

Caversham Bridge

How can I help?

by Fred Smith

REGULAR READER, and former Reading councillor, Bet Tickner recently commented to me on the growing scarcity of volunteers across the voluntary sector. So many organisations rely on time given by their supporters to deliver services, raise funds, or simply to keep things on an even keel. With Covid-19 and lockdowns, many volunteers could not continue in their roles. Since then there has been a growth in demand for many services, such as befriending. Thousands joined the army of volunteers working in vaccination centres around the country. But the lifting of restrictions was not matched by a return of volunteers to the roles they had before. Some still have health concerns, others have found new occupations, and more grandparents are caring for grandchildren. One positive recent change is a growth in the number of younger people offering some of their time.

Whatever the reason, there is a shortage of people prepared to help in every sector. From charity shops to National Trust room stewards, there is a huge unmet demand. The breadth of roles is vast, from helping with language skills for those new to this country, to sorting donations and serving in charity shops. We are witnessing long-established organisations

closing as a result. The Rosehill Women's Institute in Emmer Green closes in March after 50 years, as they cannot find a secretary, and the Emmer Green Residents' Association closed for the same reason.

Voluntary organisations touch on many aspects of our lives. From organising children's sports and youth groups, to providing lifts for the less mobile; they enrich our community and provide rewarding occupation for those with even a little time to spare.

Reading Voluntary Action (RVA), works with organisations across Reading to improve the lives of local people, matching volunteers with opportunities. Steve Hendry of RVA said, "Whatever your interest, and no matter how little time you have, you can make a difference".

Bet said, "Volunteers enjoy what they do and find it rewarding. They can contribute specific skills or simply enthusiasm and interest. Our community would not be the place to live and thrive that it is without them and all they do."

So, if you could spare a little time, why not look for a way to give something back to our community? It could be a regular commitment, but there are less formal and more flexible roles available. We will highlight some opportunities in the coming months, but the need is vast – from befriending the lonely to weeding a garden!

Reading Voluntary Action website

<https://rva.org.uk/>



text and photo Phil Chatfield



THE DAYS are noticeably longer, and the first spring flowers can be seen here and there. Snowdrops have been flowering since December and, despite the cold weather, daffodils and bluebells are breaking through the soil.

Our February edition leads with an article on the value and benefits of voluntary work in our community (above), and we will be returning to this theme in future editions. The efforts of volunteers are marked inside with a report of fundraising for Daisy's Dream (p11), and an obituary for Mary Nicholls (p15). The work of the Weller Centre, much of which depends on volunteers, is highlighted in our Community Connections feature (p11).

The weather at this time of the year can make life difficult for our wildlife, and we have two items which

consider how we can help our bird population (p9). Regular contributions include Happy Wanderer on handbells (p7) and our Wellbeing column from Ami Roy (p15).

For those with gardens, Les Cooper looks forward to success with his delphiniums, and Louise Hampden writes about the benefits of mulch for the soil (p10). If you enjoy the fresh air and cycling, then perhaps you would be interested in joining the Kidical Mass ride this month (p8)? And if indoor exercise is more your thing, then perhaps our Creative Caversham article on Monica Cleaver of Mo's Dance and Drama (p12) might inspire you?

This month we have three contributions from new writers. Do you have something you would like to write about which would be of interest to our readers? If so, contact editors@cavershambridge.org which you can also use to give us your comments, news, or details of forthcoming events.

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TURN, TURN, TURN

TO EVERYTHING (turn, turn, turn) there is a season (turn, turn, turn)... You almost certainly know the tune, and now have the words running through your mind like an unstoppable freight train. Sorry about that!

This wonderful earworm by The Byrds has some significantly more pointed words in it of course, but I am fairly certain we would not be allowed to print more. And yet I am fairly sure the lines you have read are enough to trigger the song's very pointed invitation to reflect on life. The words are based on the words of someone described only as 'The Teacher' in the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes, and 'The Teacher' is very interested in reflecting on the rhythms of life. If a little miserably so.

This piece of scripture, Ecclesiastes, chapter 3, verses 1-8, is one that is often read at times of significant beginnings and endings in people's lives. I have had it requested at funerals too many times to remember, at a Baptism or two, and even at a wedding. It seems to bring to mind vividly the possibilities of 'what could be' or the gift of 'what was' in a way which helps people prepare for what comes next, with or without someone important to them.

As my time in Caversham draws to an end in a few months, I find myself reflecting on this notation and especially the chorus of The Byrds' version. While I am only moving a little way, it does involve the arduous journey across one of our bridges into the centre of Reading. And we don't want to get started thinking about 'time' and driving over one of our bridges. That is entirely too traumatic. So instead let us consider, is there really a time for everything under heaven?



Talking Point – by Martin Beukes

Quite some years ago now, I found myself speaking to the son of a gentleman who had just died. In preparing the funeral, his son had a single request. "Can we have the passage about it being good for us to eat, drink, and be merry?" So, knowing exactly what he meant, I read the passage. There was stunned silence at all the time to build and scatter, time to love and hate, etc. (verses 1-8), followed by a dawning realisation and almost a grin when we arrive at 'eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil' (verse 13). The stunned silence briskly turned into a sheepish smile and, "aah, the rest of it is good too".

Sometimes life is easy, and sometimes it is tough. I am very aware that, barring a miracle, by the time this goes to print we will be very nearly one year into the terrible war in Ukraine. That for many this winter will have been long and cold in their homes. That the cost of living will continue to be a worry for many people. And that, sadly, Liverpool FC will still not have bought a decent midfielder and will be languishing in seventh place or worse in the League. There is always too much going on for us to think and worry about.

In the meantime, the world will turn, turn, turn. And the seasons will change. And the days grow longer. And daffodils begin to sprout. And, if we listen carefully, all the new things God has dreamed up for us will become clear and begin to take shape too. There is a season for everything, are you brave enough to step into the season that comes next? Are you willing to take a step of faith into what could be, or are you more comfortable worrying about what 'is now'?

Revd Martin Beukes is a member of the Methodist Team Ministry in Caversham

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/live-stream>

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 10:30 each week, including groups for children and youth
Sermons are recorded and uploaded to www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk
Hymn Café 15:00-16:00 on the last Sunday of each month

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)

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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

Following the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic, our churches are now open on a regular basis with no restrictions.. 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 March 2023 issue should be submitted by 1 February and for the April 2023 edition by 1 March. These should be e-mailed to:

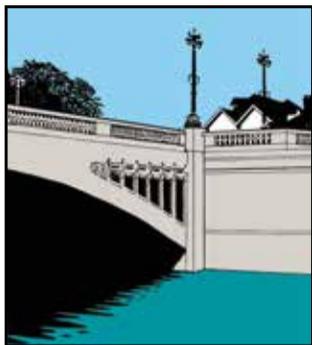
editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 February for the March 2023 issue and 1 March for the April issue. These should be e-mailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org

STOP PRESS

Parents, staff and pupils have been shocked to learn of the passing in early January of Ruth Perry, Head Teacher at Caversham Primary School. We send our condolences to all who have been affected and will include an appreciation in our next edition.



The Caversham Bridge – subscriptions for 2023

by The Editors

A BIG THANK you to all of you who have already renewed your subscriptions. We apologise to those of you who tried to use our website for renewals over the Christmas period, as we have been having a few problems with this.

The website subscriptions page has now been amended to include the details for direct bank transfer. The details required for a direct payment are:

Bank account name: Caversham Christian News

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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.

We have tried to ensure our volunteer deliverers have the details of those who have paid by direct transfer, standing order or PayPal, but sometimes this can take a few days to reach them.

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



A live music treat

by Adrienne Black

THE NEXT event organised by Concerts in Caversham is their Early Spring Concert, which will be on 25 February at St Andrew's Church at 19:30.

It will feature Mary Hofman playing the violin, and Richard Ormrod on the piano. This duo has a national and international reputation, having performed throughout the UK and abroad. They were recipients of a Royal Philharmonic Society award and Selected Artists with Making Music.

The programme will consist of works by:

- Dvorak: Four Romantic pieces
- Enescu: Impressions d'enfance
- Kodaly: Three Hungarian Dances
- Brahms: Sonata in D minor

An exploration of Eastern European music as well as ideas of Innocence and Experience.

The Brahms is a much-loved classic, while the Enescu is extraordinary and an underplayed work. It is very 'visual' in its representation of childhood.

For more information on the duo see:

<http://richardormrod.co.uk/duo/>

Tickets, priced £22 (age 25-59), £20 (60+), £16 (age 16-24), under 16s free, are available online at the 'Box Office'

www.concertsincaversham.co.uk

or in person from Caversham Picture Framers from 20 January.



Write to the editors

Murmurations

In your December issue, the 'Happy Wanderer' column mentioned that starlings are getting increasingly rare. I thought you (and your readers!) might be interested to know that they're very common in my garden - I often see a group of five, ten or more starlings flocking around a bird feeder! **Rob Day** (by email)



According to my book of collective pronouns, a flock of starlings is known as a murmuration, a term which can be traced back to the 15th century. It is said to be inspired by the sound the birds make when they are flocking together.

Phil Chatfield

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New Year – New Ministers



Revd Kevin Lovell

WITH THE turning of the year there have been several changes at our local churches.

At St Barnabas, Emmer Green, a new minister, Revd Kevin Lovell, was installed in a service on 15 December at the church. The formal service of Institution, Induction and Installation was conducted by the Bishop of Reading, The Rt Revd Olivia Graham. A copy of the Order of Service is available on the church's website (<https://www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/>) Kevin was ordained in 2019 and has moved

by Fred Smith

from the parish of Prestwood and Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire, where he was Assistant Curate.

November saw the arrival of Father Joe McLoughlin as Parish Priest of Our Lady and St Anne's Parish, Caversham. He has moved to the church on South View Avenue from the parish of both SS Peter and Paul, Erdington and also SS Mary and John, Graveley Hill, Birmingham. His first Masses in Our Lady and St Anne's were on the weekend of Christ the King – 19-20 November.

Changes are also afoot in the Methodist

Church in Caversham. The two churches, at Gosbrook Road and on Highmoor Road have been formally combined and are now One Church in Two Chapels under the name The Methodist Church in Caversham. The minister, Revd Martin Beukes, now has a new post as the Superintendent Minister for the Basingstoke and Reading Methodist Circuit. A new minister, the Revd Jeongsook Kim has been appointed to serve the Methodist Church in Caversham and Christ Church Woodley. Originally from South Korea, Jeongsook has served in the Methodist Church in Britain for nearly two decades, and will start her new ministry in September this year.

SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS UPDATE

by The Editors



Tamalia Reeves

photo S Reeves

LAST MONTH we reported on the Small Business Saturday award for Mama's Way. Unfortunately we made a mistake with the caption, as it was the shop manager, Nicola, receiving the award from Matt Rodda, not Walter Gumina.

We also found we had missed out an award for another Caversham business. Made by Tamalia, which is based at Southview Business Park, Marsack Street, won the competition for Arts, Crafts & Entertainment. Made by Tamalia is an independent art studio, which specialises in creative and immersive events run by professional artists and qualified teachers. Congratulations to Sue Reeves and daughter Tamalia, who run the studio, and who also organise the Artesia Christmas Market which we reported in our January 2023 edition.

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- News
- Events
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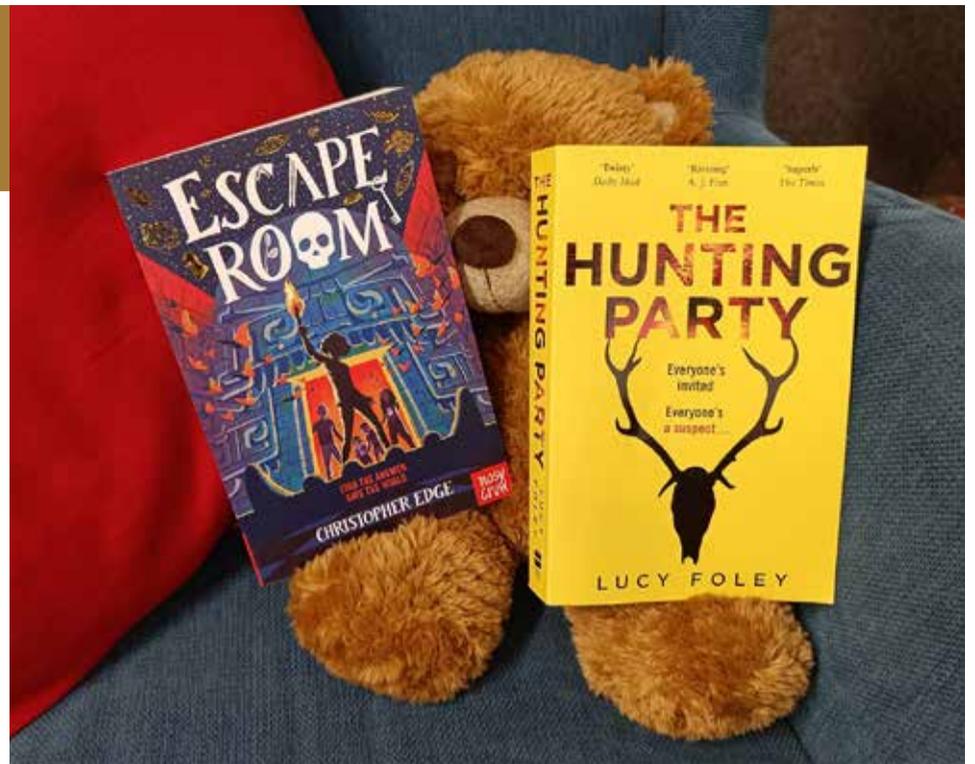


by Alex Forbes

Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews', where we briefly review a couple of titles chosen from our book shop 'Fourbears Books' in Caversham.

THE FIRST for February is one of the books I enjoyed reading most over the festive period; The Hunting Party by Lucy Foley. A group of old friends arrive at a lodge in the Scottish Highlands to celebrate New Year and soon become snowed in. The reader also learns that there is a dead body, and it doesn't look like an accident. The book jumps between the present day when the body is uncovered, and 3 days prior when the group first arrive at the Lodge. The story is told from the various points of view of the members of the party as the dynamics of the group are explained and how the friendships have changed over the years. I thoroughly enjoyed it and, although there was a cliché setting and the book had the feeling of a typical Agatha Christie, it felt original and was a page turner. Certainly a great book to read while the nights are still a bit darker.

The Children's book this month is Escape Room by Christopher Edge. This sold very well leading up to Christmas, so I wanted to check it out. When twelve-year-old Ami arrives at The Escape, she thinks it's just a game - the ultimate escape room with puzzles and challenges to beat before time runs out. Meeting her teammates, Adjoa, Ibrahim, Oscar and Min, Ami learns from the Host that they have been chosen to save the world and that they must work



Will the bear escape the hunt?

photo A Forbes

together to find the Answer. This book is a lot of fun. Kids from age 7+ will enjoy it. Christopher Edge books have a nice pace about them, and are packed with adventure and suspense, but not in a scary way. I'll certainly be making sure I've read all his other titles, as I thought this was brilliant.

Happy reading, whatever you pick up and hope to see you in the shop soon.

Highmoor Harmonies are back by Ian Lowry

RIVARATE, THE Caversham community choir, is firmly back in good voice after the lockdown years and their aftermath. In the run-up to Christmas 2022, the choir gave two very well-supported midweek concerts – including music by Rachmaninov, Frank and Holst, as well as Elton John, Sullivan and Adele. Then they were back in the Caversham precinct for their traditional Saturday morning festival of Christmas carols and readings in aid of Launchpad, the Reading homelessness prevention charity. The two concerts and the festival raised over a thousand pounds for Launchpad and branches of charities supporting local people with multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's.



The Choir at its Highmoor Road home

photo Rivarate

The choir managed to continue rehearsing during lockdown thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of its musical director, Sarah Scotchmer, and the foresight of choir member Alastair Muirhead, who helped members to install networked music performance software on their home computers. This timely intervention allowed live rehearsing by singers located anywhere.

If you are interested in joining, please see our website for further information. If you wish, you could attend a rehearsal to observe and decide if Rivarate is for you. Students can join free, while other members pay minimal fees to cover costs. The Chairman and all committee members are volunteers and are drawn from within the choir.

Numbers who rehearse regularly are now up to seventy, having dropped to forty during the second half of lockdown. But there is still room for new members. Experienced singers are always welcome, but there is no formal audition, and the ability to read music is not required. Rivarate has an extensive library of sheet music, and new members are often surprised how quickly they learn to follow a relatively simple musical score. Initially, they are only expected to be able to sing in tune and sustain a musical note.

Our next full concert will take place on Saturday, 20 May in the Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The programme includes a mixture of well-known popular, traditional and familiar sacred music - additional details can be found on our website.

If you join the choir now you could be singing in that concert in May!

For further information, see <https://rivarate.com>



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WHAT'S ON in FEBRUARY

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/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 on 0118 3348195 for further information. www.bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Mondays - Little Lambs and You - Baby and Toddler Group - 10:00-11:30 in term time - Caversham Baptist Church. www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

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 www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Wednesday 1 February - A demonstration of microwave cooking - 14:00 Rosehill WI, St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green

Wednesday 1 February - A talk on the work of local homeless charity Launchpad - 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society www.cavershamheights.org

Friday 3 February - 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.

Sunday 5 February - 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>

Wednesday 15 February - Children's author, Debi Evans, will talk about her work - 14:45 - Caversham Heights

Methodist Church Hall. Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild. Every 3rd Wednesday. Contact Mrs M Miles 01491 681223

Wednesday 15 February - The Loss of the Solomon Browne Lifeboat a talk by Eddy Roach - 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society www.cavershamheights.org

Thursday 16 February - 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 18 February - Regular Monthly tasks at Mapledurham Playing Fields - 10:00 - 12:30 Econet/ Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields, meeting point the Community Orchard - see <https://econetreading.org.uk/programme>

Thursday 23 February - How to get your house plants thriving Zoom talk with Jane Perrone - 19:45 Caversham Horticultural Society. Advance booking via Eventbrite website. Suggested donation for non-members £3 is payable when booking a ticket. Website www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/events.htm

Saturday 25 February - Early Spring Concert, Mary Hofman, violin, Richard Ormrod, piano - 19:30, St Andrew's Church, RG4 7PL. Concerts in Caversham. Tickets available online at the 'Box Office' www.concertsincaversham.co.uk



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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

THE DOMINANT issue in the last month has been the number of applications for 5G masts from 15 to 20 metres tall. 5G is the next generation of wireless communications technology. It is expected to provide faster connections, not just for mobile networks, but later for healthcare, smart cities, transport and manufacturing. The Government target is for the majority of the population to be covered by a 5G signal by 2027.

In determining each application, a judgment must be made as to whether the benefits of the mast outweigh any harm to the character and appearance of the area. Several applications have been refused by the Council and some appeals dismissed. The most recent appeal decision was for a mast on the triangle at Grove Road, Emmer Green, which has been planted by community volunteers; the appeal was dismissed by the Inspector. A decision on the appeal for St Peters Hill, within the Conservation Area, is expected. CADRA has prepared a summary of the relevant planning policies and the issues to be considered in sending a formal objection, along with a list of applications north of the river. This is available at www.cadra.org.uk

As we write, the revised plans for Caversham Park are not yet available on the Council website. Some of the detailed conditions for building on Reading Golf Club have been approved but the important Construction Method Statement has not yet been approved. CADRA remains concerned about construction traffic on Kidmore End Road. Plans for 36a Church Street, across the alleyway from the Working Men's Club, have been approved. Decisions are awaited for the Drews and Carters sites and for the Henley Road retirement housing next to the new care home.



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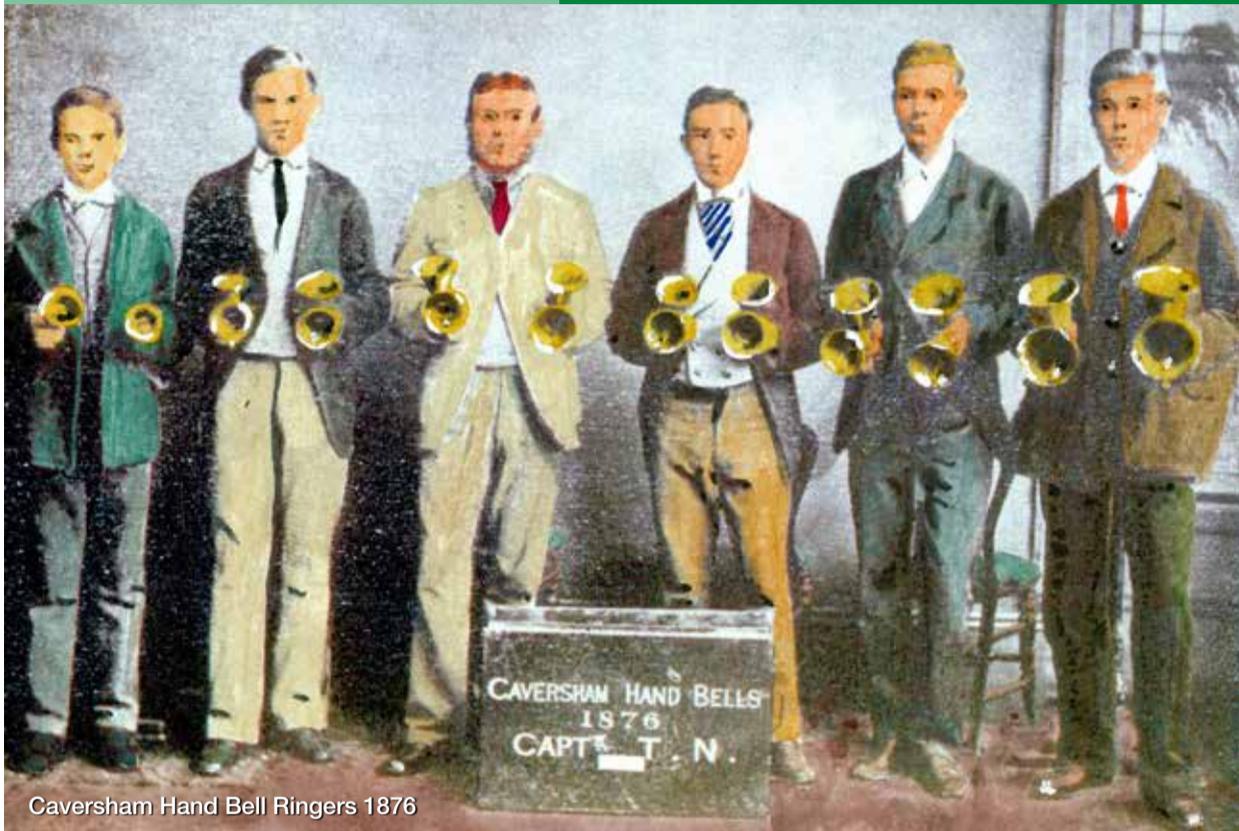
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Caversham Hand Bell Ringers 1876

THIS MONTH'S picture set me wondering – were these six fine gentlemen the bell-ringers of St. Peter's Church, are their bells still in existence somewhere, and who might 'T.N.' have been? The chest, seen in front of the Ringers, has the words 'Caversham Hand Bells, 1876, Capt. T.N.' painted on it. In case you're wondering, the original photograph is black-and-white, but I've tinted it using watercolour to make it look more attractive.

From the old Reading papers on the British Newspaper Archive database, and the large number of mentions,

I found that hand-bell ringing must once have been a popular hobby and form of entertainment. The first mention of the Caversham Hand-bell Ringers comes in 1879, three years after their foundation. Presumably they were already well known by then because they entertained the Ancient Order of Foresters 'in their usual good style'. The last mention comes in 1901, when they were fund-raising for the Reading Working Men's Regatta in the Victoria Hall, Fatherson Road.

This may not be quite the end of the Ringers because,

in 1913, we find the St. Peter's Institute Hand-Bell Ringers performing in the Balmore Hall, Hemdean Road, at a meeting of the Church of England Missionary Society.

The initials on the chest, 'T.N.', must be those of Mr. T. Newman. He is mentioned three times in local papers. On the first occasion he is 'Bro. Newman' when he was performing after the Oddfellows' dinner in the Foresters' Hall in West Street in 1884. In 1892 he was conducting the team to raise money for the Caversham Amalgamated Friendly Society, so that collection-boxes could be purchased in connection with the [Royal Berkshire] Hospital Sunday Parade. At least one photograph exists of the parade going along Gosbrook Road – I used it in my article in September 2015.

... Mr. Newman was leading the team...

The 1892 fund-raising event was held in the National School in School Lane, a building many will remember as an adult education centre, although it's now the Caversham Health Club. Finally, in 1889, Mr. Newman was leading the team at an entertainment for the National Deposit Friendly Society in the British School in Gosbrook Road – which was built as the Baptist Church, and which became a school when the present Baptist Church was built. It is now divided into apartments, and called The Waterhouse, after its architect, Alfred Waterhouse.

Teams of bell-ringers from other Reading churches seem also to have been adept with hand-bells – those of St. Laurence's and St. Giles's are mentioned in the papers. Each of these bells was, of course, tuned to a particular pitch, so that a team of ringers could play tunes and harmonies – hymns, carols, and popular music of the day. They could also be used to practise the intricacies of change-ringing away from church towers, in comparative warmth and comfort, with less physical effort, and without the sound disturbing the neighbours. During the Second World War, when the ringing of church bells was to be used only as an alarm signal in the case of invasion, the ringers could practise ringing the changes, in readiness for the longed-for victory.

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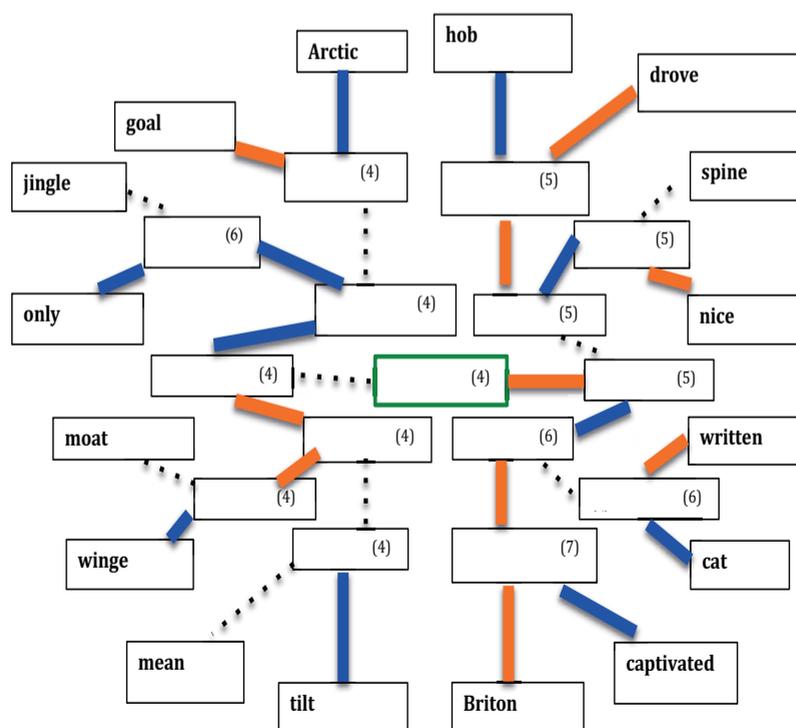
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Puzzle Corner

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

THE WEATHER TODAY

Can you find 21 weather related words here?

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

Cloudy
Cold Front
Depression
Drizzle
Drought
Flood
Fog
Hail
Heat Haze
Heatwave
Hurricane

Ice
Lightning
Mild
Mist
Rain
Rainbow
Snow
Stormy
Sunny
Thunder

Time to get the kids' bikes out



by Hilary Smart

A sunny day by the Thames

photo Rodrigo Perez Vega

KIDICAL MASS Reading will run its first Caversham based family friendly bike ride at 14:00 on Saturday 11 February. We will meet in Hills Meadow, at the river end of the car park. There will be marshals present to help keep everyone safe on the roads and by the river, and we will go at a pace suitable for the littlest of riders. We anticipate that the circular route will take about forty-five minutes. The ride is free, and everyone is welcome to join us, though children do need to be accompanied by a responsible adult. After the ride there will be bike games for the children and biscuits for all.

Kidical Mass is an international movement, and its motto is 'creating space for the next generation'. The aims are to build confidence in young cyclists, create community among cycling families, and raise awareness of the need for cycling routes that can be safely used by children. Against the backdrop of the ongoing climate crisis, which Reading Borough Council

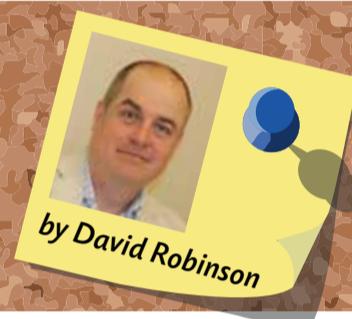
have rightly recognised, active transport needs to become a viable option for as many people as possible.

Reading saw its first Kidical Mass in April last year, and rides now run monthly in either Reading or Wokingham. Highlights of the year included the ride to Reading Cycling Festival, which was attended by 65 riders, and the December ride, which was attended by a very special guest. Father Christmas rode along merrily waving from a box bike at the front of the ride, and we got a lot of smiles from pedestrians and motorists who saw us along the way.

Our riders use a wide variety of bikes – cargo bikes, tagalongs and tandems, and of course children on their own bikes are a large part of the fun.

We look forward to seeing as many people as possible on 11 February!

New Year's Resolution



I KNOW, I know. There are 101 articles telling you what New Year Resolutions you should make – from exercising more to being more organised in your plans...

We certainly will not be arguing against those, but we would also like to introduce the thought of 2023 being the year you finally sort your Will and other estate planning!

This is a New Year's Resolution which will make a big and real difference both to you, for your peace of mind, and also for your family and loved ones when you die.

Best of all, this is not a difficult resolution to complete – a good estate planner will help you tick it off your list with the minimum of fuss or work on your side.

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What will you need to do?

If you are not sure what it is you need to do for your planning – other than 'get a Will', then your estate planner will gather all the information to understand your situation, listen to your requirements, and then make recommendations to you, from which you can pick and choose. The heavy lifting will be done for you.

What might they recommend?

Number one on the list will be a Will if you do not already have one. These range from:

A **simple Will**, where you 'gift' everything directly to beneficiaries. These gifts are unprotected and could be subject to a number of threats.

A **Will using Trusts**, where your beneficiaries will gain a level of protection to avoid threats to their inheritance. These include: unnecessary tax payments, divorce, insolvency, and Care Home fees. These are particularly useful for dependants with disabilities.

Alongside your Will, depending on your situation and your family's situation, there might be other recommendations, including:

A **Lasting Power of Attorney** which will protect you in your lifetime, where you can appoint someone who can legally make both health and financial decisions for you.

Professional services to take the stress away from your family in handling the executorship or probate for your estate.

So, whilst you are not going to the gym to lose those pounds, give your estate planner a call and set up a consultation to be halfway there to ticking off that first resolution!

David Robinson is Director of Templar Estate Planning a specialist Will writing and Estate Planning provider based in the heart of Caversham within Church House. He is always happy to have a chat or offer a free full consultation for all your estate planning needs.

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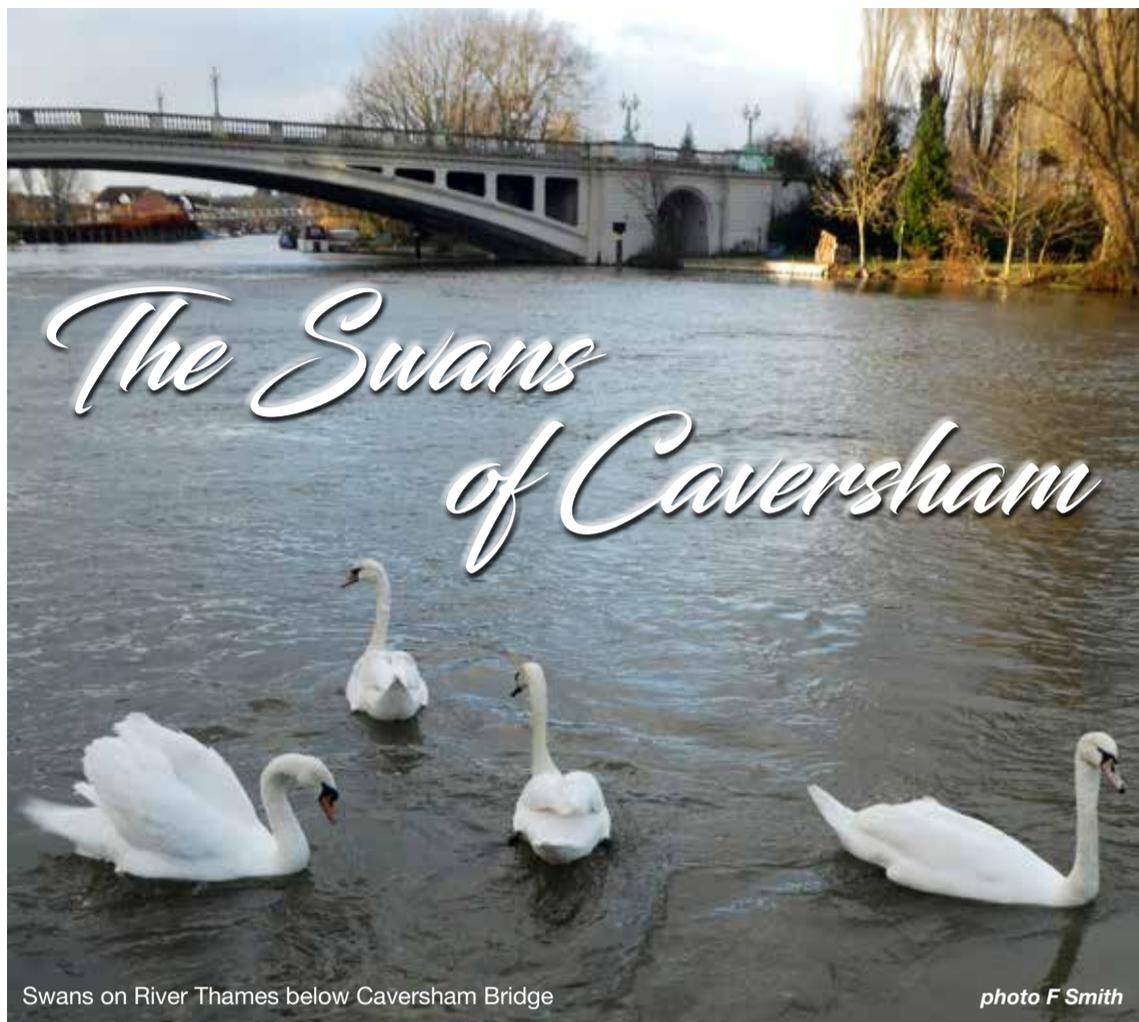
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The Swans of Caversham

Swans on River Thames below Caversham Bridge

photo F Smith

FOR THOUSANDS of years, the River Thames near Caversham was a wide, braided wetland where swans could feed on abundant plants, frogs, and snails in shallow water.

In the 19th century, when the river was dredged and narrowed for barge traffic, the marshlands were drained, and the channel became too deep for swans to reach food when the river rose in winter. Breeding territory – areas with shallow water, shelter, and enough food to support cygnets to maturity – almost vanished.

At last look, there were estimated to be half a dozen viable breeding sites on the Thames between Sonning and Caversham. Successful swan pairs defend these patches violently, so unmatched swans, the unlucky in love, are obliged to bottleneck by Caversham Bridge to escape attack.

Areas along the Thames bordering Caversham are posted as swan sanctuaries, where fishing is prohibited (fishing line causes serious injury every year to swans), and responsible feeding is permitted (more below).

Over the years, the image of a swan has become the unofficial symbol of Caversham, and why not? After all, they are our regal, feathered neighbours – and they were here first.

...Swan myths debunked...

A swan's wing can break your arm!

False - swans – wings and all – weigh almost nothing. The charge of a male swan, defending his family, is display. Back off and all will be well.

by Cynthia Martin

Feeding swans bread will kill them.

False - bread, as long as it's not mouldy, does no harm to swans, and in a tough winter it certainly beats starvation. However, bread is not best for nutrition, and uneaten bread can pollute the river. Floating bird food is a great choice and can be purchased at Caversham Home Crafts or online.

My dog would never!

False - dogs are dogs, and sometimes the prey drive is overpowering. That's bad news for swans, cygnets, and even your dog, if it's small. Please keep them on the lead near the river during nesting season.

Additional advice

With concerns about avian flu affecting birds in the UK, we are advised to stay away from dying or dead birds and contact Swan Support on 01628 876336 immediately.

To learn more see their web site www.swansupport.org.uk and Campbell, D. (2003) The encyclopaedia of British birds. Dubai, Parragon. Belloc, H. (1988) The historic Thames. London, Webb & Bower. or online www.britannica.com/place/River-Thames



HELPING BIRDS THROUGH THE WINTER

by Trish Marcouse



Sparrows feeding in a Caversham garden

photo F Smith

WE HAD A nasty cold snap before Christmas, followed by days of wind and rain. There may be more this month. Birds need clean, dry feathers to keep them warm, and can suffer in the same way that we do from windchill. Many people feed garden birds during the winter months but forget their need for clean, accessible water for drinking and bathing. And remember this needs to be defrosted on icy mornings! Winter shelter is as important for survival as food and water, and it could be bird boxes (if the dirty nest material is cleaned out at the end of the summer), a pile of logs and woody prunings, or an evergreen shrub providing a windbreak and an escape from the wet.

If your garden is short of evergreen shrubs and small trees, now is a good time for planting. This will allow the roots to settle in before any hot dry periods in the Spring and plant to make good growth to provide shelter next winter. It doesn't have to be a huge green conifer taking up the entire garden. There are many varieties forming lollipops or cones in a range of different colours with a final height of less than 2 metres. Conifers are great for winter shelter, but any evergreen that grows higher than cat height is useful.

There is a list on

www.rhs.org.uk/plants/types/shrubs/evergreen-by-size.



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WELL, WHAT WILL THIS YEAR BRING? *by Les Cooper*



Delphinium trials, Wisley

WHAT ARE your plans this year for your garden? I am wondering if the long drought in 2022 may have made you think hard about what you are going to do in 2023. I do hope you haven't decided to concrete over the whole darned lot. That surely would not be in order. Oddly enough, when I talk to friends, I get contrasting stories. Some moan about how badly they fared, particularly with things like potatoes and runner beans, and yet others are quite blasé saying they didn't do at all badly. My memory, not the most reliable of things, tells me my garden looked picturesque in Spring and a desert in the dry Summer.

Clearly what happens one year doesn't necessarily mean the following year will be similar. Nevertheless, the thought of 'climate change' does hang over our heads like a witch's curse. Notice I didn't use the words 'global warming'? Because, even as I write this, I am huddled up over my keyboard trying to keep warm!

So, the answer to my original question is, we have to plan for a dream garden and

pray we don't have a nightmare. My own particular desire every year is to have a batch of beautiful delphiniums. Believe me, they are a bit temperamental. In the right year they will be the pride of Reading and in the wrong year they simply sulk. As mere gardeners, our role is that of a servant who has to satisfy the whims of their plants. Last year I failed miserably because, just when my plants needed water, there was drought and a hose-pipe ban.

...Nemaslug to deter...

Undaunted, in the autumn of last year I mulched my delphinium plants with strulch (a friend's recommendation) and hopefully in early spring this year I will water them with Nemaslug to deter the slugs. Then, when the shoots come through, I will thin them by cutting out the weakest so as to have a few of the strongest - making sure they are well watered with a liquid feed. I will then stake each plant with three canes keeping an eye open for caterpillars.

With luck on my side, for a few weeks I could have a dozen or so beautiful delphiniums. But

if things go wrong, as they did in 2022, I could decide that I am a fool and to save time and money I will grow cosmos instead. They are much cheaper and so easy to grow!



Delphinium 'Raymond Lister'

photos E Cooper



Plant of the Month – February

by Louise Hampden

THE GRAND clear-up begins in February, when all the old foliage the worms haven't yet dragged into the soil is cleared up, and the new shoots of Spring are exposed. There's a bit of a pruning frenzy happening too, taking out dead wood from shrubs and shaping up roses which are now showing bright red leaf shoots.

This year though, I also intend to look after the gaps in between plants, which is the other living, breathing and often neglected organism –

the soil. It's the lifeblood of the garden, teeming with insects seen and unseen, which care for and nurture the soil and the roots of our plants, providing the nutrients they need to thrive.

The best way we can look after this precious resource and our plants is to apply a mulch of some sort of organic matter. This can be anything from home-made compost to bark chippings. Not all of us, however, have the capacity in our small gardens to have a compost heap and could never produce enough to cover the whole garden anyway. So even if you just invest in buying enough for one border, it's a start and the garden will thank you for it. A thick enough layer of around 2 inches or 5cm minimum is sufficient, and I'd recommend a well-rotted manure or bark-based compost, which will look good too.

...Woodland floor theme...

I have a very dry area under a tree where I have been trying to establish plants which thrive in shade, like ferns and Bergenia. This area really suffered during last summer's drought, so here I am going to use chipped bark between the plants to continue the woodland floor theme in that part of the garden.

With the high heat of last summer, getting in now with the mulch will help keep that winter moisture in the soil, suppress weed growth, feed the plants with nutrients and save water.

February also heralds the first of this year's flowers, and the brightest of these is the zingy Euphorbia 'Robbiae'. For anyone who has a dry or shady area in the garden, I'd recommend this plant. With evergreen and shiny dark green leaves which capture and reflect light and flowers lasting for weeks it's a real winner.



Euphorbia 'Robbiae'

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Community Connections

by
Caroline Gratrix
This month we meet
**The Weller Centre
manager Simone**



THE WELLER CENTRE is located in the heart of the community in Amersham Road, and Simone Prendiville is the manger there; she sums up the centre telling me, "It does everything, for everyone".

There is a café, open to all, with 'proper' coffee from a machine, open 9:30-12:30 Monday to Friday and a fresh food collection point open every day. What there is to collect can vary, but today, when I arrived, the team were sorting a 60kg delivery of fresh produce and they had had the same quantity the day before. Simone is keen to stress that anyone from the community is welcome to come and help themselves.

The Centre is warm and bright, with cheerful staff and volunteers to greet you. They offer warm coats to those who need them, they run art classes, knitting classes, a weekly jacket potato club, a monthly older people's lunch, and so much more. There is a washing machine at the Centre so, if you need clean clothes, pop down and have a coffee while the load washes.

The Centre is available for private hire, so other groups also run activities there. For parties or events, there is a preferential booking rate for Amersham Estate residents.

The team recently won a Pride of Reading Award, and it's easy to see why. They have established close links to other centres and charities around the county and are able to share resources. Visitors are treated with great dignity and kindness, which is reflected in the response from the locals. Simone told me they have had some incredibly generous donations, including some people giving their winter heating allowances.

I asked what we, as a community, could do to help and Simone told me it would be lovely to have the café open all

day. So any volunteers who'd be willing to do an afternoon shift would be warmly welcomed. They would also love it if a local painter could give some of the rooms a spruce up! If you're interested, please contact Simone via The Weller Centre Facebook page.

I left feeling very proud of the Weller Centre in the heart of RG4, and I shall be popping back soon for a 'proper' coffee and with a bag of warm clothes to pass on. Let's find out a little more about Simone...

How long have you lived in Caversham/Emmer Green?

I have lived in Caversham all my life and was delighted to return to working within Caversham 4 years ago.

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

I am never without my nails being jazzed up by Van at Gorgeous Nails. I love eating at Thai Table, and you can always rely on Caversham Homecrafts or Terrys to have the weird and wonderful items you desperately need.

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

The Weller Centre is keen to highlight the need for sustainability, so I am pleased to see our shelves, or those in the Caversham charity shops, bursting with good quality items which will bring joy to the next owner.

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

It is incredibly hard to work all day and still have the energy left to become involved in community events, but I would urge everyone to try to support any events taking place across Caversham. I was heartened by the amount of people who



Simone and The Weller Centre

photo C Gratrix

attended the Christmas Eve Nativity Live event and hope other events can be similarly embraced.

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

Somewhere to highlight local wines with wine tasting.

DREAM COMES TRUE IN DERBY ROAD

by Jessica Heaven

IN EARLY JANUARY, the residents of Derby Road delivered a sealed bucket of cash to Twyford based charity Daisy's Dream, which helps children through bereavement after loss of a parent. The charity works in many schools in Caversham, helping local children cope with loss.

The Derby Road Residents Association organised an evening of carol singing, accompanied by mulled wine and mince pies in December, alongside a raffle, to raise funding for the charity. Residents Suzi Harcourt and Sean Mitchell (dressed as Rudolph) collected donations with the Daisy's Dream bucket. Social secretaries and organisers for the Association, Gill Vooght and I, chose this charity, as a number of children on the road have lost a parent and have made use of its services at what were very difficult times for their families.

The singing was led by local musician, Pete Doyle of Reading Rock Academy, with local residents Sophie Hastings (a BBC introducing singer), Professor Andrew Mangham and Sophie Morrison on saxophone. We were fortunate to have a visit from Santa, in a red sports car (James Harcourt), with Rudolph (Sean) who delivered gifts to the children on the road.

There was a great community spirit with so many local volunteers

contributing to raising nearly £200 for the charity and enjoying an evening together. This isn't the first charity event we have run and it won't be the last... so watch this space!

For further information about Daisy's Dream, see www.daisysdream.org.uk



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SO WOULD YOU DARE TO DANCE?



Mo's Dance and Drama at the Hexagon, Reading



Putting on a pink tutu doesn't have to be confined to little girls – grown women can also improve their fitness, mental health, not to mention their creativity through dance. **Monica Cleaver** reveals her lifelong passion for teaching performing arts to both young and old to **Elestr Lee**

MANY OF US who raised our families in Emmer Green or Caversham will have come across the ball of energy who is Monica Cleaver – or, more familiarly, Mo of Mo's Dance and Drama. Monica and her team of dance and drama teachers have been providing lessons for four decades, with 2023 marking the school's 40th anniversary, having first opened its doors in 1983.

But the fun of dance classes, or joining the Berkshire Theatre School (a Saturday school for under-18s interested in musical theatre) doesn't have to be confined to

children. Monica also offers lessons to older people at her Adult Dance School, in both Caversham and Reading. Together with fellow teachers Julie and Nicky, she teaches ballet, tap and contemporary dance, just the same as for the children. No doubt most parents sign their children up for dance hoping that some of the benefits will rub off – improved co-ordination, increased confidence, and the chance to get involved in what might become a lifelong interest. However, Monica reckons that the benefits for older dancers might be even greater.

Monica was eager to introduce me to some of her adult pupils when I visited her private studio in Caversham. A great success story has been Doreen Pechey, who first started dancing lessons after she officially reached retirement age. "My parents couldn't afford for me to have ballet lessons. But I visited my Canadian niece who's a dance teacher, and she offered me a class. I loved it so much I decided to take up lessons here locally. Someone suggested I should go to Monica, and I haven't looked back!" she recalled.



Carol Cutler (left), Mo, and Doreen Pechey (right) **all photos: Mo's Dance and Drama**

Having taken her Royal Academy Dance Grade 6 exam in 2016 at the age of 71, the electrical engineer has been declared 'the world's oldest ballet dancer' in the national press – and even danced on the stage of the London Coliseum.

"I teach adults from all walks of life," Monica commented. "Teachers, scientists – including oncologists – all sorts".

Indeed, arriving to practice her tap routine was Carol Cutler, a former director with a local authority. "When you set out to do something like dance it helps you keep on form, not only physically, but also mentally. Repeating and memorising all those steps and sequences means firing up all those neural pathways. Anything to improve balance and muscle strength, as well as memory, can only be good. So many people become incapacitated following falls".

But Carol is also very keen to promote



Where it all started in 1983 – Mo's Place – now the London Street Brasserie in Reading

the real thrill adults feel when they dance. "I had the biggest smile on my face at the end of my first ballet lesson as an adult," Carol remembered. "I used to dance when I was a child but gave up. Then I went to see a performance of *42nd Street*, and it reminded me of how much I enjoyed it. I didn't want to join a class with children, so Monica's adult classes are ideal. It is so wonderful to do something that I enjoy!"

Teaching children remains an important part of Monica's work: "I do musical theatre classes for 3-6-year-olds," Monica explained. "And I find that if they love it at the age of six, then they stay with me right through until 18. The biggest problem with children these days is that they tend to want to 'do it all' – they take on so many different things. Stick at one thing, is what I advise!"

Thrilled by success stories

She is proud of her pupils' achievements and, while few choose to become professionals, she is thrilled by success stories such as that of Teige Bishnought who started lessons with her aged 10, and who now dances professionally in the US.

Preparing for dance exams and rehearsing for shows is the mainstay of performing arts, but Monica always ensures that the emphasis is on her pupils having fun as they learn. The recipe is the same for both children and adults - and everyone gets the chance to perform. In 2022 her adult dancers put on Dance for Ukraine at St Andrew's Hall in Caversham which raised £800, and a Tap-a-thon in Broad Street, Reading, in aid of Children in Need.

"We have been doing the Tap-a-thon for the past 7 years. Obviously, everything was disrupted during Covid, but now we are rebuilding. Sometimes I worry that people will stop dancing – but I know that won't happen. Once they start attending lessons it becomes a commitment. They look forward to their weekly lesson, but the great thing is, they leave beaming!"

Find out more:

www.mosdanceanddrama.co.uk/contact/adult-dance-classes

www.berkshiretheatrecompany.co.uk



Mo's dancers taking part in the Tap-a-thon 2022, in aid of Children in Need



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

Caversham's banking quarter now has tempting baking displays

DRIVING DOWN St Peter's Hill and queuing along Church Road towards the traffic lights, I have often thought what a charming building number 15 Bridge Street is. Janina Maher shares my view, as she has chosen numbers 15 and 13 as her subject for this month's drawing. For many years number 15 was a Lloyds Bank and may have been purpose built as such. Built in a classic neo-Georgian style in 1928, it replaced older Victorian buildings, but earlier directories list a branch of Lloyds Bank at number 20 Bridge Street. Now it has a new life as The Gardens of Caversham Café. To me, it looks like a bank from a model railway, or a doll's house.

Sadly, Caversham is now bereft of any banks at all; the busy junction of Bridge Street, Church

Road and Church Street used to be a 'banking quarter' with branches of most major banks. Lloyds closed in November 2016 and after a refurbishment, which included lengthening ground floor windows, the café opened in February 2019. The Gardens of Caversham are part of the Workhouse Coffee Chain, noted for its range of specially ground coffee beans. They also have branches in the Oxford Road and Broad Street. The name of the café came about as the farmers who produce the beans, sourced directly, often refer to their land as their 'Garden'. Their delicious and tempting display of sweet and savoury baking is all produced in the kitchen in Caversham.

Next door at number 13 is Romans Estate Agents, in a building which also dates from 1928. In the 1970s it was a shop called Risby's, selling 'Freezers, saunas, baths, kitchen fittings and design' – saunas were unusual and trendy in the 1970s. Romans is a national chain of estate agents, and Matthew Hembra, Lettings Manager, was part of the team who opened the Caversham branch in 2009. When I spoke to him, he told me the company has instigated a strategy for all their branches to be carbon zero offices by 2030.

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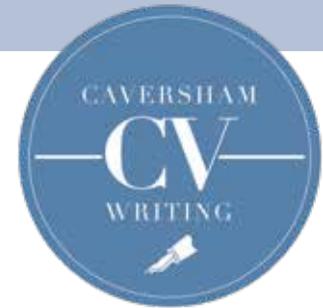


First Impressions Matter

TOP INTERVIEW TIPS

by Laura Harmsworth

HERE ARE my top tips on how to prepare for an interview.



DAYS/WEEKS PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

(not on the train on the way there!)

- **Read the advert, job description and person specification thoroughly.** Think of situations/projects where you can demonstrate what is being asked for. Have ready an example from your experience for each key skill/competency.
- **Research the company.** Ensure you have a good awareness of the company you are applying to – competitors, market, customer base, recent news, structure, values, key personnel. Look at their website and annual report. Try to speak with someone in the company to gain useful insights and a feel for the company.
- **Your current or most recent role and company.** Note down the business type, business goals and how you worked towards them. The culture and how it compares to the new company. What you could bring from this company to the new role.
- **What are your future plans?** Career goals, where this role could lead you, what you need to do to reach your next goal.

- **Prepare a potted history.** Think concisely about your education and career to date. Review the choices you made and how jobs led from one to the next and be prepared to explain any gaps in your CV.
- **Plan your outfit.** Base this on your personality and the type of organisation you're interviewing for. Ensure all clothes are clean, ironed, and your hair is neat.
- **Think of questions you might be asked.** Bullets 1-5 will help with this.
- **Prepare a list of questions you'd like to ask at the interview.**

The Night Before

- Don't drink the night before and get a good night's sleep.
- Prepare a document holder with copies of your CV, job description, documentation if asked for, pen and paper to take notes if necessary.
- Check where you need to go and car parking arrangements.

Interview Day

- Allow plenty of time to get to the interview.
- Turn off your mobile phone.
- Make eye contact with the interviewer and have a firm handshake.
- Don't be negative about current or former employers.
- Answer the actual questions and don't waffle.
- If you don't know the answer, don't make it up. It is alright to say you haven't come across something before, but you'd be interested to learn more about it.
- Leave the interview in the same polite, assured manner in which you entered – look the interviewer in the eye, smile, firm handshake.
- Send a 'thank you' email.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

or on LinkedIn, where she posts tips and articles: www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

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Jean Mary Nicholls: 1929-2022 – A family appreciation

JEAN NICHOLLS, known to many in the Caversham area through her connection with St John's Church Caversham, and many local groups, passed away on 3 November 2022.

Born in London, she spent the war years in Sussex, where she met her future husband, Ken, and they were married in 1952. They had 3 children, Susan, Peter and Sally (aka Helen). The family moved to Caversham in 1961 and became regular members of the congregation of St John's Church. Jean became involved with the 3rd Caversham St John's Brownies in 1965, taking over as Brown Owl until she retired in 1994.

Jean had trained as a primary school teacher in the late 1940s and went back into teaching in the late 1960s, starting at

Katesgrove Infant School, and later working as a supply teacher.

Jean always loved languages, and taught herself Welsh and Russian. She took part in French and German Adult Education classes locally for roughly 50 years. Throughout the lockdowns, she carried on both languages on Zoom, and was due to re-start her classes in September.

She was also very keen on classical music and, about 10 years ago, started taking piano lessons again, practicing diligently for one hour every day.

To fill her time after retiring as Brown Owl, she took up Family History. She would regularly go to London or Trowbridge to consult census records or Parish Records before it all became available on the internet.

She was also a very keen birdwatcher and lover of wildlife, and belonged to various RSPB and other birding and wildlife groups. She completed an online survey every Sunday on the number of birds and wild animals visiting her garden during the previous week.

She bounced back after losing Ken to Parkinson's Disease in 2005, and was very strong when Susan passed away from a brain tumour in 2018.

Jean remained active and independent right up to her last fall on 31 August 2022. She was due to catch the bus that afternoon to go to Caversham for her weekly visit to the hairdresser.

Peter and Sally are immensely proud of her commitment to all her hobbies, her desire to keep active and to keep learning, and how she coped during the lockdowns, mastering both Zoom and Facetime in her determination to keep going.



Wellbeing with Ami Roy

It's all connected!

SCIENTISTS IN the early 19th century, who proposed theories counter to the received wisdom of the day, were ridiculed by the orthodoxy. One of these ideas was the neuroplasticity of the brain! While people used to believe that the brain became fixed after a certain age, newer research revealed that the brain never stops changing in response to learning.

In scientific terms, it is defined as the ability of the nervous system to change its activity in response to intrinsic or extrinsic stimuli, by reorganising its structure, functions, or connections.

After damage to the brain, such as during a stroke, the areas of the brain associated with certain functions may be injured. But eventually, healthy parts of the brain may take over those functions and abilities can be restored.

There are steps we can take to help encourage our brain to adapt and change, at any age.

Enriching our environment: Learning environments that offer plenty of opportunities for focused attention, novelty, and challenge, have been shown to stimulate positive changes in the brain, for example:

- Learning a new language
- Learning how to play an instrument
- Travelling and exploring new places
- Creating art and other creative pursuits
- Reading and writing

Getting plenty of rest: Research has shown that sleep plays an important role in dendritic growth in the brain. Dendrites are the growths at the end of neurons that help transmit information from one neuron to the next. By strengthening these connections, we may be able to encourage greater brain plasticity.

Exercising regularly: Regular physical activity has a number of brain benefits. Some research indicates that exercise might help prevent neuron loss in key areas of the hippocampus, a part of the brain involved in memory and other functions. Other studies suggest that exercise plays a role in new neuron formation in this same region.

Practising Mindfulness: Mindfulness entails completely immersing our mind in the present moment, without ruminating over the past or contemplating the future. Awareness of the sights, sounds, and sensations around us is key. Many studies have shown that cultivating and practising mindfulness can foster the brain's neuroplasticity.

Play: Games aren't just for kids: studies show that playing board, card, video, and other games can improve our brain's neuroplasticity.

And you might find that there is a common thread above, one that links to some of the previous articles in this column. Why am I saying something similar under a different heading, you might wonder! Aha! Memory recall and repetition also help our brains make new connections!

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

pole, stove, single, spice, sole, clove, lone, **love**, glove, loan, mitten, moan, kitten, lean, smitten.

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