

New Title in Print for Local Author

Caversham author Leslie Wilson has just published her fourth novel, *Last Train from Kummersdorf*, this time for older children as well as adults. The story is set in wartime Germany, and tells of two teenagers and their search across Germany for their respective parents as the Russians advance. The people they meet – starved and displaced German refugees, victims of brutality – tell of the horrors of the war, but the story also concerns resistance to Hitler in Germany, kindness amid horror, courage and love. It reflects on the fact, that in war, the innocent always suffer for a nation's collective guilt.

There is a personal resonance about this work. Leslie had an English father and German mother, and in post-war England this created tensions. Her mother was captured by the Russians during the war, only narrowly escaping and being fortunate to be picked up by sympathetic British soldiers. Her grandmother, living later in England with the family, was not only mentally ill, but stood out as a German due to her lack of knowledge of English. As a child,

Leslie remembers that this had an isolating effect – those around her were unable to share in her experiences. Her mother's family were expelled from German Silesia after the war and never felt completely secure; this feeling persisted through Leslie's childhood. This, in turn, has influenced Leslie's current involvement with the Refugee Support Group. She has witnessed here that children carry the burden of their parents' suffering, as they do in her novel. As they grew up, Leslie was encouraged by her father to think about the wider issues of prejudice, and this too has influenced her adult thinking, including her move to join the Quakers. A recurrent theme in her work is that people *do* keep going, and learn how to survive adversity.

Given this background, it seems appropriate that Leslie's latest teaching venture concerns autobiography. She now leads a two-term course with the University Department of

Continuing Education entitled "Getting your autobiography down on paper". She has seen the value for people of being able to sort through their lives and their memories and commit them to paper. Some have done it purely for themselves, others for their grandchildren, and most find that writing things down can be easier than talking about them. Writing gives an authority to their

experiences, and can provide a way of accepting the past. Leslie's own parents both wrote of their lives – her mother's was published in 1990 (*Shadow of War*, by Gerda Erika Baker, published by Lion), and she read her father's after his death, only to wish that she had been able to read it before and talk about it with him. She feels it a privilege to be able to enable people in this way, and to be taken into their confidence, and has met many wonderful people through this work.

Brought up with a very Christian background, Leslie has now joined the Quakers, a move which has enabled her to let go of doctrines and dogmas and write with a greater freedom.

Although her novels are not trying to be specifically moral, Christian or Quaker tales, they are influenced greatly by her spirituality. Conversely, her writing is a profound part of her spiritual life – they are interlinked. Quakers have no outward sacraments, but appreciate that the whole of life is sacramental, and that everything one does is part of one's religion. This quote from Isaac Pennington sums it up for Leslie: *All Truth is a shadow except the last, except the utmost; yet every Truth is true in its kind. It is substance in its own place, though it be but a shadow in another place (for it is but a reflection from an intenser substance); and the shadow is a true shadow, as the substance is a true substance.*

Last Train from Kummersdorf is published by Faber, price £9.99, and is available from Caversham Bookshop. Further information can be found at www.lesliewilson.co.uk.



Leslie Wilson

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Contributions are welcomed if they are relevant to community matters or church life. Copy should be kept short, typed in double spacing if possible and with a word count. Copy dates are given in the paper each month and copy should be handed in at the Parish Office at Church House, Church Street, Caversham. The office is open 9.30 - 12.30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please note the Editors reserve the right to edit copy if necessary.

The Caversham Bridge is delivered each month to homes in Caversham. It could be delivered to you for £2.40 per year. If you do not regularly subscribe to the paper and would like to do so, please contact the Parish Office on 947 1703.

TALKING POINT
 By
Revd Rosemary Fletcher

WILD GOOSE OVER THE SEA

At the sixth hour darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus called in a loud voice: 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' - which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last. (Mark 15 vv33 - 37).

In the history of the church, darkness has been a recurring experience for the followers of Jesus. Those who huddled at the foot of the cross knew the meaning of despair. They had welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with their cheers and their hopes and the waving of branches. They really thought that Jesus would be acclaimed king, dressed in purple and seated on a throne. They did not think that the power of the authorities and the Roman soldiers would prove stronger. As Jesus breathed his last on the cross it was the deepest of all darkness that settled over their world.

The Church has often suffered from such despair. One of these times of darkness in the British Church was in the very early days when the rest of Britain had lost its faith and only a small group in West Scotland clung to the faith. The missionaries from this era and place had a difficult time, but as they stared out in despair across the sea something came that they took to be a message of hope. Across the horizon came a bird; firstly as a speck in the distance but then the form of a wild goose could be made out. In places like Iona today the wild goose, not the dove, is the symbol of God's Spirit.

At dawn on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. They found the stone rolled away. In their grief, Jesus met them and in the encounter he brought them hope where there had been despair. The Resurrection of Jesus was unexpected. The disciples had taken the cross as a sign of failure and they could not see beyond the darkness of that first Good Friday. That day is only 'Good' because of what came next.

Sometimes in our individual lives or in the life of our world we can see little hope. Sometimes we cannot see the next chapter of the story. We and our world need to hear the good news of the Resurrection. Out of hate God brought love; out of death God brought new life. We need to bring God's love and hope to dispel the shadows of despair, to enable new life to come from what is old and dying, whether that be in our personal or corporate lives.

The ancient Church of Western Scotland helped to re-establish Christianity in Britain. Those early missionaries did not give up hope. Even in the times of darkness God was there and God is there - waiting to come to our aid. God is still to be looked for. He comes into our lives, often unexpectedly. He comes like a wild goose flying over the sea. He brings hope to our despair and light to our darkness. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the promise of God's continuing love. It gives us hope and meaning for this life and for the life to come.

May the peace and joy of Easter-tide gladden your hearts and may the message of Easter give you hope and strengthen you now and always.

Revd Rosemary Fletcher is the Methodist minister in Caversham.

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the May 2004 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 31st March. The date for submission of items for the June 2004 issue will be Wednesday 5th May.

All advertising copy for the May 2004 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 6th April. For the June 2004 issue the date will be Tuesday 4th May 2004.

The newspaper produced by the members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

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The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board. The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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 Tel: 947 1787
 Fr John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common
 Tel: 972 3418

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD
 Rev H R Gayle Tel: 945 3849 (contact)

SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN
St Peter's, St Peter's Hill
 8.00am Holy Communion
 9.45am Parish Communion
 6.30pm Evensong

St John's, Gosbrook Road
 8.00am The Holy Eucharist
 10.00am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road
 8.00am The Eucharist
 10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)
 First Sunday, Family Eucharist
 11.30am The Eucharist
 6.30pm Evening Prayer (as announced)
 An up to date list of weekday Services will be found on the Church notice boards.

St Barnabas', Grove Road, Emmer Green
 8.00am Holy Communion
 9.30am Family Communion (apart from 2nd Sunday)
 9.30am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

St Margaret's, Mapledurham
 11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT
 11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)
 Morning Worship (2nd Sunday)
 All Age Worship (4th Sunday)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH
 10.30am Prospect Street
 6.30pm Usually at 191 Kidmore Road

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL, Old Peppard Road
 10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church
 6.30pm Prayer Meeting

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM
 Caversham Methodist Church (Gosbrook Road)
 10.30am and 6.30pm
 Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road
 9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am and 6.30pm
 Woodcote Parish Church
 9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC
 Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue
 Saturday 5.30pm,
 Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm
 Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

**SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers),
 Church Street, Reading**
 10.30am
 (House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham
 9.30am Sunday School
 11.00am Divine Worship
 6.00pm Evening Service

EASTER SERVICES

St Andrew's Caversham Heights

Palm Sunday 4th April (palm crosses at both services)

8.00am Holy Eucharist (*said*)
10.00am Blessing of Palms (*in church hall*),
Procession and Sung Eucharist

Monday 5th April in Holy Week

7.30pm Holy Eucharist (*said*) with Homily

Tuesday 6th April in Holy Week

7.30pm Stainer's Crucifixion (*sung*) with St
Andrew's Church Choir (augmented)

Wednesday 7th April in Holy Week

9.30am Holy Eucharist (*said*)
7.30pm Passover Celebration in Church.

Maundy Thursday 8th April

7.30pm Sung Eucharist of the Lord's Supper &
Ceremonies of Washing of Feet, Stripping
of Altar, and Watch of Prayer before the
Altar of Repose (*until the morning*).

Good Friday 9th April

9.30am Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
(*ending the Vigil from the previous evening*)
11.00am Family Service, followed by hot cross
buns in Church Hall & Walk to
Mapledurham

Holy Saturday 10th April

9.00pm The Easter Vigil, Service of Light & First
Communion of Easter.

Easter Day 11th April

8.00am Holy Eucharist (*said*)
10.00am Family Service with Eucharist (*sung*) &
Blessing of Easter Garden
11.30am Communion (*said*).
6.30pm Festal BCP Evensong (*sung*) with Address.

St Barnabas Emmer Green

Maundy Thursday 8th April

8.00pm Eucharist with foot washing followed by
vigil from 9.00pm to midnight.

Good Friday 9th April

2.00pm - 3.00pm 'Reflections on the Cross'.

Easter Day 11th April

5.45am Dawn Eucharist
8.00am Said Communion (BCP)
9.30am Sung Family Communion.

St John's Lower Caversham

Palm Sunday 4th April

8.00am Holy Eucharist. Blessing and Distribution
of the Palm Crosses.
10.00am Procession and Parish Eucharist. Blessing
and Distribution of the Palm Crosses. The
Solemn Reading of the Passion.
(No sermon).

Holy Tuesday 6th April

10.00am Communion at Bristow Court
2.30pm Holy Eucharist for the Mothers' Union

Maundy Thursday 8th April

10.00am Holy Eucharist. Stripping of the Altars
7.30pm Celebration of the Passover Meal.

Good Friday 9th April

2.00pm Hour by the Cross. Celebration of
Passiontide Music, Readings and Poetry.

Easter Sunday 11th April

8.00am Holy Eucharist and Blessing of the Easter
Garden.
10.00am Procession and Parish Eucharist.
3.00pm Holy Baptism.

St Peter's Caversham

Palm Sunday 4th April

8.00am Holy Communion
9.45am Sung Communion (meet in Caversham

6.30pm

Court for 9.40am procession of palms)
Entry Into Holy Week - choral and
congregational music, readings and
prayers.

Monday 5th, Tuesday 6th, Wednesday 7th April in Holy Week

7.00pm Holy Communion.

Maundy Thursday 8th April

9.30am Holy Communion.
8.00pm Sung Eucharist, Stripping of Altar,
Candlelit Vigil to midnight.

Good Friday 9th April

8.00am Holy Communion.
12.00 - 3.00pm Three Hours Devotion: Conductor - John
Madeley

Easter Day 11th April

8.00am Holy Communion.
9.45am Family Communion.
6.30pm Evensong.

St Margaret's Mapledurham

Palm Sunday 4th April

11.00am Family Communion

Maundy Thursday 8th April

7.30pm (At Trench Green Hall) Supper and
Eucharist.

Good Friday 9th April

11.00am Holy Communion and meditations.

Easter Day 11th April

11.00am Holy Communion.

Caversham Baptist Church

Palm Sunday 4th April

10.30am (at Prospect Street) Preacher - Revd Peter
Edwards

6.30pm (at North Caversham) - Communion
Service, Preacher - Revd Peter Edwards

Good Friday 9th April

10.30am United Baptist & Methodist Service at
Prospect Street.
Preacher - Revd Rosemary Fletcher

Easter Sunday 11th April

10.30am (at Prospect Street) Family Service.
6.30pm (at North Caversham) Preacher - Mr Bert
Metcalf

Caversham Hill Chapel

Good Friday 9th April

10.30am Short Service.

Easter Sunday 11th April

10.30am Celebration of Easter.

Caversham Park Church at Caversham Park Primary School

Good Friday 9th April

11.00am Meditation and Prayer.

Easter Day 11th April

11.00am Celebration 'The Lord is Risen' and Holy
Communion.

Methodist Church in Caversham

Friday 2nd April (at Caversham Heights Methodist Church)

8.00pm Riding Lights Theatre Group presents The
Passion of Christ - Doorway into Life.
(Contact 0118 954 6680)

Palm Sunday 4th April

Caversham (Gosbrook Road) Methodist Church
10.30am Revd Rosemary Fletcher

6.30pm

Ignation Spirituality - Rev Nicholas
Thompson

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

10.30am Revd John Dudley

6.30pm Prayer & Praise - Mr. David Beek

Monday 5th April and Tuesday 6th April

8.00pm Images of Jesus from round the world at
Caversham Heights Methodist Church -
led by Revd Dr John Ogden

Maundy Thursday 8th April

8.00pm Joint Maundy Thursday Service at
Caversham (Gosbrook Road) Methodist
Church - Revd Rosemary Fletcher

Good Friday 9th April

10.30am United Service at Caversham Baptist
Church - Revd Rosemary Fletcher
Easter activities for 3 - 12 year olds at
Caversham Heights Methodist Church
(Contact 947 0040)

Easter Day 11th April

Caversham (Gosbrook Road) Methodist Church

10.30am Holy Communion - Revd Dr John Ogden
6.30pm Hymns and Readings - Revd Rosemary
Fletcher

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

8.00am Holy Communion - Revd Rosemary
Fletcher
9.00am Easter Breakfast
10.30am Holy Communion - Revd Rosemary
Fletcher
6.30pm Revd Dr John Ogden

Parish of Our Lady and St Anne

Saturday 3rd April

5.30pm Vigil Mass

Palm Sunday 4th April

10.00am Mass.
5.00pm Stations of the Cross
6.30pm Mass.

Monday 5th April and Tuesday 6th April

9.15am Mass

Wednesday 7th April (Spy Wednesday)

7.30pm Mass

Maundy Thursday 8th April

8.00pm Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper.
Watching at the Altar of Repose till
Midnight.

Good Friday 9th April

9.00am Morning Prayer of the Church
12.00 noon Children's Way of the Cross.
3.00pm Solemn Liturgy of the Passion.
7.30pm Stations of the Cross and Holy
Communion.

Holy Saturday 10th April

9.00am Morning Prayer of the Church
8.30pm Solemn Easter Vigil and First Mass of Easter.

Easter Sunday 11th April

Sacrament of Confession and Reconciliation

8.30am, 10.00am and 6.30pm Masses
After the Liturgy on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday,
Holy Saturday 10th April 10.30 - 11.30am.

New Testament Church of God

Maundy Thursday 8th April

8.00pm Communion and Washing of the Saints'
Feet

Good Friday 9th April

11.00am Morning Service

Easter Sunday 11th April

11.00am Easter Sunday Service

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FROM THE LOOKOUT POST

It was good to see 'Bystander' back in action last month and with such an enviable turn of phrase. Over the last month the binoculars have been scanning round from the lookout post to see what is going on in Caversham that might be of interest.

Local Consultation

They spotted some folk from the Borough Council visiting Church House with a road show on a consultative draft document – 'Moving Forward in Partnership'. It is the result of work between 18 different organisations – public sector, voluntary and commerce and industry – which is in itself impressive. It is full of laudable aims but it is hard to see how they will actually be fulfilled. For example – 'Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the built environment and securing adequate infrastructure improvements in Reading is a principal objective'. Yes, it is planning speak, but Caversham could do with some objectives like that. Let us read on to find what action is planned. Here it is – we are going to 'identify and value the ... environments.' Oh dear what a disappointment!

Caversham Centre

Also spotted in Church House, a very cheerful community police officer enthusiastic about the newly installed IT link. Apparently it saves them a lot of time going backwards and forwards to Reading. Great news! What is more difficult to find, despite several attempts, is any news on when and how the police can be contacted in the new office.

Scanning on, there are some notices in the Post Office which indicate that the proposed post office counter in Church Street will be having longer opening times including staying open on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. And according to our Post Master they will cover at least the same range of services, so we do have something to sweeten the bitter pill. However, I do fear for Prospect Street! It will not be the same without the Post Office.

Round the corner, a build-up of litter and piles of cigarette ends spoil the newly improved area outside the library. Congratulations to the good people who completed an early springclean of the area on Rectory Road behind Warings bakery. Let us hope that it will soon be followed by a clean-up of some unpleasant graffiti along the wall.

The Caversham Riviera

Inside the library you may have seen a notice for the CADRA AGM. It will be on Monday 29 March 2004 at 8pm in the Baptist Free Church Centre opposite Waitrose. Adrian Lawson from the Parks and Open Spaces Team at RBC will be talking about the development of the Kennet and Thames watersides or what we might call 'the Caversham Riviera'. This links in to some interesting work on the Thames Parks Plan as well as RBC ambitions to use the waterways for local transport. By all accounts the next few years could be a busy time by the river if we are to have a 'New Hexagon' in Hills Meadow, new developments on Caversham Lock Island and the tow path, and more besides.

Amersham Road Estate

Local residents are understandably up in arms about the George Wimpey signboard at the old SEC depot. Wimpey applied to build 179 homes on the site and received outline planning permission. What is particularly worrying is that the normal RBC policy allows 30 homes per hectare, but the application would give 71 per hectare. The apparent justification for granting outline approval with more than twice that density is that a new bus route will open up access to services on Henley Road. The services on Henley Road are themselves fairly limited. This line of reasoning seems highly tenuous and, to make it worse, the bus route will only be possible if RBC acquires land which is currently privately owned. On top of all that there are flooding problems, not to mention the traffic implications for Caversham and its creaking infrastructure. All credit to the campaigners. Keep your voices heard.

Mapledurham pavilion

An announcement is still awaited from the Mapledurham Playing Field Committee and RBC on two options for the sale of a small portion of the playing fields and the detailed proposals for the rebuilding of the pavilion. Please be alert for the announcement and take the opportunity to make your views known.

And Finally

A CADRA newsletter appeared through my letterbox this week. They are sent free to CADRA members, so why not swell the ranks of membership by ringing Marian Fallowfield on 954 6899 (the cost is only £6 per household for three years).

Abbeyfield

6 MAITLAND ROAD

6 Maitland Road is our supportive house where Residents are free to come and go as they please. Most of the rooms have their own ensuite facilities, and you can bring your own furniture and treasures as far as they can be accommodated.

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Christian Schools Worker finds 'great things' in town's churches

BY ANDREW MATHEWSON

If Andrea Clarke hadn't unexpectedly lost her voice 11 years ago, her life might not have taken its present course and it is unlikely that she would now be the new Schools Christian Worker in Reading. Andrea, 28, grew up in Kent and, after studying History and German at Exeter University, spent three years living in Germany. Coming back to England, she took a postgraduate teaching certificate at the University of Reading and has stayed here to become the town's new Schools Worker.

Crucial to this part of her story, however, is a succession of events which happened slightly earlier. "I grew up in a Christian family," she says. "I always went to the local parish church and sang in the church choir. But when I was 17, I lost my voice because I'd been singing too much and so I couldn't do all the Easter services."

"I went along to church and thought 'There's not really much for me here - I can't sing!' For me, church had just been a matter of singing!"

Then a friend suggested that, since Andrea was free of her church commitments, they could spend Easter together at Spring Harvest.

"A lot of things that I'd learned at church just came to life at Spring Harvest, moving from my head down to my heart. God was obviously working on my life. It was then that I made a conscious decision to follow Jesus and become a Christian. It grew from there." At 21, Andrea was baptised in a church in Germany. "A process," is how she sums up her conversion.

The position of Schools Worker was created about four years ago by the Reading Schools Christian Work Trust, a registered charity founded and supported by 14 local churches. The broad aim of the Trust is to make Jesus known in Reading secondary schools through assemblies, Bible-based RE lessons, after-school or lunchtime clubs, and through support for Christian Unions and individual Christians in schools. A group from the Trust guides Andrea in her work and the Scripture Union provides training support and guidance.

Her work in schools is varied. Within a few weeks of starting the job in September she had led assemblies at Thamesbridge College in Whitley, and at Kendrick School. She also visits existing Christian Unions in schools, offering the organisers advice or resources and, with no prior contact, three more

schools have approached her for help in setting up new Unions. She is also available to help other church-based youth workers in the area.

"I've also been looking for schools where there may be Christian teachers and Christian pupils doing fantastic work but which no youth worker is visiting," she adds.

Thamesbridge College is a school which makes her particularly excited. As well as running assemblies there, Andrea is now

mentoring a small group of boys and is running an After-School Club.

"What's really exciting about that is that the kids come along voluntarily, so we can talk about our faith openly. They are not there because it is on their timetable but because they are interested. This gives us a lot more freedom to talk, to pray that they bring their friends along, that the club grows and that they ask questions and come to know Jesus."

But in some schools, the work of leading assemblies, RE lessons, lunchtime clubs and so on can only develop once Andrea has established a position of trust. In order to do this, she has to undertake groundwork first. "This may include helping out in the Special Needs department, attending school events, chatting to staff and pupils after assemblies and at break time etc," she explains. "It's a question of letting the school get to know you, building up their trust and developing good relationships in the hope that they might ask you to do other things."

One thing she finds hard is going into a school to introduce herself to the staff, giving them her details and then... praying and waiting. "That is the hardest bit really. I'm a doer and it's hard to just leave it and wait patiently to see if they come back to you."

Her network of local church contacts gives her an overview of Reading that not many people have. Local Christians will be reassured to know that she is excited by what she sees. "I believe we are amazingly blessed in the town but often do not realise it," she says. "Churches are working together and God is doing some great things through Christians here."

• If you would like to pray for Christian work in Reading schools and to know more about the work of the Reading Schools Christian Work Trust, contact Andrea for a monthly *Pause2pray* email/letter and a newsletter with updates on schools. Her e-mail address is



- Photo courtesy of A. Mathewson

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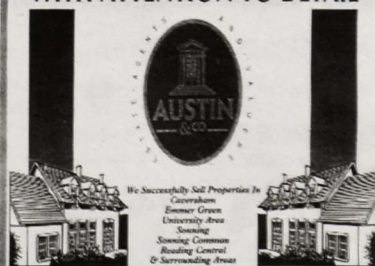
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AROUND THE CHURCHES

ST DAVID'S DAY CELEBRATION AT ST BARNABAS

As in recent years, St Barnabas Church was happy to act as hosts to Cymdeithas Cymry Reading a'r Cylch (Reading and District Welsh Society) for their annual St David's Day Service held this year on 29 February. The early spring ensured that the gathered expatriates were resplendent with their daffodils for this bi-lingual service, conducted on this occasion by Dr Trystan Owain Hughes, an ordinand at Wycliffe Hall and the former Head of Theology at Trinity College, Carmarthen.

In his address, Dr Hughes mused about what St David would think about Wales if he were to return after nearly 1,500 years. The countryside has not changed, the people are still warm and friendly and there remains a rich culture. However, he would not be impressed by the poverty and shortages that are worse in Wales than elsewhere, nor by the drug abuse in the valleys, robbed of their resources and with failed industries, the areas polluted and spoiled by neglect, the many closed churches and chapels, and the few people with their high average age present in those that are open. Putting a positive slant on the situation, Dr Hughes reminded the congregation of God in creation, who looked on His creation and saw that it was good. He suggested that we should look for the image of God in all creation and in the community in which we live. He reminded us of Bonhoeffer's words "the church exists to serve the world", a world in which we need to value the positive things and overcome the



negative ones. His message was for us to ensure that our own lives reflect Christ and Christian principles. We should look for, and expect to find among God's people in the community, love and hope and those who work for justice and peace.

Any Welsh congregation is characterised by its singing. This was no exception and the service included vigorous renderings of Cwm Rhonda and Calon Lan. The generous Welsh hospitality was demonstrated through the subsequent provision of refreshments in the Church Hall.

Dr Trystan Hughes (left) was photographed outside St Barnabas Church with John Wayman Evans (President of the Reading and District Welsh Society and a member of St Barnabas congregation) and the Vicar (The Revd Derek Chandler).

FISH, FUN AND FROLICS AT ST BARNABAS

Christians know how to enjoy themselves; this is particularly so at the Annual Fish and Chip Supper at St Barnabas Church. This year a capacity crowd filled the Church Hall to experience a super Supper Entertainment boasting a range of musical and acting entertainment across the ages. It is invidious to pick out specific acts and this brief report merely skims the surface, but Nathan Gash's accomplished performance on the tuba of the Allegro from Mozart's Horn Concerto was a highlight. There were many other instrumental and vocal solos and duets and sketches, including music from South Pacific by members of the choir in costume, line dancing from the facilitators of the Junior Church, a memorable demonstration of service by the Churchwardens' interpretation of "Right, said Fred, let's have a cup of tea" and an hilarious sketch in which "Big Ears" was teaching "Noddy" how to drive a car. Top of the bill was the pantomime by the Junior Church Fellowship, an extravaganza involving characters from many pantomimes all rolled into one, executed with talent, panache and humour.



Our pictures show Big Ears teaching Noddy how to drive and a scene from the pantomime.



NEW MINISTER FOR THE METHODIST CHURCHES IN CAVERSHAM

As many readers will be aware, Revd Rosemary Fletcher has announced that she and her husband, James Rowley, will be leaving Caversham in the summer. They will be working overseas after a period at college.

The Revd Dermot Thornberry, who is currently stationed near Darlington, has been invited to succeed Rosemary Fletcher, and subject to the approval of the Methodist Conference, will be taking up the position of Team Leader for the churches in Caversham from September next.

Visit of Riding Lights to Caversham Heights

Riding Lights will be visiting Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Friday April 2nd, at 8 pm, to present *The Passion* in the church. It combines a performance of the events leading up to the death and burial of Christ with an act of worship, creating a powerful opportunity to reflect on Christ's passion. The additional elements of worship, prayer, readings and music will be led by local people.

Tickets (priced at £5 & £3.50 for concessions) are now available for the evening. Please phone 0118 946 1763 (the Methodist Northern Section team office - answerphone when unmanned) or Kathy Munns on 954 6680. Further information about Riding Lights and this presentation can be found at www.ridinglights.org.uk.

Quiet Day at The Oak House Quiet Garden

80 Woodcote Road, Caversham
Thursday 22nd April
10.00-3.00pm

Led by Revd Keith Green
Leave behind the hustle and bustle of life and join us at the Oak House quiet garden. Feel free to pray, read, sew, write, paint, knit or sleep if that is what you need; the day is yours. Listen to God and be restored.

Coffee will be served at 10.00am followed by a short led meditation at 10.20am and again at 12.30pm. The rest of the day can be spent in quiet individual reflection in the house or garden. To book telephone Mrs Leslie Maynard (0118 947 6067).

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

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In February last year, Brian Conder, from Traidcraft, went to India, on the first of these tours. In articles to Traidcraft supporters he wrote: 'The 15-day holiday included visits to producer groups in Mumbai, Jaipur and Bhuj, as well as seeing some of northern India's famous tourist sights, like the Taj Mahal.

The Shroff Self Help Centre in Mumbai provides embroidery work for families, many of whom live in the slum areas of Mumbai. Despite the living conditions, I received a warm welcome and saw some of the outstanding embroidery work being carried out, as well as the practical help which Shroff offers to mothers and their children.

In Jaipur, we visited Aravali who encourage and develop the traditional art of blockprinting. We saw how Traidcraft's beautiful duvet covers are manufactured, from the carving of the original wooden block to dye making, printing, cleaning and drying.

We then travelled to Bhuj in the north west, scene of a devastating earthquake in January 2001. We visited Shrujan, a group which supports the traditional embroidery skills of this part of Kutch. Many families have been resettled in new housing schemes following the earthquake. We visited families who make the beautiful products and saw the detailed work which goes into making them.

'All the people we saw live in very basic conditions and it was a humbling experience to meet them and to be welcomed into their homes. By supporting Traidcraft you are directly helping some of the poorest communities in India.'

Latest dates and destinations for tours in 2004 are:

Northern Thailand - 15 May to 30 May

Kenya NEW - 25 July to 8 August

Peru NEW (to be confirmed) - 14 August to 29 August

Southern Thailand NEW (to be confirmed) - 31 July to 15 August

South Africa - 22 August to 5 September

India Highlights - 2 October to 16 October

South Africa - 20 November to 4 December

If you would like more information, please ring 0870 444 1774 or e-mail: comms@traidcraft.co.uk or go to www.traidcraft.co.uk

EASTER QUIZ

Following the huge success of the Christmas Quiz, held to raise funds for St. Margaret's Tower Appeal, the organisers thought it would be fun to organise a similar quiz this Easter. This quiz is now on sale at St. Margaret's and St Peter's Churches, Parish Office, and Caversham Bookshop, priced at £1 per entry. Again, all proceeds will go towards the Tower Appeal Fund.

Thank you to all who took part in the Christmas Quiz. Nearly £400 was raised towards the Tower Appeal Fund. The winner of the £50 prize was the Blinstrub family from Reading. Well done to them. The answers are published below.

So far, the Appeal has raised £10,000 by donations received and pledges, so we're a third of the way to our target. Many thanks to all concerned.

For further information, please contact the Appeal Project Manager, Mark Denley, on 0118 946 4086 or by e-mail: mh.denley@virgin.net.

St. Margaret's Tower Appeal Fund Christmas Quiz - Answers:

- DDMOH Ding Dong Merrily On High; 2. THATI The Holly And The Ivy; 3. DTH Deck The Halls; 4. RTRNR Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer; 5. GWK Good King Wenceslas; 6. AIWFCIMTFT All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth; 7. OLTOb O Little Town Of Bethlehem; 8. RATCT Rock Around The Christmas Tree; 9. ISMKSC I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus; 10. CROAOF Chestnuts Roasting on An Open Fire; 11. RTWATT Roast Turkey With All The Trimmings; 12. CPABB Christmas Pudding And Brandy Butter; 13. WTKOOA We Three Kings Of Orient Are; 14. ISTS I Saw Three Ships; 15. DPBVCC Dancer (Donna, Dasher), Prancer, Blitzen, Vixen, Comet and Cupid; 16. GFAM Gold, Frankincense And Myrrh; 17. OCAYF O Come All Ye Faithful; 18. JATB Jack And The Beanstalk; 19. BNI Batteries Not Included; 20. AIAM Away In A Manger; 21. GRYMG God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen; 22. TTD0C The Twelve Days Of Christmas; 23. OIRDC Once In Royal David's City; 24. HYAMLC Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas; and 25. WWYAMC We Wish You A Merry Christmas.

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British & Foreign Bible Society's 200th Anniversary

The BFBS was one of the many Christian societies founded in the wake of the Evangelical Revival in the 18th century and of the consequent birth of many protestant missionary societies. These movements revived the need for translating and publishing the Bible. The Society was founded on March 7, 1804, with a non-denominational constitution and the aim 'to encourage a wider circulation of the Holy Scriptures at home and abroad'.

A trigger in the setting up of the Society happened in Wales where the few available copies of the Bible were too expensive for most people. But a young girl called Mary Jones was so desperate to have her own copy that she saved up her pennies for six years and then walked the 25 miles to Bala in north Wales to find a certain Rev Thomas Charles who sold Bibles. He was thankful that he still had a copy left for her but was so moved by her story that he kept thinking of all the other people in Wales, and probably in England, who also wanted their own Bible at a price they could afford.

So Thomas Charles went to London on December 7th 1802 to meet with the most influential Christian leaders of the Church of England and the Free Churches. He shared the story of Mary Jones with them and emphasized the great need for Bibles in Welsh. Together they discussed the formation of a society to print and distribute Bibles, not only for Wales, but also for England – and for the rest of the world! There and then, letters were sent to Christians in all denominations inviting them to unite in supporting this work. Soon after March 1804, supporters organised themselves into local "Auxiliary Bible Societies" to raise funds. From then on, Bible Societies were formed in many parts of the world in imitation of the BFBS. The largest was the American Bible Society, founded in 1816 to supply the huge needs in the US; by the end of the 19th century, the BFBS and ABS had a vast network of agencies and associations around the globe to supply Scriptures in many languages.

When the British Government began to send convicts to Australia, the Bible Societies established agencies to supply them with the Scriptures to bring comfort to them. A national Society was then founded in 1924.

In Russia in 1806, the Tsar financially assisted the Church to form a Society and this functioned until the communists came to power and closed it down. Persecution of Christians followed. In the exciting days after the opening up of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall the Russian Bible Society was re-founded in 1991.

A major development took place in 1946 when a Conference of Bible Societies met in Haywards

Heath. The members were "moved by the need of the world for the Word of God and by the deep Christian fellowship of those who work together for its spread" and decided to found the United Bible Societies to co-ordinate Bible Society work around the world. A small UBS office co-ordinates the work and serves the 138 national Bible Societies throughout the world who are the 'handmaids' of their churches. Funds from donor Societies are used for priority Scripture work in poorer countries through a central budget. Co-operation ensures more effective production and distribution.

Few countries have presented more problems and challenges than China. In 1966, the Cultural Revolution almost destroyed Bible work and the Churches. Christians were persecuted and they went 'underground'. However, in the late 70s the situation began to ease and the demand for Bibles increased, especially for Scriptures in the new Simplified Script officially adopted by the Chinese Government. At Nanjing University, revision of an old version of the Bible was going on and the UBS supplied the original Hebrew and Greek Bible texts to the translators. In the 80s, Bible printing in China itself became possible; in 1985 a partnership between the Amity Foundation (set up by the Christians to serve the nation) and the UBS established a Bible Press in Nanjing. This was God's special miracle for China after such a long period of terrible suffering. Over 30 million Bibles have been printed with government permission. Now, there are 50-100 million Christians in China and churches are growing fast.

So much exciting work continues: a Bible Press in Brazil and Bible Boats taking the Word and medical help to Indians along the Amazon; increasingly national Bible Societies are the vehicles through which the various denominations in their countries work together; Scriptures are being used for literacy work in the third world; Braille Bibles are produced in many languages; the ministry of Gospel audio cassettes "Faith Comes by Hearing" is a major outreach in many languages, to name but a few. So, people in 180 territories are still being reached by the Word of God.

Jan Blakeley

A date for your diary: As part of the celebrations of the Bible Society's 200th Anniversary there will be a BIBLE SOCIETY PICNIC & FAMILY FUN DAY in Prospect Park on Sunday, June 20th, 12.30 onwards. More details later. Also, it is hoped to re-found the Reading Action Group for the Bible Society. This had been the first Action Group in the country.

ERNIE'S BARBER SHOPS

by Sylvia Chumbley

I wonder if anyone recognises where the left hand photo was taken in the 1950s.

As you can see, it is a barber's shop, and the only clue is that it was in Caversham Road. Standing outside are the proprietor, Ernst Drechsler, with his young assistant Madjevski, the spelling of which I never knew. Both were refugees from Hitler's Europe. Someone may even remember their faces. The shop and the cottage next door were demolished years ago. I believe they stood approximately where Office World now stands. The gentleman in question later gave up this rented shop and bought a better one, fairly close to the other. This second shop was number 169 which is now the Marmara Kebab shop. I have the receipts for this purchase, and the sight of them leaves one feeling rather light-headed, for the sum paid added up to the grand total of £900, and that in three monthly instalments! That was in 1957.

The second shop was a definite step up, and the other photo shows Ernie with his wife Lora outside. They were both working in the shop by now. There is a professionally painted sign over the shop, showing his name as Dressler, rather than Drechsler. He had been quick to realise that, to gather customers amongst English people, his name had to be instantly pronounceable; likewise his first name Ernst had metamorphosed into Ernie. He and Lora had escaped from Vienna just in time, in the Spring of 1939, and, after months of being vetted in an Internment Camp on the Isle of Man, they came to Caversham. He worked as a barber in Heelas and later, for himself, while Lora found work at Huntley and Palmer's biscuit factory.

However, Lora's sister's little family back in Vienna were not so fortunate, and her sister and husband and small son were sent to Auschwitz and murdered. The shock of this gave Lora epilepsy, the tremors of which damaged the retinas in both eyes. Later she developed Alzheimer's Disease in addition to blindness, and had to be nursed day and night. They were, by now, living in a pleasant bungalow in Woodcote Road, and Ernie, in particular, was a familiar figure around the shops of Caversham.

This is when I came to know them, and when they both died in 1988, I retrieved many documents, from 1909 onwards. For they had brought over all the documents that would be useful in establishing themselves in a new country, including their German Passports with the large, red, tell-tale "J" denoting a Jewish person. Recently, I have written a fuller, more detailed account of their lives, and have also put all these documents and photographs from Pre-War times, and from the days of the Nazis, as well as from their early days in Caversham, onto a CD ROM.

I want to keep alive this small part of the suffering of those dark days in the minds of succeeding generations. So I am offering for sale the written accounts at £1.50 each, and the CDs of full colour pictures at £10. The CDs are suitable for PCs but not MAC Computers.

The Caversham Bookshop in Prospect Street has kindly agreed to take a small stock of the written booklet. Or you can phone me on (0118) 947 0762 to obtain the booklet or the CD ROM. Any surplus over expenses will be donated to the WIZO Jewish charity. If you have a computer with Internet connection, you can also see the account plus pictures at uk.geocities.com/cschumblev.



AROUND THE CHURCHES

DROP-IN CENTRE VOWS TO RAISE MORE FUNDS

Volunteers attending an extraordinary general meeting of the Churches in Reading Drop-In Centre (CIRDIC) on 26th February vowed to raise more funds to enable the centre to continue its work.

Derek Myers, chair of CIRDIC™ management committee, told the meeting that the centre funds were at a perilously low level – down to £17,000 – while the annual cost of running the centre is over £50,000. “We cannot let our reserves go below £15,000 in case we cannot meet our liabilities,” he said.

Since its formation in 1991, CIRDIC - situated on Berkeley Avenue - has welcomed the homeless and the poorly housed, and people who are lonely, facing hardship and distress and who cannot manage.

The centre serves meals on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays, and soup and sandwiches on Saturday evenings to about 60 people each day. It also offers other services for guests, such as the provision of clothes, a place to bath or shower, and a safe postal address.

CIRDIC™ manager, Verna Makins, told the meeting that the centre's Open-door policy was unique. "We

welcome all who come, without questions or judgements. As far as I know, we are the only Drop-in in the country with this policy."

But Derek Myers told the meeting that closure now had to be faced as an option. When he put this to the meeting, the volunteers voted unanimously that CIRDIC should stay open. "The message of the meeting is clear," said Derek Myers, "CIRDIC™ work meets a need; we are determined to continue."

A fund-raising committee is now being formed to make a concerted effort to raise additional funds. CIRDIC is funded by Reading's churches, Reading Borough Council, and others who support its work. It is staffed by over 60 volunteers.

"We want to appeal to people, businesses and organisations in Reading; please consider funding this work among the needy with a donation," said Derek Myers.

Enquiries to CIRDIC, tel: 958 1011 or to Derek Myers, email: derek.myers@btopenworld.com. Donations should be made payable, and sent, to CIRDIC, Berkeley Avenue, Reading RG1 6JT.

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St Peter's Wives' Group

At our February meeting we were entertained by Fiona Rolls as "Fionnaghal", who is a teller of traditional tales. It was particularly interesting, as many of the tales she told us were from our local area, and went back as far as the Middle Ages. We heard tales about a long-lost shrine near Caversham Bridge and of Reading Abbey and the Forbury Gardens, where fairs were held in 'olden times'. We also heard tales from the Battle of Newbury and of dancing highwaymen and ghosts from the past. A fascinating evening.

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Nora Kemp who died recently aged 96. She will be sadly missed.

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 20 April at the earlier time of 7.30pm when we are to be entertained by Waitrose for an evening of cheese-tasting and a talk. Members should assemble outside the store at 7.30pm for a 7.45 pm start.

New members always welcome.

ST PETER'S WIVES' GROUP 40TH BIRTHDAY

On Tuesday 18th May

We are celebrating our 40th Birthday.
An invitation is extended to all former
members to join us in Church House
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Jean Crosbie 947 0545
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Caversham Community Association

The usual games evening began the month and was followed by a popular bingo session with prizes of the 'sweet' variety. A bring and share supper was the highlight of the Valentine party the following week. Some energetic games gave a good appetite. The competition for four Valentine biscuits produced six

entries with Wendy Colton being declared the winner. Everyone agreed it was an entertaining evening. The month ended with a short trip across the Irish Sea to visit the 'Emerald Isle' with Mr Howes. His excellent slides showed lovely Georgian buildings in Dublin and some spectacular scenery with interesting information about the places seen.

Caversham Women's Institute

Romance was certainly in the air at the February meeting as the Speaker's subject was 'Love and Marriage' in Art. Mrs Rita Lenney showed slides of some well-known paintings ranging from the 15th to the 20th Century, all depicting marriage, some more romantic than others. Mrs Sue Taylor gave the vote of thanks. Still in romantic vein, the speaker judged the competition for Four Valentine Biscuits – the winner was Margaret Cameron with Doreen Stillwood in 2nd place.

Members were reminded about the Spring Meeting at the Hexagon.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

There was a good attendance at the last meeting before the AGM in March. Formal business was swiftly dealt with and the Chairman, Mrs M Pocock, thanked all members of the Guild for their efforts during the past year in fund-raising with voluntary donations, goods, coffee mornings, special occasions and raffles. Three new members were signed in and four visitors warmly welcomed. Up-to-date news from the Federation was read and organisers of the special interest groups reported on activities and plans for the regular meetings.

The presentation, "Climbing Kilimanjaro", by Mr Graham Horn was the result of a visit to that region in October 2002. He had joined a mixed-age group of 14 people aiming to reach the summit. Travel brochures often present scenery and plants/animals together. This had not been the case, as parts of the area are subject to sudden, swift and dense cloud-cover, with a lot of rain and very low temperatures. Allocated four and a half days to ascend and two to descend, it was important to read the warning health signs at the entrance to the park, particularly the effects of increasing altitude. Eventually, 12 people made the final 6 hour ascent to the rim, with a brief glimpse of dawn, of glaciers 200ft thick, then a thirty-minute break and the descent to the rain-forest.

Mr Horn emphasised how professional and careful the local support had been, with guides well aware of variations in pace and stamina. One group carried tents and a second the food, which had been excellent. Wildlife seen had comprised one scavenging White-collared Crow and a single Four-stripe Mouse.

In her vote of thanks, Mrs M Sutherland thanked him for delighting the guild with his adventure and congratulated him on his success. Mr Ford has raised £6,000, divided between an overseas charity, 'Water-Aid', and a Reading Mayor's fund, 'Helping the Homeless'.

The Guild meets every second Tuesday in the month at 7.30pm in St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green. Visitors are very welcome.

Reading and District Probus Club

Our last meeting was really exciting! The AGM – you know what those can be like! Seriously, the main item was the appointment of this year's President, Bob Knotts, by the outgoing Chairman, Dick Wheeler. As it was an Anniversary of Reading Probus, the lunch was rounded off with a Birthday Cake, big enough for some to have two pieces!

Forthcoming speakers look interesting, particularly the visit by the Curator of the Thames Valley Police Museum. In June the Ladies are invited to lunch, when the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Jeanette Skeats, will tell us about her year as Mayor; hopefully our ladies and ourselves will leave wiser thinking 'I didn't know that'. There are plenty more speakers in the offing for this year – AND a garden party in August with members' wives and any guest they bring with them.

Want to find out more? Ring the Secretary, Ray Head, on 0118 941 1445. He will tell you about Probus, twist your arm – and who knows, next month you could be a member. (If you are a retired man over 55).





Scops Owl

Garden Bird-watching had seemed a bit mundane when I was encouraged to "leave the nest" for hard learning in Norfolk.

Initiation came courtesy of the "Birmingham Boys" and my mentor, all still birding.

Venues alongside the North Sea included East Bank, the Shingle-ridge to Blakeney Point, Nancy's Cafe and Kelling Quags.

Each night, Bird Notes were written up, with "gen" Synoptic Charts to forecast next day's Itinerary – failing any rarity news. I was then a raw learner, yet the Senior of the group. Wales and Scotland came later.

More recently, Sam, the rare, black-winged Stilt, arrived at Titchwell RSPB Reserve in the 1990s. His most recent sighting was the day of these writings in March 04.

Sam and my late King Charles, "Scooby", formed an astonishing acquaintance, within a few feet, in 1995. One could almost feel the union. Certainly, the occasion belonged entirely to them. May Sam long continue to be with us. He has surely provided much pleasure through the years.

Keen memories of acrobatic Choughs, which "Dropped in to Tea" on the tip of the Llyn Peninsula, were a fine Welsh contribution.

BIRDING BEYOND THE BOUNDARY

In Scotland, Golden Eagles soared. In a forest, two Crested Tits sang diagnostic songs just above us. Ptarmigan "accompanied" us when going up Cairngorm, and Ospreys fished in Loch Garten as two beautiful Red Squirrels ate nuts.

Camping was discreet and lonely in forest or high, wild country. Once a snow-capped mountain proved exhilarating.

Cape Wrath, the highest cliffs in Britain, are kissed by the warm Gulf Stream. Shags flying below look little larger than Blackbirds. Here the sun dips only briefly before re-appearing. The "Land of the Midnight Sun", with its high Arctic Ice cliffs, lies over the Northern horizon. It is there that we pray dear "Ivy" – our very rare Ivory Gull – still flies.

Just before the Millennium – which caused her departure – she stayed unusually far South, at Aldeburgh, Suffolk.

Within minutes, "Ivy" had found me, walked a walk, just missing my scope each time, then stood by my side! Twitchers were unbelieving. I quietly talked to her while my "expedition" friend took precious, digital photographs which will always remain alongside those of my dear Scooby. This is the acme of a lifetime's birding.

Scops Owl.

TRIBUTE

Paddy Pearce

Many friends from Caversham and around joined the congregation in the Church of Our Lady and St Anne on 10th February for the requiem of Noel Patrick John Pearce who had died quite suddenly on 31st January.

Born in Reading in 1915 and educated at Reading School, he was more familiarly known as 'Paddy' amongst a wide circle. His quiet manner, coupled with a ready good humour and a keen sense of fun, made him many friends. Early hobby interests, tinkering with electrics and exploring the countryside, foreshadowed his professional life with the Southern Electricity Board where, as wayleave officer, his friendly approach to local landowners was an asset in smoothing the way for many extensions of electrical supplies to rural areas in the post-war period.

Paddy was a natural for amateur dramatics, and a humorous double-act with his brother-in-law, Harold Price, led to a pre-war local talent appearance with The Crazy Gang at the Palace Theatre. In more serious vein, he became an early member of The Sainsbury Singers.

Darker matters intervened, however, and, having joined the Territorials, Paddy went to France with the BEF in 1939 and took part in the Dunkirk evacuation. Commissioning from an OCTU in Bournemouth led to a meeting and marriage with Wendy Peters and, whilst Wendy served with the WRNS, Paddy went off for the rest of the war to North Africa and Italy.

Settling together again in Woodcote Road, the Pearce family soon expanded with the arrival of their children, Mary and Bill. Paddy meanwhile resumed his singing with The Sainsbury Singers, with a number of leading character portrayals over the years. He developed a skill as a painter in oils and was an Associate of the Reading Guild of Artists. The Caversham Horticultural Society was another interest and he served at 'The Shed' for many years.

A staunch Catholic, Paddy was a member of the congregation at both Our Lady and St Anne's Church and at Our Lady of Caversham. He and Wendy were known to many in Caversham, not least through their twenty year stint at the Oxfam shop and through some ten years helping with the pensioners' lunches at the Baptist Church.

Paddy Pearce will be much missed.

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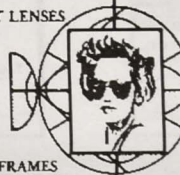
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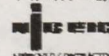
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