Cake, Create. "Enjoy a cuppa with a mini afternoon tea while you learn how to make a Christmas table centrepiece," Sue says. "And for festive fun for the whole family, why not come along to make personalised Christmas baubles as well!"

Together with the scheduled workshops and artistic events which take place at the studio, the space is also available for hire for private events and parties for young or old. But do look out for extra-special Christmas wreaths hanging on your neighbours' doors this December - they may well be Caversham-made!

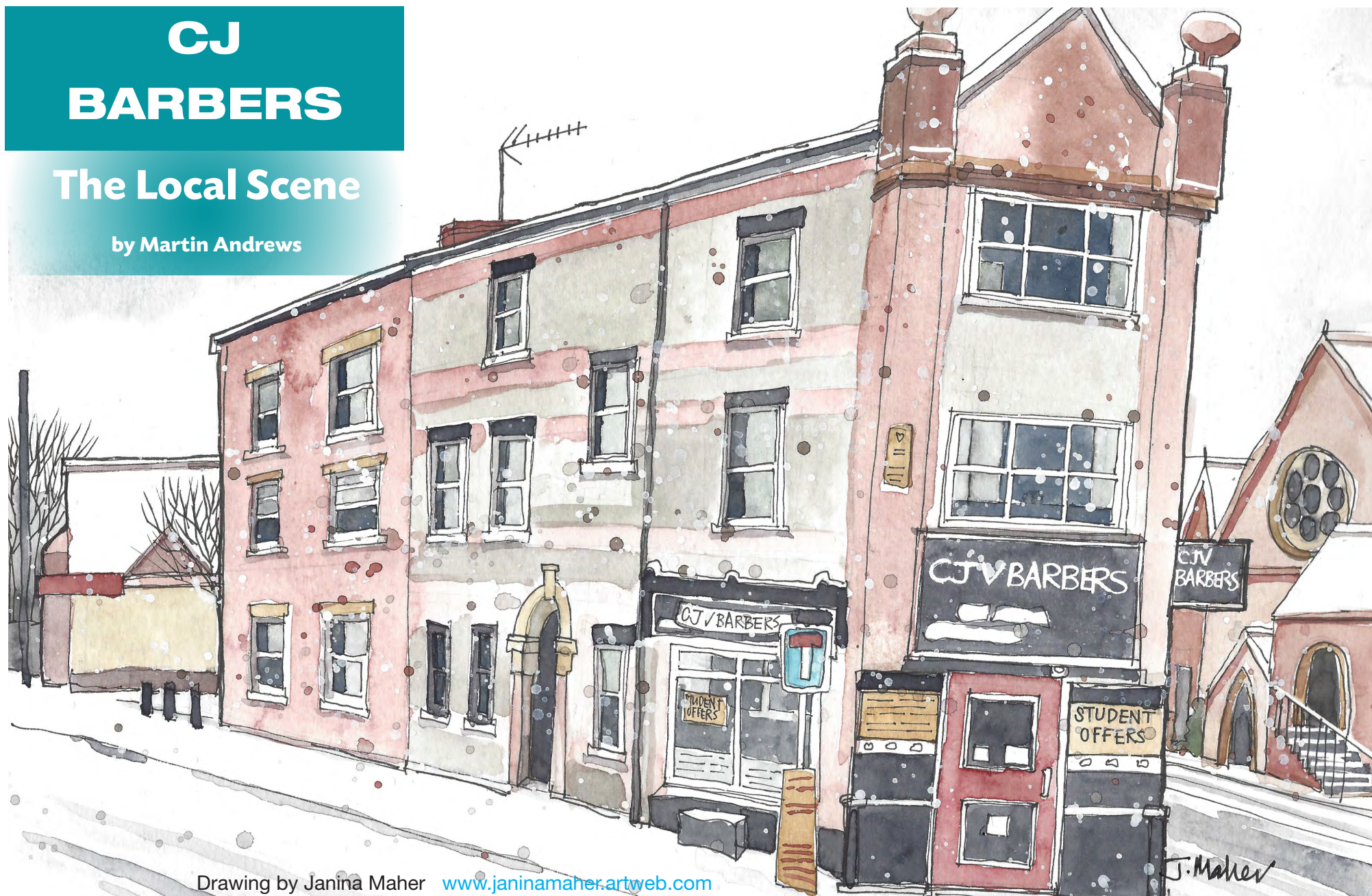
To find out more about workshops and events at Creativ.Spaces, check out: madebytamalia.co.uk



CJ BARBERS

The Local Scene

by Martin Andrews



Drawing by Janina Maher www.janinamaher.artweb.com

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THE BUILDING that comes to a tapering point with one side at the beginning of Gosbrook Road and the other in South Street has always fascinated me. The architect has made such good use of the awkward plot, and the triangular shape makes for oddly-shaped rooms. Janina Maher also found the building a great subject for this month's drawing when she sketched it in the snow last winter. I dropped in to talk to CJ of the Turkish Barbers, hoping to get some background information and was delighted to discover CJ himself was fascinated by history and had lots to tell me.

As I entered, my attention was immediately attracted to two cabinets full of vintage barbers' equipment and ephemera. Hanging on the wall was a framed chronology of the people and businesses that had occupied the premises since they were built in c.1900. According to this list, a copy of which CJ found in a drawer when he moved in, the first trader was Frederick William Slade, a coal and corn merchant. In 1916 another corn merchant, Walter C. Hunt, took over. At the end of the war the premises were occupied by a completely different business – Frygoods Ltd manufacturers of fish cakes.

In 1952, a crisp manufacturer, Golden Twin Manufacturing Company, moved in. A number of Caversham residents had previously told me of the delicious smells from the building in the 60s as they passed by. An old friend who worked at the nearby specialist joiners, Elliotts, remembers the pavements outside often had a film of grease! Apparently, the firm went on to become Golden Wonder Crisps, which many of us will remember. They moved out in 1971 and it was taken over by Marston Radiator Services, followed by Fuller Read & Company, dealers in tools, in 1986.

Whiteknights Estate Agents occupied the site between 1991 and 2010, when it became Ink-Ability, supplying printer inks and other materials for the new technology. The present owner of the Turkish Barber's shop took over in 2017 and opened up the shop space to form a spacious salon. In the forty years that I have lived in Caversham I have seen some of these businesses come and go, but I hope CJ will be cutting hair for years to come.

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First Impressions Matter

Changing direction – where next?

by Laura Harmsworth

In a study by Jobrapido, nearly two thirds of the UK workforce want to change their career path, and when Totaljobs conducted a survey of 5,364 Brits affected by Coronavirus, it found one in five used their free time in lockdown to search and plan for a career in a new industry.



SWITCHING INDUSTRY can be really daunting - your job is to show a recruiter what makes you a good candidate for the role compared to someone who is already in the industry.

Which career?

Spend time considering your options and the impact on your lifestyle, family, finances, mental health, happiness etc. Do you want to work more from home or are you happy to commute?

What makes you tick, what are you passionate about?

Research

Research is key: to confirm that this type of industry/role is for you, and to demonstrate your commitment to a career change.

- Speak with contacts/shadow someone in the industry
- Read relevant news articles
- Attend events
- Secure a voluntary role
- Subscribe to relevant journals/podcasts
- Connect with relevant people and companies on LinkedIn
- Investigate required qualifications (e.g. for teaching, healthcare, IT, engineering, and law)
- If a less formal qualification is required, find training for little cost that will fit around

other commitments, e.g. Udemy, Skillshare, LinkedIn learning (LinkedIn often do a free trial)

Update your CV and LinkedIn profile

Update your CV with the key transferable skills required that you have from paid/voluntary roles, and ensure the experience and achievements are tailored to the new industry.

The functional CV could be your best bet (May 2021 article), as it highlights your transferable skills.

Update LinkedIn stating you are changing industries and ensure the skills and experience on your profile are matched to the industry requirements. You can do this in your summary (adding Key Specialities), put the keywords in your career sections, and update the skills list.

Next month I'll continue with this series of articles relating to particular circumstances e.g. career gaps, first/early CVs for students and graduates.

Wishing you a wonderful festive season.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

or on LinkedIn, where she posts tips and articles:

www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

Her website is: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email Laura at contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS BRIDGE CLUB



by Duncan Knight

IT WAS a close thing, but Covid-19 nearly killed us off. Of course, the important thing is that our members survived. But during the year-and-a-half closure, some moved away and others left for personal reasons. Ordinarily, when people leave, replacements are sought, but this was not possible due to Covid-19. So, our membership is now well down and we are looking for new members!

Although we love this marvellous game, we don't take ourselves too seriously. Some

people are very passionate about bridge, and there are plenty of clubs for really good or competitive players, but that is not our way. Some of our players are better than others, some improve, and others occasionally leave for something more challenging, but we prefer a steady, easy club. We don't even have a committee or an AGM, and just one person tends to the essentials.

We meet fortnightly on Mondays at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on

Highmoor Road, starting at 14:00. Our membership is limited to twenty due to the size of the room we use.

If anyone is interested, you do not need to have a bridge partner to apply, but it is necessary to know the basics of the game. We offer a free trial session for anyone who might be interested. For more information, contact Duncan Knight on 0118 9475544 or email duncan.knight@googlemail.com

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Get Jamming with the Jam Lady

Sarah Roy



Fig and Earl Grey Jam

This month's recipe is a great one for your Christmas list. I use Turkish figs from the Istanbul Supermarket on Oxford Road. It's a treasure trove of Eastern Mediterranean food and well worth a visit.

Ingredients:

1kg chopped figs

1kg sugar

10g Earl Grey tea leaves

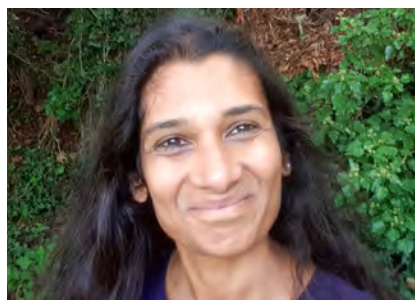
Method

1. Wash the jars and lids in hot water. Put into a warm oven (175°C) for 15 minutes to sterilise them. Mix the chopped figs and tea leaves in a large, heavy based pan with just enough water to cover.
2. Stew down the fruit and tea leaves, using a masher to break down to a pulp. Add a little more water if necessary. You want to avoid letting it burn on the bottom of the pan.

3. Stir in the sugar until it dissolves. Bring to a rolling boil.
4. You know that it has reached setting point when the mixture is bubbling and spitting. Take care as the jam will be scalding hot at this stage and therefore quite dangerous.
5. Once ready, ladle into the hot jars right to the top and seal the lids firmly. As the jam cools, a vacuum is created and the jam is preserved.

Fig and Earl Grey Jam goes just as well on your cheese board as it does spread on doorsteps of fresh white bread.

Merry Christmas!



A time for reflection

THIS IS the time of year when we often start to look back at our lives over the last 12 months. As a result, some of us feel overwhelmed, lonely or even sad as we approach the festive season.

To help ourselves, we could start by accepting fully what celebration means to each of us, however differently we might interpret it from others, and enjoy whatever form it may take.

Insight, rumination and reflection are all vital to our sense of self and can contribute greatly to our wellbeing. Being grateful has been shown to have a huge impact on mental wellbeing, and little mini-reflections on gratitude can be a wonderful gift interspersed amongst all the material gifts we give and receive this festive season.

Self-reflection is one of the best ways we can shift our mindset, increase positivity in our lives, and discover a greater understanding of who we are and what is going on for us. Self-reflection helps us to understand more about the way we respond to situations, and

to find ways to deal with situations positively, instead of letting them consume us.

We can also be left with regret at paths not taken, decisions not followed through, or tasks not accomplished. But acknowledging what didn't go the way we had hoped for is a great first step towards looking ahead with more clarity and purpose.

In both our professional and our personal lives, the end of a calendar year stands as a marker of how far we have come, how far we would have liked to have come, and how far we still have to go. Especially in the uncertain times since the pandemic began, by giving us a sense of time and place, of charting our course, of being able to look back and to look forward, self-reflection offers us a lifeline.

We can slowly turn our minds towards the concept of **appreciative inquiry**. This means looking back at this past year with an inquisitive, yet non-judgemental gaze. Holding on to the highs and learning from the lows. Giving thanks, sharing laughter and love as best we can.

And then we can slowly turn our gaze to the future, to the new year which is set to unfold as this year comes to a close. The mystery

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right) stallion, trite, kale, light, male, write, boy, **joy**, jot, toy, spot, tot, pimple, trifle blot.

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