

Caversham Bridge

No 694

www.cavershambridge.org

December 2022

Things to celebrate as this year closes

DECEMBER IS always a busy time in the run-up to Christmas. A wide variety of events are planned this month, including the traditional Advent and Christmas services in our churches (see page 4).

Tree Week runs from 27 November to 5 December, and The Friends of Clayfield Copse invite you to a self-guided walk along The Ride, through part of the woodland they care for. This guide will tell you the stories of 14 different trees you will find there. See the wonderful autumn colours, particularly of the beech and service trees. Get to know the trees which support some of our rarest butterflies, and admire the persistence of the dying English Elm tree, fighting Dutch Elm Disease, but sending out a new shoot directly from its roots.

Come and find out more. Car park off Caversham Park Road, RG4 7AA, and a short walk across the football field, to The Ride, Clayfield Copse. Contact: 07740 7663409: Website: www.econetreading.org.uk and Facebook.

On Friday 2 December, there will be a late-night shopping evening in Caversham, full of fun, food and festivities. There will be local choirs in the Precinct, as well as stalls from Caversham Artisan & Farmers Market with gift ideas and freshly cooked food. The Baptist Church will host a craft market, and the Reverse Santa will be at Fourbears Books to collect gifts for children who might otherwise miss out on Christmas! There will also be a food bank collection which will accept non-perishable food and food for pets. www.choosecaversham.co.uk for details.

By The Editors

The next day, Saturday 3, sees the annual Green Christmas Tree Day at Caversham Court Gardens (9:30 – 13:00), and the St Peter's Church Christmas Market (see page 3 for more).

To end this busy weekend, St Andrew's Church will be hosting the Caversham Gala on 4 December (details page 12), and the Glass Ensemble, an amateur female chamber choir based in Berkshire, will be performing at Queen Anne's School. Join them at 16:30 for a cosy afternoon of seasonal music, carol singing and festive refreshments. Tickets are £12.50 in advance/£15 on the door/under 18s £5 – all available via 0118 947 8097 or <https://billetto.co.uk/e/make-good-cheer-tickets-738074> There will be a retiring collection for charity.

The regular Artists and Makers Fair returns to Caversham Methodist Church on Gosbrook Road on Saturday 9 December from 10:00 – 16:00 (see their advert on page 4). Concerts in Caversham bring the weekend to a candlelit conclusion at St Andrew's Church on Sunday 10 (see page 5 for details).

And finally, on Christmas Eve, Nativity Live returns to the streets of Caversham starting from the Baptist Church at 16:00 (see page 4).

For more details of events in our area, see our What's On entries on page 6 or online at www.cavershambridge.org



Caversham Precinct

photo Phil Chatfield



The reverse Santa and friend
photo A Forbes

Plenty on offer in the run-up to Christmas

By Phil Chatfield

OUR DECEMBER edition marks the end of another turbulent year. Twelve months ago, we were looking back on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and hoping for a return to something more normal and the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. But our pages have reflected local impacts of the war in Ukraine, the drought, and the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, as well as celebrating our community.

This month we anticipate the Christmas season with the many events planned in December (see

above), and Christmas services in our churches (p4). Our Eco-Tip aims to help us to have a greener Christmas and reduce waste (p9). Local artists feature in our Creative Caversham article on Li-Sheng Cheng, who, with Matthew Hitch, has been organizing the Christmas Gala at St Andrew's Church Hall since 2010 (p12). Our colourful Local Scene painting from Janina Maher is of the popular Alto Lounge on Church Street (p13).

Even as winter closes in, there are still things for gardeners to be thinking about, and Louise Hampden and Les Cooper both have ideas about planting for the future in our gardens (p10). We also report on the success of Caversham Court Gardens and the Henley Road Cemetery in two national

award schemes, run by the Royal Horticultural Society and The Green Flag Awards (p9).

Two local schools appear in this edition, with new play facilities at St Martin's Primary in Caversham Park Village (p8), and two Outstanding Ofsted reports for Caversham Nursery in Amersham Road (p11). Animals link our regular item from Happy Wanderer, who has been inspired by a murmuration of starlings (p7), and our Wellbeing article which considers the benefits of pets (p15).

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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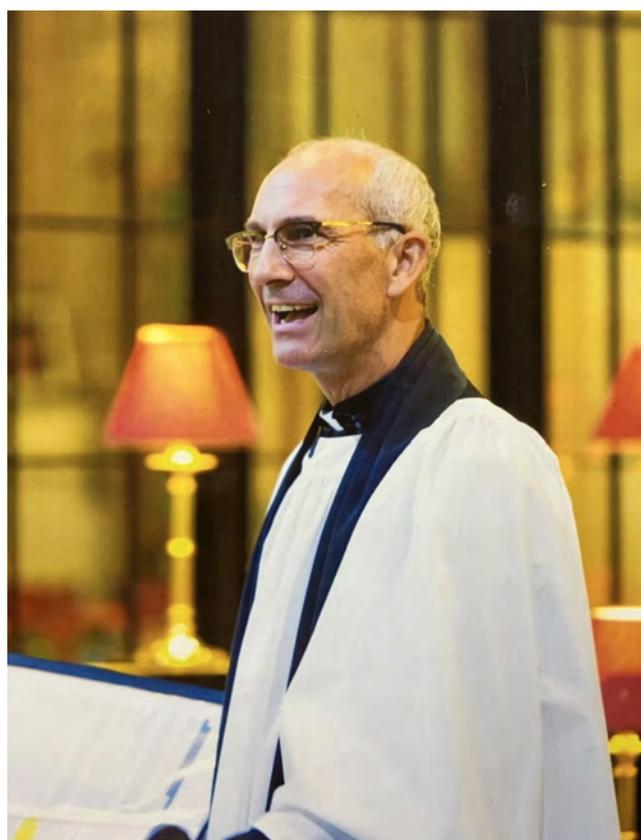


Remembering what Christmas is about

'CHRISTMAS COMES but once a year' - yet it always seems to come around more quickly than expected, despite being the best-known date in the UK calendar!

So, no doubt as December arrives and moves towards our most-celebrated holiday (holy day), the *Talking Point* will be Christmas, despite many other worthy contenders for our attention. The turmoil in government, the continuing war in Ukraine, the sharp local rises and falls in diminishing Coronavirus cases, and the ever-present and darkening cloud of climate change that threatens the whole planet's stability, will all be shelved as we try to prepare for Christmas. We will have less money in our pockets, we will need to be more creative, we may have to cut corners, and we will have our heating on low.

But it is good to be focused on this celebration, whatever the tumult in the world. Because, if we can look beyond the materialism and the familial expectations of Christmas, we can remember what it is all about: the simplest and yet most profound of stories. Over 2,000 years ago, our creator, God, took steps to save us from ourselves, and sent His only child



Talking Point –
by Andy Storch

Revd Andy Storch

into our world, to live a lifetime alongside us, and then to die in our place on the cross aged just 33.

There will be multiple opportunities in churches and other venues to hear that simple message, to sing it in our carols, and to spread it in our cards. But may I commend to you a special and visceral telling of the Christmas story? It speaks to adults and children alike, and will bring you back to what it is all about, on Christmas Eve this year. At 16:00 on Saturday 24 December 2022, starting at Caversham Baptist Church, Nativity Live will begin with Mary and Joseph and a real donkey (or two). They will travel via the Clifton Arms, Westfield Park, South View Avenue, Ardler Road and then along Gosbrook Road to finish with a Nativity Tableau, and refreshments, in St Johns Church by 18:00. Along the route in the past (we have not staged the event since 2019), many Caversham residents, plus a variety of mostly appropriate animals, fall in with the procession and join in the carols, and it provides a most memorable reminder of the coming of the Christ-child. See page 4 for more details.

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

Contact: admin@ctmparish.org.uk or 0118 996 8836
Correspondence address: Church House, 59 Church Street,
Caversham RG4 8AX

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 Gosbrook Road Sunday services

8:00 Online CTM Youtube channel (stays available to watch anytime)

9:30 1st and 3rd Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd All Age

Worship, 4th Service of the Word

Sunday Club for children on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

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)

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

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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

Our churches are open with some restrictions in place. Most have a range of on-line services, house groups and social meetings, using Zoom and YouTube. For current information, see the websites 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 2023 issue should be

submitted by 1 December and for the February 2023

edition by 1 January. These should be e-mailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 December for the

January 2023 issue and 1 January for the February

issue. These should be e-mailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org

Green Christmas Tree Sale at Caversham Court



Tree harvest

photo D Rylands

by Trish Marcouse

PLEASE JOIN us for the annual sale of Scots Pine Christmas trees at Caversham Court on Saturday 3 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 most of it is here in the UK. The trees hold their leaves, smell beautiful, but are a more open structure than the standard Norway Spruce. We'll also have holly, willow stars, and bundles of ornamental greenery for natural decorations in the house.

We're joined by a range of charities selling environmentally friendly and ethical Christmas gifts. Local honey and beeswax candles from Reading Beekeepers;

food and homes for garden birds and hedgehogs; beautifully turned wooden bowls and light-pulls by our local woodworker; and a Fair Trade stall offering a range of food and gifts from around the world.

There is also the Christmas market in St Peter's Church, which will have refreshments, including hot mulled fruit juice!

Our trees and decorations are very reasonably priced, but not all stallholders have card readers, so please bring some cash.

There is no parking at Caversham Court unless you are using the disabled parking bays. Please park elsewhere, walk in to make your purchases, and then bring your car in to load afterwards. We'll have a crèche for storing trees, and a person to help load and separate cars from pedestrians.

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The Caversham Bridge – subscriptions for 2023

by The Editors

LAST MONTH we confirmed we would maintain the current price of £5 for 2023 Caversham Bridge subscriptions. We also encouraged you to pay your subscriptions by direct bank transfer if possible. 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. You may also purchase a gift subscription for anyone in our area for just £5 – a small gift which will last throughout the year.

The details required for a direct payment are:

Bank account name: Caversham Christian News

Sort Code: 30-67-99

Account Number: 72808960

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.

If you have any questions regarding your subscription, please email: subscriptions@cavershambridge.org

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

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You can buy single copies from:
NOODSkin in Church Street, Fourbears Books in Prospect Street, the True Food Community Co-Op in Grove Road, Emmer Green, opposite St Barnabas Church, the Milestone Café in Caversham Park Village and now from Sheabutter Cottage, 118 Henley Road.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES IN CAVERSHAM

THIS YEAR Christmas Day falls on a Sunday, so the normal pattern of Sunday services may change. Several local churches will be holding carol services or a Christingle in the weeks before Christmas.

Our Lady and St Anne

Thursday 22	19:30	Carol Concert
Saturday 24	21:00	Mass of Christmas Night
Sunday 25	9:00	Mass of Christmas Dawn
Sunday 25	11:00	Mass of Christmas Day

St Andrew

Sunday 18	17:00	Carols by Candlelight
Saturday 24	15:00	Nativity Service
Saturday 24	20:00	Christmas Night Service (like Midnight Mass, but not so late!)
Sunday 25	8:00	Christmas Morning Said service
Sunday 25	10:00	Christmas Morning All-Age Eucharist (Said service at 8am)

St Barnabas

Saturday 24	23:30	Midnight Mass
Sunday 25	9:30	Parish Communion

St John's

Thursday 15	19:30	Candlelit Community Carol service with traditional carols and readings and seasonal refreshments afterwards
Friday 16	16:30	Christingle service, lots of fun with oranges and sweets
Saturday 24	16:00	Nativity Live starting at Caversham Baptist ending at St John's.
Saturday 24	11:30	Christmas Eve Midnight Communion
Sunday 25	9:30	Christmas Day Family Celebration with Communion

St Margaret

Sunday 11	18:30	Carol service
Saturday 24	16:00	Christingle
Saturday 24	23:30	Midnight Holy Communion service
Sunday 25	1:15	Christmas Morning

St Peter

Sunday 4	18:30	Advent Carols
Sunday 18	18:30	Carol service
Saturday 24	5:00 & 16:30	Two Christingle services
Saturday 24	23:30	Midnight Holy Communion service
Sunday 25	8:00	Christmas Morning (Book of Common Prayer)
Sunday 25	9:30	Christmas Morning Festival Communion

Caversham Baptist

Sunday 18	10:30	All Age Nativity worship
Sunday 18	19:00	Carols by Candlelight
Sunday 25	10:30	Christmas morning worship

Caversham Methodists

Sunday 11	10:30	Carol Service at Caversham Heights followed by lunch
Sunday 25	10:00	Christmas Morning Worship

URC – Caversham Park Village

December 18	11:00	9 Lessons and Carols
December 25	10:00	Christmas Day Morning worship
December 22	11:00	Christingle Service



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Email: d.capasso67@gmail.com

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Nativity Live IS Back! by Revd Penny Cuthbert



AFTER A two-year Covid-enforced break, the much-loved re-enactment of the Christmas story along the streets of Caversham is back this year on Christmas Eve. Nativity Live is a joint production by three churches - Caversham Baptist, Gosbrook Road Methodist and St John's, Church of England. Members from the different congregations take on the roles of Mary and Joseph, shepherds, angels and wise men, and we are all invited to travel with them to watch the drama unfold, and to sing carols along the way. As always, live animals will be part of the scene, donkeys, sheep and goats (and often a few dogs that join us along the way). The journey starts at Caversham Baptist Church at 16:00 and travels to the Clifton Arms (where there is no room at the inn) and on to Westfield Road Park (where astonished shepherds are greeted by angels declaring the Saviour's birth). Passing Our Lady and St Anne's Church, we reach Gosbrook Road Methodist Church (where we find wise men searching for the newborn king). Finally, we arrive at St John's, where we all gather to celebrate the good news of Jesus's birth. Everyone is welcome to join this event – see you there!

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For your bookshelf...



Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews', where we briefly review a couple of chosen titles from our book shop 'Fourbears Books' in Caversham. It's nearly Christmas. Do pop in and see Santa in the shop on 2 December at 17:00. It's part of Caversham Traders' Late Night Shopping. We also have Santa in the shop on 4 December at 11:00. It's a reverse Santa, where we ask visitors to bring a book or toy, new or as new, for distribution by Reading Family Aid to less fortunate families, so their kids have something to open at Christmas.

by Alex Forbes



Time for this bear to hibernate!

photo A Forbes

AS IT'S CHRISTMAS, we wanted to look at two brilliant festive books for children. *I Definitely Don't Like Winter* by Fiona Barker is about two best friends - Hank and Hoog. Hank is annoyed as he doesn't like winter one bit. Hoog absolutely loves winter. The book is beautifully illustrated by Christine Pym. These two best friends learn to put their differences aside, despite not agreeing about Winter. This book is a lovely, sweet story and beautifully sums up how important friendship is, even when you don't agree. It was also a perfect reminder to me of how lovely it can be getting warm and cosy in this colder weather. The other book I wanted to look at is also by Fiona Barker, illustrated this time by Pippa Curnick. *The Big Christmas Bake* takes the reader through the Twelfth Night Bake and all the special ingredients needed for the cake. The reader goes through

a slightly different twelve days of Christmas as the cake is made. We have four penguins delivering sugar and, on the fifth day, rabbits deliver 5 golden rings! There is also the dried bean hidden in the cake mix, with the lucky recipient being King or Queen for the day. *The Big Christmas Bake* is a lot of fun and would be a perfect read with a nice slice of cake. Eat carefully though, as you could bite into the Twelfth Night Bean and be King or Queen!

We wish everyone season greetings and warm wishes for however you spend this period, and all the best for 2023. We look forward to seeing you in the shop soon.

Congratulations to Alex and Claire on the safe arrival of their daughter Eliza in October –
The Editors



MUSICAL CANDLELIT TREAT IN STORE...

Ewan Miller with the Caversham Chamber Orchestra
photo Torbjorn Hultmark

by Elestr Lee

sponsorship locally, and Queen Anne's School was generous, which made Ewan Millar's concert possible."

Adrienne's next venture will be her annual Christmas Concert by Candlelight, which takes place on Sunday 10 December, at 19:30, in St Andrew's Church. The chamber orchestra and soloists will perform an uplifting programme of seasonally appropriate music, including Howard Blake's *The Snowman*, beautiful Baroque concerti, as well as carols for the audience to join in. There will also be mulled wine and mince pies to enjoy during the interval.

The event is usually a sell-out so, to avoid disappointment, buy tickets either through the Concerts in Caversham website – www.concertsincaversham.co.uk - or from the Caversham Picture Framers and Art Gallery, in Church Road.

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THE RECENT autumn concert series in Caversham ended in triumph with a packed hall at Queen Anne's School for an evening of Handel, Bach and Mozart, performed by the Concerts in Caversham Chamber Orchestra. The orchestra was formed of some of London's leading professional players, and featured the exciting young oboe soloist Ewan Millar, who performed Mozart's Oboe Concerto.

The Grand Finale rounded up five very contrasting concerts, which showcased a wide range of musical genres, organized by Adrienne Black. "I loved them all, each one was so different," Adrienne told us. "Fortunately, we managed to raise some

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WHAT'S ON

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to editors@cavershambridge.org We need to receive these no later than the 10th of the month before the event for inclusion in the printed paper. 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

Caversham Library opening: 09:00 -17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00 - 19:00 Thursday and 10:00 - 15:00 Saturday. Regular events such as *Rhymetime* are now being held again - see www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/all-libraries/caversham-library

Geo Café - Artists against homelessness, an ongoing and changing exhibition of art by local artists at Geo Café, Prospect Street. Sales support Launchpad Reading. Open daily except Tuesdays.

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 - *Babies and Toddlers* - 10:00 -11:30 - Gosbrook Road Methodist Church - term time

Tuesdays - *St John's Baby and Toddler Group* - 09:30 -11:00 in term time - Caversham

Hall, St John's Road - all welcome.

See www.facebook.com/stjohnscaversham

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

Sundays - *Farmer's Market and Artisan Fair* - 10:00 - 15:00 Caversham precinct Church Hall, Emmer Green www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Friday 2 December - *Bereavement Café* - monthly drop-in for the bereaved 14:00 - 15:30, St Barnabas Parish Centre, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA First Friday of the month. All welcome. Contact Gillian Wilson 0118 947 8772 for information.

Friday 2 December - *Late night opening in Caversham* - 17:30 - late, Caversham Traders Association. See Facebook for details @cafmarket and @choosecaversham

Saturday 3 December - *Green Christmas Tree Sale* - 9:30 - 13:00, Econet - Caversham Court <https://econetreading.org.uk>

Sunday 4 December - *Regular Monthly tasks at Clayfield Copse* - 10:00 - 12:30 Friends of Clayfield Copse (ECONET) - Car Park at Caversham Park Road. One of a series of work parties which care for our open spaces. For the full programme, see <https://econetreading.org.uk/programme>

Sunday 4 December - *Christmas Gala at St Andrew's* - 14:00 - 18:00, St Andrew's Hall, Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7AW www.cavershamartists.wordpress.com

Wednesday 7 December - *An A Capella male voice quartet and the Chocolate Man visit Rosehill WI* - 14:00 St Barnabas Church Hall.

Wednesday 7 December - *The history of Magic by Keith Churcher* - 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. NB a bring and share party follows the talk. www.cavershamheights.org

Thursday 8 December - *Christmas Mini-Market* - 14:00 - 16:30 Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion. Warren and District Residents Association. <https://wadra.org/christmas-mini-market-2022>

Saturday 10 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 10 December - *Christmas Concert by Candlelight* - 19:30 St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7AW - Concerts in Caversham www.concertsincaversham.co.uk

Wednesday 14 December - *Brussel Sprouts to Tangerines: Christmas Fruit and Vegetable Stories with Jacqueline Aviolet* - 19:45 Caversham Horticultural Society. Caversham Baptist Church opposite the Waitrose archway) Caversham RG4 8HY. £3.00 non members Website www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/events.htm

Thursday 15 December - *Caversham WI meeting* - 19:30 at Church House (next to Waitrose). Every 3rd Thursday of the month. New members are welcome. Email: cavershamwi@berkshirewi.co.uk Secretary: Joy Kennedy on 07786 642424

Saturday 24 December - *Nativity Live* - 16:00 Start at Caversham Baptist Church



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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

CAVERSHAM WAITROSE is planning changes. In addition to 221289 for new signs around the shop and the car park, application 221300 applies for changes to the façade, loading area, car park, pedestrian walkways and trolley parking.

The Reading Golf Club approval for outline planning consent did not include the detailed design of the houses. These 'Reserved Matters' are applied for in 220930. Application 220738 applied to discharge three of the list of conditions. The Council has approved the discharge for Archaeology, but not for Habitat or the Construction Method. In parallel to this, having made further detailed studies, Vistry has applied to make some changes to the agreed permission - 221312. CADRA met the Vistry team and raised issues on detailed design, safety issues on Kidmore End Road, and more effective local communication.

The Traffic Management Committee on 10 November will be held after this paper goes to press. The agenda includes two safety petitions for Caversham. Concerns have been raised for some years about the problems for pedestrians crossing the junction by the Last Crumb. A local resident conducted a survey, with support from MP Matt Rodda, reaching 1400 responses. Accidents by the access road to Caversham Lakes have long been a concern and this continues to be an issue, despite the refusal of planning permission for the leisure facilities. A petition was launched by another local resident and has attracted over 500 signatures in the first four weeks. CADRA has provided advice and support to both of the residents submitting petitions for improved safety provisions. A formal response from the Council on the two petitions will be given at the meeting, which will be available to view online. To find the link, search on www.reading.gov.uk for Democracy - Councillors & Committees - Calendar.

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IT WAS IN October of this year that I noticed them, just as the light was fading from the evening sky. I was returning home to Caversham approaching Christchurch Bridge and, as I got nearer, I heard a sound that was vaguely familiar. I'm not much of a birdwatcher, but I recognised it as the sound of starlings – a sound I hadn't heard for many a long year.

Looking upwards, I saw the birds, a few hundred of them, perching on the cables from which the deck of the bridge is suspended. From time to time there was a little flurry as some of the birds took to the air and wheeled round and then returned to their perches, miraculously avoiding flying into one another. Unfortunately, it was coming on to rain, and I was walking with someone to whom none of this was of any interest, so I didn't stay around to see what happened next. Did the birds roost on the bridge overnight? Returning to the scene a couple of days later at the same time of day, there was

no sign of them. Perhaps it was just as well – had they stayed around for any length of time, the bridge would have been decidedly filthy.

The experience surprised me, since friends who feed the birds in their gardens tell me that years ago starlings were plentiful, and often the first visitors to the bird-table after food was put out. They were aggressive towards other birds, and had no table manners, strewing the food around. Now, the situation has changed, and starlings are hardly ever seen on bird-tables.

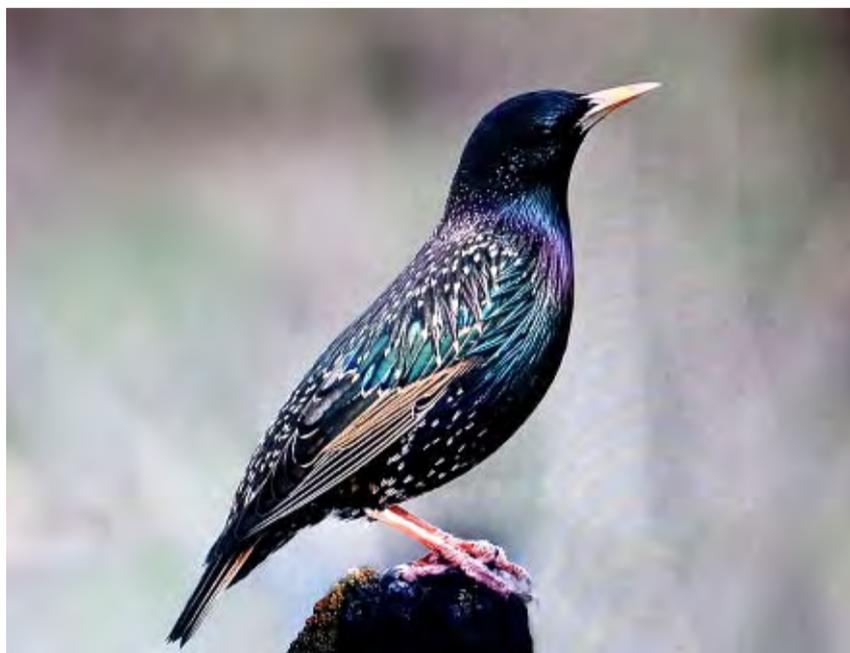
A glance at websites such as those of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology confirms that numbers have declined greatly since the 1980s, though starlings are still fairly common and plentiful.

Most of those we see are resident all year round, but some starlings from northern Europe are winter visitors to Great Britain, so that at least some of the birds I saw were probably the 'foreigners' who were 'just passing through'.

refers to a flock of the birds in flight, performing aerial acrobatics. The Oxford English Dictionary describes a 'murmuration' as the kind of sound made by people murmuring, and then says that it is also an 'alleged term for a flock of starlings'. It quotes the phrase 'a

murmeracion of stares', from a book entitled *Hors, Shepe and Ghoos*, published by William Caxton in 1479. The word 'stares' was the usual term for starlings from Anglo-Saxon times, but the dictionary compiler obviously has some doubts about this secondary meaning of the word 'murmuration'.

I would have thought that 'murmuration' originally meant the sounds made by a flock of perching starlings – ranging in pitch from a fairly deep bubbling sound to sibilants – rather like an audience at a concert in the Hexagon, waiting for the orchestra to appear!



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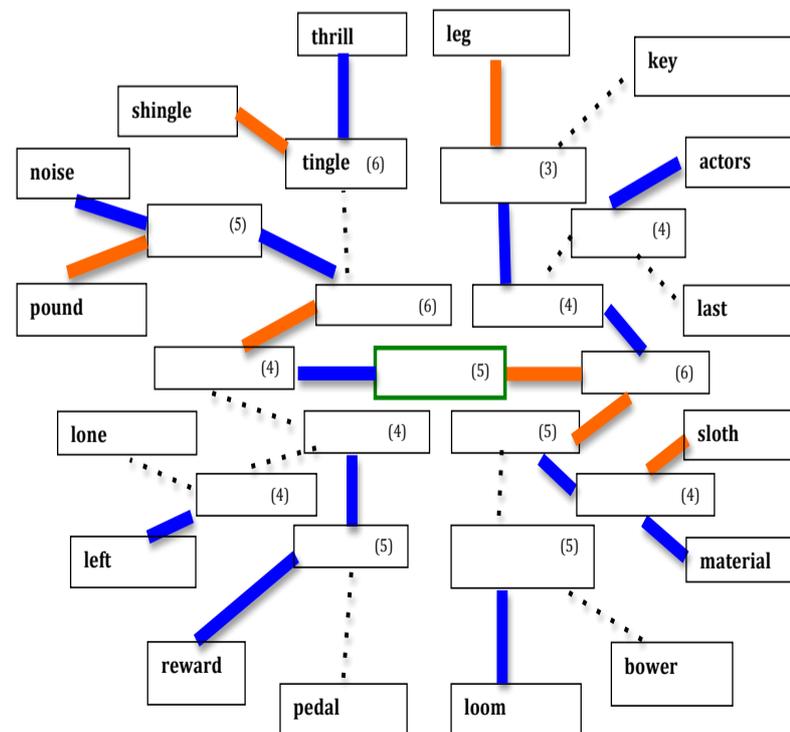
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Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

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

Rhyme ———
Letter change
Meaning ———



Answers on page 15

A CELEBRATION OF CAKES

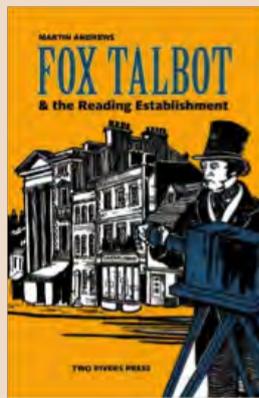
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- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Angel | Date |
| Apple | Fruit |
| Babka | Genoa |
| Bara Brith | Lemon Drizzle |
| Battenburg | Maderia |
| Butterfly | Simmel |
| Carrot | Swiss Roll |
| Christmas | Tealoaf |
| Chocolate | Victoria Sponge |
| Coffee | Walnut |

A Caversham Photographic

Family



by Francis Serjeant

IN THE 1830s, William Fox Talbot kick-started photography in England. Coincidentally, he has a Reading connection. In 1844 he opened his first commercial photographic studio in Baker Street, West Reading. Reading's local publisher, Two Rivers Press, has recently published an account of this studio, which is well worth reading as a study into the pioneer years of photography.

Unsurprisingly, due initially to the cost of printing and equipment, this new technology was the sole preserve of wealthy amateurs. But, as the century progressed and new processes and cheaper equipment were developed, photographs became increasingly more common and affordable. Commercial photographic studios sprung up throughout the country to supply the increasing demand for individual and family portraits. The typical price for a photographic portrait, as illustrated, was six pence.

One such commercial photography studio was set up by Caversham resident Joseph Green who, according to Mary Kift's *Life in Old Caversham* book, had been an upholsterer. She also mentions he had a side line as a coffin maker and undertaker for the village.

My introduction to Mr Green occurred with the discovery of an anonymous portrait of a young man, found within a stack of portrait

photographs whilst mooching around a local shop, *Dolly Rose Vintage*, in North Street. As you can see from the reverse of the image, Mr Green was not reticent about publicity, as were all the other photographers in this collection of portraits.

Intrigued, I decided to chase up further information with a visit to the Local Studies section at Reading Central Library. Using local trade directories and the 1901 census, I found the following information about this photographic studio and the Green family. Joseph Green was about 25 years old when he set up his first studio in Bridge Street in 1876. Unfortunately, neither this card nor local directories list a building number for the Bridge Street years (1876-84). In an advertisement he placed in a local directory, he lists himself as a landscape, architectural and machine photographer, in addition to portraits. He adds 'Copies of pictures may be had up to life size in oil colours. Negatives kept in stock'. With the late Victorian rise in popularity for sending postcards, he diversified into this area by using his stock images of local scenes.

In 1885, Joseph moved his studio around the corner to 4 Church Street, within the old building that is now *The Spice Oven* restaurant. In 1899, his son, Alfred Green, joined him, before taking over from his father in 1913. On closing the business in 1926, the studio was absorbed into the neighbouring premises of Baylis & Co, a grocer.



Enjoying the frame

photo St Martin's Primary School

by Hilary Smart

AN EXCITING new climbing frame has been installed at St Martin's Catholic Primary School in Caversham Park Village, with the help of the school's Parent and Staff Association (PSA), which raised £12,000 to cover the cost of the new equipment.

The play frame is targeted at the school's older children, though it is designed for all the children to use. In previous years, the PSA has helped to revamp the separate play areas for the younger children, including the reception playground, which is pirate themed.

Zoë de la Pascua, co-chair of the PSA, said, "We are thrilled to put the money that's been raised to such a significant and visible investment. The new equipment increases important skills of coordination and balance through their play and seeing the children's excitement at their new playground has been such a joy."

The school has a strong emphasis on keeping active as part of children's wellbeing. On non-PE days the children do a Daily Mile together, where they walk or run for 15 minutes, and they spend time each week in the school's woodland area.

The PSA runs events and fundraisers throughout the year, including social activities for parents and children (the Glow Jam Disco is always very popular). They are looking forward to bringing back their Advent Fayre on Saturday 26 November after years of COVID-19 restrictions.

Money raised by the PSA is used in a variety of ways, including ensuring the school library book collection is kept up to date.

Katherine Tilling is the headteacher at the school, which was rated Good in its Ofsted Inspection last year. She said, "We are grateful that our parents are so supportive and involved. We are a small school, and that sense of community is really important to us."



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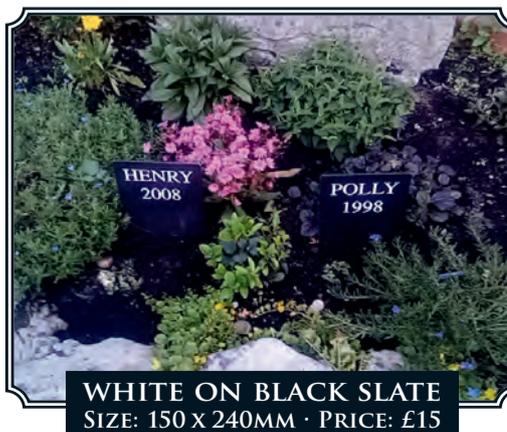
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Have yourself a merry, slightly greener, Christmas

by Trish Marcouse

CHRISTMAS WRAPPING paper comes in every design, size and thickness, and not all can go into the recycling container after the 25th. You don't need to buy expensive 'eco-friendly' wrapping paper to reduce your environmental impact. Simply avoid buying wrapping paper that is crinkly and shiny, or decorated with glitter (and whoever does the hoovering in your house will bless you for that change), and limit your use of glue or sticky tape when wrapping. The anti-glitter and plastic message goes for Christmas cards as well. Then cards and wrapping can both go into the recycling bin.

And if you're a meany like I am, remember to smooth out and squirrel away the nice bits of paper you receive this year to reuse next Christmas, as well as picking up extra in the January sales.

Next on the list is decorations. Simple tricks include

thin slices of orange or apple (cut across the centre to show the 'star' made by the core) dried out in the bottom of a cool oven and hung on the tree with twine. There are lots of good ideas on the internet, and I particularly like the wine cork reindeers on <https://ecochildsplay.com/2015/12/22/10-eco-friendly-christmas-crafts-for-kids> They are simple to do (everything else on that site looked way too complicated), but do require a search for wine with corks! Videos on making stuff from paper and materials are on https://theminismallholder.com/diy-eco-friendly-christmas-decorations/#Christmas_Stars_from_Old_Paper

The Oxfam shop in Caversham and World Shop in London Street have beautiful crafts from around the world, or come to Caversham Court on 3 December and buy from Fair Trade (and get your tree and greenery as well).



text and photo Fred Smith

TWO SITES in Caversham have received awards in the 2022 Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) annual Thames and Chilterns in Bloom competition.

Caversham Court received the gold accolade for its beautiful grounds and a national certificate of distinction from the RHS, for the 'Best Park 2022' within Berks, Bucks and Oxon. The judges visited Reading in July and particularly complimented Caversham Court, which they said '... is packed with history..... It is an excellent example of a green space with a high standard of horticultural and arboricultural management and maintenance.'

They also praised the community allotments, which provide a valuable resource for wellbeing. They singled out the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens (FCCG) for its provision of a wealth of historical knowledge to the local community and for its organised walks throughout the year.

FCCG commented, 'The awards recognise the

hard work and achievements of Reading Borough Council staff and our volunteer gardeners whose inputs have supported those of the Head Gardener, Will Paice, throughout the year'.

This was not the only award for the gardens this year, as they were recognised under the Green Flag Award as both an award-winning site and a Green Heritage Site. For details of these awards, see <https://greenflagaward.org/park-summary/?park=1339>

The second RHS award winner was the Henley Road Cemetery, which won a Silver-Gilt award for its grounds. The judges highlighted the careful and sensitive layout of the grounds, the attractive planting, wonderful mature trees, and the rewilded areas managed as habitats for specific species, including badgers and slow worms. They particularly complimented sustainability measures and community engagement at the site.

For more about FCCG, see their website at https://home.fccg.org.uk/home_1

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LIVING AND LEARNING

by Les Cooper



I FIND IT hard to believe, but this is my thirty-sixth gardening article for the Caversham Bridge. When I was first asked to write them, I thought, 'I can easily do that because I enjoy writing and I've been gardening for years.' However, when following one of my early articles, someone asked me a question about the care of houseplants, I came down to earth with a bump. My knowledge of

houseplants was, and probably still is, rubbish. So, I can tell you I know of one person who has learned something from my articles. Yes, you've guessed it. Me.

I also suspect most gardeners know quite a lot about the things they are most interested in, but not a great deal about other aspects of horticulture. Therefore, it will come as no surprise for me to tell you I have fairly recently 'discovered' bushy salvias.

Previously, I had thought of salvias as those bright scarlet bedding plants called *Blaze of Fire*, or ones like *Blue Bedder*, a half-hardy perennial with two-foot-high lavender-blue flowers. They were, as my mother-in-law might have said, 'quite nice'; a gentle compliment that also says a lot.

Then, more recently, I started noticing the so-called perennial sages (salvias) and started to realise the large array of form and colour they had to offer. They can begin to flower in May and, with regular deadheading, continue into September. Apparently, so I am informed, if they are grown near roses, they can keep mildew and black spot at bay. I like the sound of that.

These salvias like a sunny, sheltered spot, with well-drained soil. I have been told they do not flourish in heavy, clay soil. Also, I am guessing they may be a plant of the future, because my plants



Salvia 'Hot Lips' in November!

photo C Clifford

appeared to have survived the long, hot, drought quite happily. They are reckoned to be frost hardy but, to be on the safe side, don't cut back the flower stems in autumn, and mulch well to protect the developing shoots.

Just out of interest, my latest purchase is salvia *Amistad* which is said to be floriferous, bearing deep blue flowers popular with bees. We will see.



Plant of the Month

by Louise Hampden

FOR MANY OF us, the first of December starts the countdown to Christmas and the 'present' dilemma. But I always have something on my wish list, and can think of quite a few items that a gardener would appreciate - from a pair of soft leather gloves with reinforced fingertips, to an elbow-length pair for protection from vicious thorns when pruning roses. I would never turn my nose up at a pair of pruning shears either. But I think that a lovely and long-lasting gift would be a tree, which, bought now as a bare root specimen, would be a most memorable gift.

You can never overestimate how important it is to plant trees, and now more than ever. Trees not only mitigate climate change, but also have huge benefits for wildlife, offering a home to hosts of insects as well as shelter for birds. Our gardens can make a vital contribution.

There are a couple of things to consider when choosing a tree. Firstly, height. Always research the eventual height and spread of a tree and choose one to suit the size of the garden. We have all seen trees that have completely taken over front or back



Acer griseum – Paperbark Maple

gardens and have clearly been a mistake. Secondly, the tree must have at least three seasons of interest, especially when it is going to be planted in a small urban garden and will be visible daily. This interest may range from flowers and leaf shape to bark, fruit, and autumn colour.

Acers, or Japanese maples, are hugely popular, and some have spectacular autumn colour. But they are fickle creatures, preferring light shade and should most definitely not be placed in a windy spot where the delicate leaves can curl up and dry out. However, they are ideal for tiny courtyards and can live happily in pots. If you have space, then the paperbark maple is a fabulous choice, with cinnamon-coloured peeling bark as well as spectacular autumn colour.

Crab apples are high up on my list for both wildlife and the gardener. They have everything from spring blossom to fruit and berries in autumn. I have my eye on a lovely crab apple, *Malus 'Cardinal'*, which has scented dark pink spring blossom, glossy dark red leaves in summer, and then small red fruit in the autumn. I'm imagining this tree alive and buzzing with bees in spring and then filled with birdsong in

autumn and winter as birds feast on the fruit. I could probably get a jar or two of crab apple jelly from it too!

So, this Christmas, how about taking a friend out for a memorable day to choose a tree and plant a memorable future.



Malus 'Cardinal' – crab apple

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Community Connections



by Caroline Gratrix

This month we meet Angela from True Food Community Co-operative



WHEN the Oracle was being developed in 1999, Reading lost its whole food shops. People clubbed together, bought wholesale organic produce, and shared it out. This became True Food Co-op, which then grew into selling at local markets and having over 400 members. In 2010, the True Food Co-op opened its shop in Emmer Green. Since then, they have become Reading's only 'organic supermarket'. You don't need to be a member to shop there, but they are now offering membership for a one-off

payment of £5 and, from November, members will be offered monthly product discounts. If members have time to volunteer, they earn additional discounts on shopping depending on how many hours they work each month: 2+hrs 5%, 4+hrs 10%, 12+hrs 15%. This local organic supermarket supports our community on its journey towards more sustainable living. They do this by selling organic, ethical, zero-waste food and household products, and providing support and education. There are over 80 loose items to stock up on: cereals, nuts, pulses, etc, fruit, vegetables, chilled items, organic alcohol, fresh bread, pastries, and refillable household items. It's a

little gem in the heart of Emmer Green, located opposite Emmer Green Primary School. If you haven't been in a while, why not pop in for some serious feel-good factor and ethical Christmas gifts and stocking fillers? Angela is the business development manager at True Food. Let's find out a little more about her...

How long have you lived in Caversham/Emmer Green?

I moved to Caversham from London in around 2004 and then up to Emmer Green around five years ago. It's great being close to Reading but with easy access to the countryside.

Where are your favourite places to eat, drink and shop in Caversham/Emmer Green?

My absolute favourite place to eat is the Bina curry house - although it's often a takeaway these days. The people that run it have always been really friendly to me, and I don't think you can beat their vegetarian Dhansak. I do most of my shopping at True Food (unsurprisingly).

How do you think we can all be eco-friendlier in RG4?

If being more eco-friendly is important to you, start by changing one thing and then build from there. Whether it's walking or cycling rather than using the car or deciding

to refill a plastic bottle rather than buy a new one (like washing up liquid).

Being part of a community reaps a wealth of benefits. How would you strengthen our sense of community in Caversham/Emmer Green?

I'd encourage people to join a group that's of interest to them. It's a great way to meet people and then widen your network which could lead to other things that you can't necessarily predict.

If you could bring anything to Caversham/Emmer Green - an event, an experience, or a shop, what would it be?

I would love for True Food either to move or to have a presence in Caversham so we can be more accessible to more people. I make a regular trip over to the Oxford Road for authentic Indian produce at the Exotic Superstore. It would be great to have something like that closer to Caversham.



OUTSTANDING

Staff celebrate photo Caversham Nursery

DISPITE SOME difficult circumstances, Caversham Nursery School, in Amersham Road, has received a second Outstanding report from Ofsted in 6 months. This relates to its provision for 3-5-year-olds. The Nursery School's provisions for 0-3-year-olds attained an Outstanding report in April. The school suffered from a flood in July, caused by a leaking water pipe, so they have been using temporary classrooms.

Typically, Ofsted give just one day's notice of an inspection. The second report, covering provision for older children, was published 21 October. It emphasised staff were providing an outstanding learning experience for the children, noting they were being taught in temporary classrooms due to the flooding. The report starts with the question 'What is it like to attend this school?'. The Inspectors wrote in answer, 'Children's smiling faces as they arrive each day show how much they adore attending this friendly and nurturing community. They are eager to

begin their learning. Children receive a warm welcome from caring staff. Everyone is valued and respected.'

The team at the Nursery were delighted to have external recognition of the fantastic impact they have on the children. The report says, 'Children truly flourish at Caversham'. Caversham Nursery is part of Reading Early Years Schools Federation, which also includes New Bridge Nursery in Montague Street. Executive Head Teacher for the group, Joanne Budge, said, "I am so proud of the amazing team who have continued to work so hard to provide a truly outstanding learning experience for the children, despite all the obstacles they have had to face. To be able to deliver such consistent high-quality teaching and learning is truly exceptional."

The report is available at:
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/20/109750>
 For more about the nursery, see www.reysfederation.org

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ANNUAL GALA BRINGS SPARKLE TO ST ANDREW'S

Since 2010, Li-Sheng Cheng and Matthew Hitch have been organising the Christmas Gala at St Andrew's Church Hall. Elestr Lee finds out more about the spectacular showcase which features many of our local artists

CLEARLY CHRISTMAS is around the corner when flyers start appearing advertising the annual Christmas Gala at St Andrew's. The wonderful array of arts and crafts on display is put together by Caversham-based silversmith Li-Sheng Cheng and her jewellery designer partner Matthew Hitch. This year, the event is celebrating its 10th anniversary.

"We have been living in Caversham since 2008, and had various ideas about



putting on a craft show. We tried out a show one autumn, but then someone suggested the hall at St Andrew's, and we have been doing the Christmas Gala every year since 2012 - apart from 2020, when everything stopped due to Covid.

"We can cater for around 18 stalls, although the number varies, and was fewer when we had to maintain social distancing. A number of local artists who are regulars get first pick, then we invite people in from outside the area. We try to get a balance of different types of work on display, and there will always be something new. But it's lovely as people come to the Gala to catch up with old friends - and hopefully find something they like to buy too!" Li-Sheng explains.

Local artists and craftspeople who regularly take part in the Gala include weaver Gloria Pitt, artist Nina O'Connell, and recycled jewellery maker Barbara Goodbun. Matthew Hitch will also be taking part with a stall showing his latest designs. Other artists taking part include stained glass artist Therese Wicks, painters Rebecca Howard and Claire Burriss, painter and printmaker Julie Simmonds, and ceramicist Emma O'Donovan.

Li-Sheng herself trained as a silversmith, studying initially at the Kent Institute of

Art & Design, where she and Matthew met, and subsequently at Sheffield Hallam University. After graduating, Li-Sheng lived in Liverpool for a while, just as the city was preparing for its stint as European Capital of Culture. "It was a wonderful time to be in the city; I felt there was a real network of artists there," Li-Sheng recalls. However, Matthew was working at Walton's in Prospect Street, and Li-Sheng moved from Liverpool to Caversham. "When I first lived here, I really felt the lack of my Liverpool support network," she comments, and the years of austerity have not made life easy for artists. However, there was a surprising turnaround when, during lockdown, Li-Sheng and Matthew were invited to show their work in an empty shop in Bell Street, Henley.

Recently Li-Sheng has taken on a new challenge and, instead of the relatively

large pieces which she used to enjoy creating as a silversmith, she has taken on the job of repairing items of old jewellery. "This isn't something I did previously. But I have recently come across things such as signet rings which were hand engraved. The more I look at them, the more I can appreciate the craftsmanship which was required. These are skills which are in danger of becoming lost.

"Matthew and I recently went to the AGM of the Hand Engravers Association, a group which is trying to preserve these skills - so many of the engravers doing demonstrations of their work at the association were quite elderly. I am now looking into the history of hand engraving; it is really in danger of becoming a lost skill.

"I now feel I am at something of a crossroads - to continue working as a

silversmith, creating my own work, or to concentrate on my new interest in repairing jewellery, and learning more about these old skills, which very few people do these days," she says.

Since moving to Caversham, Li-Sheng is pleased to have discovered the thriving community of artists who take part in the annual Arts Trail, many of whom can also be found displaying their wares at



the Christmas Gala, which this year will take place on Sunday 4 December.

"This is our 10th year, but I do hope the Gala continues, it is very straightforward to organize. Everyone at St Andrew's Church is so helpful, and we invite in the Ways and Means Trust to provide refreshments, which are always very popular. Everyone enjoys their cups of coffee and tea and cakes, and this allows the Ways and Means Trust to do some fundraising at the same time.

"It is so good to be able to showcase the local talents here in Caversham!"



Plenty to choose from at the 2022 Christmas Gala - bauble earrings by Matthew Hitch (above left); A wintry scene (above) entitled *Between Ice and Snow* by landscape artist Rebecca Howard, and festive glass ornaments by Theresa Wicks (right)
All photos by the artists

Find out more:

Caversham Christmas Gala -
December 4, 2pm - 6pm
St Andrew's Hall, Albert Road,
Caversham RG4 7AW
www.cavershamartists.wordpress.com
Facebook: cavershamartists



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

IN THESE articles, I often comment on the architecture of buildings in Caversham – Janina Maher brings out the charm of the Victorian and older buildings in her drawings. But in the 1960s, a number of rather bland ‘modern’ structures replaced some of the old properties. Number 32A is part of a small run of such buildings in Church Street (32A to 32D). But the *Alto Lounge* is far from bland – it’s a lively, thriving café - usually full of young and old and families enjoying the extensive menu and atmosphere. It feels very individual, with eclectic retro décor, but in fact it is part of a big company, Lounges Limited, which has many outlets, including one in Woodley.

When I dropped into the *Alto Lounge* recently, I chatted to the manager Emily Gingell, who explained the company usually gives their cafés a name relating to the locality. However, the story goes that ‘Alto’ came about because one of the owners was held up in a traffic jam whilst travelling through Reading, and the car in front was a Suzuki Alto!

The café/bar opened 13 years ago, although the premises had previously been restaurants for some time. The homely interior of the *Alto Lounge* creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere. The walls are covered with an amazing array of retro and vintage pictures, with mirrors and light fittings making it feel a bit like a living room. There is a strong sense of being part of the community, and the *Alto Lounge* regularly holds charity events.

The site on which the present buildings stand appears to have a long history. It is believed to be where monks and

canons from Notley Abbey had a living, and was established in 1162 (at that time Notley Abbey controlled large parts of Caversham and Emmer Green) – hence the name of Priory Avenue. In more recent times, the site was occupied by the premises of John Howard, baker and confectioner, whose shop was on the corner with Hemdean Road. His buildings were demolished to make way for the new development, but today, the modern shop on the corner site is still a bakery, Warings Family Bakers, and the old bakehouse behind the shop remained until a few years ago.

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First Impressions Matter

SHOULD YOU USE A CV WRITER?



by **Laura Harmsworth**

MANY PEOPLE write their own CV with successful results, but others need support. How can a CV writer help you, and what should you look out for?

External perspective

You're not alone if you find it hard to define and talk about your abilities and achievements, or to decide what to include/take out from your CV. A CV writer will pull out the key points to highlight in your CV, and help recruiters see why they must employ you – without making you sound arrogant.

Getting past the robots

75% of job seekers' chances of landing a job are lost the moment they send in their CV, thanks to Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). You can have the best experience, the most amazing achievements and be the perfect person for the job – but your CV will not reach the next stage if it's not written in the right way and doesn't include key words. Good CV writers understand how ATS works.

Time

It's easy to think that you're saving money by writing your CV yourself, but crafting the perfect CV takes time. CV writers don't need to research how to write a CV, saving you time so you can focus on what you do best. The time you do spend with them going through your experience, skills and achievements, will be time well spent as it will help with interview preparation.

My tips for finding a CV writer who suits you:

- Call to discuss your requirements – does the writer instill confidence?
- Are the prices in your budget? Ensure no hidden extras.
- Check their website, social media, testimonials, presence on LinkedIn, do they have plenty of experience?
- Speak with a few so you're sure you are working with someone who understands you and what you want to do next.

Next time, I'll take you through the STAR method that will help with your CV and interviews.

You can follow Laura on:

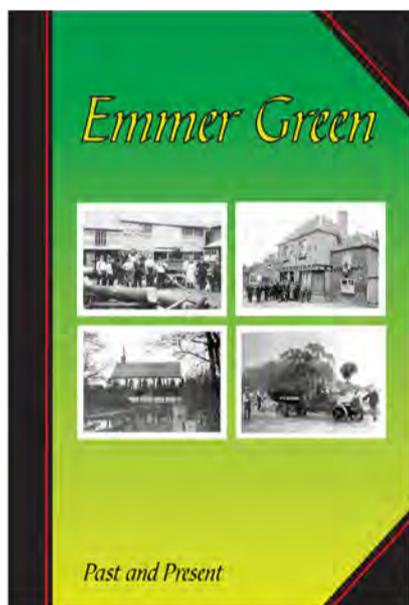
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Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Humanimals

OUR BOND with animals is deeply rooted in our evolution. This relationship with animals large, and small, has been studied in depth and is a continued area of interest to scientists around the world.

Caring for an animal can help children grow up more secure and active. Pets also provide valuable companionship for older adults. Perhaps most importantly, though, a pet can add real joy and unconditional love to our lives.

While it's true people with pets often experience health benefits, a pet doesn't necessarily have to be a dog or a cat. A rabbit could be ideal if you're allergic to other animals or have limited space but still want a furry friend to snuggle with. Birds

Pet owners are less likely to suffer from depression...

can encourage social interaction and help keep your mind sharp if you're an older adult. Snakes, lizards, and other reptiles can make for exotic companions. Even watching fish in an aquarium can help reduce muscle tension and lower our pulse rate.

Pet owners are less likely to suffer from depression than those without pets, and have lower blood pressure in stressful situations. One study even found that when people with borderline hypertension adopted dogs from a shelter, their blood pressure declined significantly within five months.

Playing with a dog, cat, or other pet can elevate levels of serotonin and dopamine, which calm and relax, while pet owners have lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels

(indicators of heart disease).

Heart attack patients with pets survive longer than those without, and pet owners aged over 65 make 30 per cent fewer visits to their doctors than those without pets.

One of the reasons for these therapeutic effects is that pets fulfil the basic human need for touch. Even hardened criminals in prison show long-term changes in their behaviour after interacting with pets, many of them experiencing mutual affection for the first time.

Children with autism interact most frequently, and for longer, with a dog when compared to a person or object, and there are similar benefits for children with developmental disorders.

Meeting the needs of an animal friend acts as an indicator of empathy, and sensitivity toward the moods and needs of others. Across age groups, gender, socioeconomic status and ethnicity, those subjects who felt close to animals exhibited increased trust and trustworthiness, increased empathy and reduction of aggression. They also benefited from a reduction of fear and anxiety, and increased calm.

I grew up in a flat in Mumbai where it would have been impossible to keep pets, plus at that time it was not so much a culturally accepted feature of life as it is now.

So, finally, at a much later stage in life, and at the insistence of my teenagers, we have adopted two little kittens. They've inspired me to write this piece. From the heart!



Nicola Dominic

15 April 1963 to 24 September 2022

NICOLA, WHO was known to many people in Caversham and was regarded with considerable affection because of her warmth and kindness, died 24 September 2022.

Earlier this summer she had enjoyed being one of the team of volunteers running the WonderZone Holiday Club (reported in the September edition of the paper). Nicola was taken ill whilst on holiday in Cornwall with her husband Bernard, and died in Plymouth Derriford Hospital of complications from pancreatitis.

Readers of the *Caversham Bridge* will be familiar with several poems she contributed to the paper in recent years. She was, in fact, a previously published, and competition-winning, poet in her youth.

She will be greatly missed by her husband and family, and by the many people who knew and loved her.

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

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