

# EASTER WITNESS ACROSS CAVERSHAM

## PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION AT ST JOHN'S

Not one, but two donkeys led St John's Palm Sunday procession round the streets. Solo and Buffy, who have previously come to St John's for Nativity Live and Mothering Sunday, were welcomed back on a beautifully sunny morning.



They set off at a good pace and we followed, singing and carrying palm branches.

On our return, the donkeys came in through the main doors to lead us back into church for the remainder of the service.



## GOOD FRIDAY WALK OF WITNESS

This year's Good Friday's walk-of-witness began with a service at Caversham Baptist church followed by our walk with the Cross, with the Cross carried at the front making its own witness. It certainly drew the attention of the public and those travelling in vehicles along the high street as we first gathered at the Caversham shopping precinct where a reading was read and a hymn sung.

The walk then continued onto Caversham Court Gardens where a short service ended the proceedings. Walking behind a Cross through Caversham via our main shopping street was a simple but powerful declaration of faith in Jesus Christ.



Caversham Shopping precinct



It is also a visible reminder to all who watched that there is hope to be found in the death and resurrection of Christ. Hope of forgiveness, of new beginnings and a purpose to live for. The walk organised by Churches together in Caversham celebrated openly to all the Good Friday message across all denominations in Caversham, and provided the opportunity for a united witness to the people of Caversham.

*Rev'd Dr Alison Johnston Caversham Park Church*



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## Caversham Clergy

### ANGLICAN

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

### St Andrews

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,  
Harrogate Road. Tel: 947 2788  
www.standrewscaversham.org

St Peter, St Margaret, St John  
Rev'd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Road,  
Caversham RG4 7AD Tel: 9479505  
rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Marion Pyke

Tel: 947 5834

Rev'd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331810

Rev'd Judith Ryder Tel: 9473783

### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Secretary: Dr Alison Johnston  
Tel: 0118 947 5152

### METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev'd Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.  
Tel: 947 2223

Rev'd D Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

### CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Transitional Minister Rev'd Jonathan Edwards  
Church office tel 954 5353

Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptist  
church.org.uk

### RIVERSIDE CHURCH (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

### GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk Tel 9474529

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

Fr Paul Martin, The Presbytery,  
2 South View Avenue.  
Tel: 947 1787.

Deacon: Hugh Anscombe

Fr Paul Rowan

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev'd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009

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

EDITORS: Mr Alan Bradbury, Mr Philip DeVile,  
Mrs Myra Emerson, Mrs Janet Offord,  
Mrs Pat Williams, Rev'd Keith Knee-Robinson, Dr Alison Johnston

c/o Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham. RG4 8AX  
Tel: 947 1703. Email: secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

ADVERTISING MANAGER: Mr A Wright,  
Tel: 947 6958.

Email: alanwright55@btinternet.com

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mrs Carol Moloney.  
Tel: 947 1370.

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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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## TALKING POINT

by Nigel Jones

*He left his Father's throne above,  
So free, so infinite his grace-  
Emptied himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race.*

So Charles Wesley catches one of the deepest, most mysterious truths of Christianity. Who, after all, is Jesus Christ? Christian faith says that he is God, the same God who created and sustains the Universe. The Unimaginable Power that makes there be anything at all in one small frame of flesh and blood. Jesus Christ, according to Christian faith, is not just a great teacher; not just a prophet; not even just the Messiah; he is God Himself living as one of us.

And that means, as Wesley saw, that a great emptying has occurred. The way God is, and the way God has to be imagined, are changed forever and even though we should have learned the lesson, it always comes as a surprise.

It is so easy to imagine God the Father Almighty as just like our Mighty Fathers, except even bigger and stronger. Almightyness sounds like force and control. It's not surprising that to many Christianity seems to be about people cringing before the cosmic ego in servility and fear. If you've read Philip Pullman's *The Dark Materials*, you'll recognise the critique. Brave, free humans would rather go to hell than worship such a God.

And yet, the central truth of Good Friday is that this is precisely what God has chosen not to be. In Jesus Christ, God empties Himself of all but love. He renounces every sort of controlling, of compelling, of forcing things to go his way. God stops being Almighty. Maybe he never was?

He stretches out his hand not to smite the wicked, but so that he can be bound, led away, to the trial and to the killing. God chooses to let all that be. And the very heart of the Christian religion is the claim, the faith, that this great emptying, this self-surrender of God into weakness and death, is in the end what real Almightyness is. What we find, incredibly, amazingly, to be at the heart of all creation is love, which makes itself vulnerable and puts itself in loving service of others. To call this Good News is the greatest understatement ever!

This is what the Incarnation is: God in Jesus coming in love, stretching out his arms, giving love, and longing for love, and the response is hammer, nails and wood. He beseeches, and we crucify. It is not God in this situation who is the violent one, who deals out terror and shame and wrath. Humans do the killing here. And it is not just on that hill outside Jerusalem. The darkest teaching of the faith is that that is just what we are like, whether back then or here and now – that's how we deal with each other, with the poor, with God, with ourselves.

A true Christian faith recognises that Jesus turns all this on its head, redefining for all time what it means to be great.

*The Rev'd Nigel Jones is the vicar of St Andrew's Church Caversham*



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## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ANGLICAN

#### St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am Matins 1st  
Holy Communion 2nd 3rd and 4th Sundays  
9.30am Holy Communion 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays  
Service of the Word other Sundays  
6.30pm Evensong

#### St John's, Gosbrook Road

9.30am Holy Communion 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays  
9.30am All Age Worship 2nd Sunday  
Fifth Sunday Services as advertised

#### St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.15am Morning Worship 1st Sunday  
Holy Communion 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays

#### St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am The Eucharist  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)  
First Sunday, Family Eucharist  
11.30am The Eucharist first and third Sundays only, first Sunday BCP  
6.30pm Evening Prayer (as announced)

#### St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

8.00am Said Communion (BCP)  
9.30am Parish Communion  
9.30am COGS for all ages (1st Sunday of Month)

#### RIVERSIDE CHURCH(READING)

Meeting at Hemdean House School, Hemdean Road, Caversham  
10.00am Morning Worship & Teaching

#### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP Meeting at Caversham Park School

11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)  
Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)  
All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

#### CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH South Street

10.30am Morning Worship each Sunday  
8.00pm House of Prayer (praise and prayer) – 2nd Sunday each month  
3.45pm Messy Church – for all the family  
Fourth Sunday of the month

#### GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church

#### THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

##### Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am  
6.30pm (second and fourth Sundays)

##### Gosbrook Road

10.30am

##### 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

## Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the July 2017 issue should be sent to Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by **Monday 5th June**. The date for the July 2017 issue is **Monday 3rd July**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the July 2017 issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham by **Friday 2nd June**. The date for the July 2017 issue is **Friday 30th June**.

## PARISH OFFICES

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St Peter, St Margaret, St John  
Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX  
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Tel: 947 1703 email: secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

### ST BARNABAS

St Barnabas Centre  
Tuesday and Thursday 8.30am-10.30am  
Tel: 947 6310 Website: www.saintbarnabas.org.uk



## CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH NETWORK FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME – SUMMER 2017



Meetings are held on alternate Thursdays  
(Except August) at 2.30 p.m.  
in the church hall.

### 8th June

Speaker: Colin Fergusson  
Subject: 'Islands of Antiquity'

### 22nd June

Speaker: John and Barbara Frogget  
Subject: 'Canal Ministries'

### 6th July

Speaker: Peter and Lesley Boardley  
Subject: 'Guatemala'

### 20th July

**GARDEN PARTY** at the home of Carole Pearce

## OAKFEST

– A celebration of Oak Trees

Friends of Clayfield Copse will hold a celebration of the beautiful oak trees in Clayfield Copse. Present in the show field will be an artist tent to make messages to be hung on a message tree, along with local crafts people using natural materials to make simple toys and a story teller. Come and join the celebration 2-5pm on 17th June.  
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## Netball Posts for St. Anne's School

Coach Paul Meakin has been working with children of St Anne's school for some time now and in February he volunteered to compete in the Goring 10K Run in order to raise funds for the school. He was sponsored by parents and others with the intention of buying two new netball posts. Because the final total sponsorship money amounted to £235.42 it proved possible to buy four new posts. These arrived in the school at the end of March ready to be used after the Easter Holidays.

The PSA made a subscription with funds raised by the Bingo evening and fifteen new netballs were purchased to be used with the new posts.

Thanks go to Paul Meakin and all who sponsored him as well as to the PSA for this equipment which will enhance the school's sports facilities during the summer months.

At the end of April, a team from St Anne's came first in a Years 3/4 Cricket Tournament held at Kidmore End Cricket Club. They played against local schools and secured a place in the Berkshire Games next term. An added excitement was the chance to meet Charlotte Edwards, the former English professional cricketer, who had been captain of the England women's team for 10 years and is a role model for aspiring women cricketers.



Paul Meakin standing by one of the new Netball Posts

## Lucas and Dan ran the London Marathon

Lucas Doherty completed the marathon with Daniel Moloney guiding him and between them they raised £1790 for the Royal Society for Blind Children. This included £263 from the cake stall on Bean Pole Day at Caversham Court.



## The Reading Quiz

There were 3 completely correct entries for Francis Sergeant's Reading Quiz and they were from Kathleen and John Hardy, Jane and Richard Havelock and Sylvia and Richard Purkis. Names were put into a 'hat' after the morning service at St Peters and Jane and Richard Havelock were drawn - they won a lovely Traidcraft Hamper. Thank you to all who entered, £153.20 was raised for Cambodia. Answers are on display at St Peters Church.



## Bible Friends

### Noah builds a boat

God said to Noah, "I want you to build a boat."

Noah loved talking with God.

He always wanted to do what God said, but he was surprised. "Build a boat?" Noah asked.

"Yes," said God. "I'm going to send lots of rain. The world will be covered in water. You and your family must get into the boat and be safe."

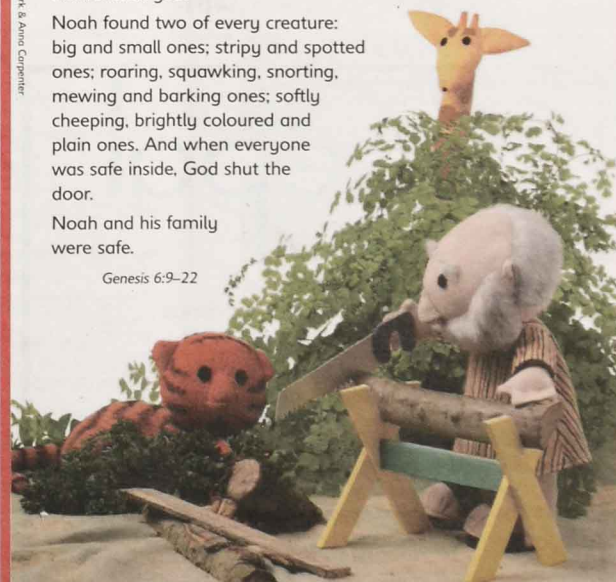
Noah built a big, big boat from wood. He used a saw and a hammer and nails. He made the boat very long and tall and wide. He built a roof and lots of different rooms – just the way God said.

"Now go into the boat," said God, "and take two of every kind of animal with you."

Noah found two of every creature: big and small ones; stripy and spotted ones; roaring, squawking, snorting, mewing and barking ones; softly cheeping, brightly coloured and plain ones. And when everyone was safe inside, God shut the door.

Noah and his family were safe.

Genesis 6:9-22



## AGM & OPEN MEETING A history of architecture in Caversham

Speakers: Dr Megan Aldrich, Architectural Historian



**Tuesday 20 June  
7.30pm**

Thameside Primary School, Harley Road  
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## John Madeley – a tribute



*From the eulogy given at John's funeral by the Revd Rosalind Rutherford*

John was born and brought up in Manchester and remained proud of these roots all his life. He had one brother, Peter. The boys got on well, but – they supported different Manchester football teams. However, this rivalry hasn't spoiled their deep relationship throughout their lives.

Alison too, was a Lancashire lass, and she and John married in 1962. Anyone who was at Alison's funeral last summer will have heard and seen how deeply she and John loved and supported each other, yet also

each allowed the other space and independence. Alison had strong views of her own, but was also very willing to be his support and back up. We saw this visibly when he took on long distance cycle rides and Alison followed with the luggage and checked in at hotels – but it was a support there throughout his life. And just as important in a different way were his children, Gillian and Stephen and his five grandchildren.

But how to sum John up: of course it's impossible, but I realised I would describe John as an encourager; and a lover of people and of life. He always tried to see the best in others, and believed in them. It was John who said to me, about 25 years ago, when we were about half way round the annual Christian Aid sponsored walk "Have you ever thought of becoming a lay Reader?" I don't think I had – but after that I did start thinking....

Linked to this gift of encouragement was the gift of living with faithful love and hope. One might call it optimism, but I see it more that John had a deep faith that in the end, God's justice and love will prevail. This of course was what underpinned his lifelong commitment to world development. He was someone who recognised early on that eradicating poverty would take political action and campaigning as well as giving money, and this was what encouraged him to give up his management job in Manchester and move to Reading, working first for World Development Movement and then becoming a free lance journalist specializing in development. His vocation was to use his writing skills to inform and persuade others, whether through the journal *International Agricultural Development* which he and Alison published for years, almost a cottage industry; writing articles for a range of newspaper; writing books, ranging from specialist books on development and related economic issues, to the novels he wrote more recently to try to reach an even wider audience.

John had boundless energy – he loved life and loved living it to the full. In addition to John's love of sport (he was a very good golfer in his younger days), he loved to walk whether in the Chilterns or the Pennines, or anywhere; cycling for him was both relaxation and his preferred means of transport, and he celebrated his 70th birthday by cycling the coast to coast route (with back up provided by Alison of course). He focused the same boundless energy on bringing about change in the world: through politics as a long term Liberal party member, who would campaign tirelessly right up to the moment the polls closed and on one occasion standing in Henley constituency against Michael Heseltine. He then decided to link his faith and politics and stood for General Synod, representing the diocese of Oxford for 15 years. His time in Synod including the 1992 vote to enable women to be ordained priest, and John was of course a strong supporter of this, but he was also someone who kept close and warm links with those who did not share his views.

John was a man of great faith and integrity. What he believed and how he lived were fully consistent. He trained as reader in Manchester and continued to preach and lead worship until a few years ago, though latterly he preached mainly on the Methodist circuit. And he nearly always brought his experience overseas into his sermons – the examples and stories just linked naturally to what he was saying.

Discovering the Taizé community in France was hugely significant for John. He and Alison bought a cottage near Taizé 25 years ago and both of them loved worshipping in the church in the Taizé community, loving both the chants sung so prayerfully by thousands of voices, and the silence at the heart of each time of prayer spoke very deeply to them. This was what led John in the last ten years or so to find spiritual nourishment with Reading Friends Meeting; but his Anglican roots remained deep. John was not someone to leave a tradition but to include ever more traditions and ways of worship in his own waiting on God.

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# 175 YEAR CELEBRATION OF READING AMATEUR REGATTA

**T**his month the Reading Amateur Regatta (RAR) will be hosting the 175 year celebration of this two-day festival of rowing. The event is well known to the rowing community as it gives crews the opportunity to race over two different distances on Saturday (1500m) and Sunday (1100m). The mini-regatta (for novice juniors under 14) is often the first race that budding young athletes experience. However, the history of this event is far less well known.

Most people (and rowers) think that Reading Rowing Club hosts the regatta, but the rowing club is a mere youngster in comparison at only 150 years old. The first regatta was held in 1842, three years after Henley decided that it would host a competition. It is estimated that 10,000 spectators came to watch that first regatta. Back then the spectators used to line the Oxfordshire bank standing on The Warren and the top of the chalk cliffs (now Upper Warren Avenue) to catch a view of the races.

The ensuing years resulted in controversy when an umpire was thrown in the river, a competitor sent to jail and slowly the event reduced in scale and ambition. Then in 1867 Reading Rowing Club was established and by 1870 the club had helped to re-establish the regatta as a much larger event. The club was originally based in The Griffin public house, then moved to Christchurch Meadows (until the timber merchant took its place), followed by Fry's Island (now Caversham Boat Services) before finding its current home on Thameside Promenade in 1989. The fields that are now the promenade were originally hired for the regatta from the local farmers. Singers, minstrels, and swings were used to entertain the spectators between events. A forward thinking Reading corporation bought the land from the farmers in around 1907, meaning that entry to regatta from that date forward could be free.

Reading (or rather Caversham) became the home of British Rowing when



the Redgrave Pinsent Rowing Lake opened in 2006, allowing a permanent base for GB rowers to train. The lake is hidden from view but rail commuters to and from Reading station see it every day. Some of those rowers can be seen down on the water next to Thameside Promenade during the week. Reading Rowing Club, is unsurprisingly, one of the GB Rowing team Start Centres. Due to the support of a number of volunteer coaches, the club is able to promote affordable rowing to all.

The Reading University Boat Club was founded in 1902. To cater for the increasing demand for women's rowing, the University Women's Rowing Club boathouse was built in 1939. Now both the male and the female students race for the same club. It has produced numerous Olympians including James Cracknell, Debbie Flood, Cath Bishop, Garry Herbert, Adrain Ellison and Anna Watkins.

Those medalists and Olympians are amongst the competitors that have come to battle it out along the Thameside Promenade at Reading Amateur Regatta. The regatta has proved so popular that races are now held every three minutes meaning that there is always something to see.



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**BIG LUNCH  
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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## ENGLISH CHORAL MUSIC FIT FOR A CORONATION

Erleigh Cantors, a local Chamber choir comprising about 25 singers, will be performing its next concert at St Peter's Church Caversham on Saturday May 20th @ 7.30pm in aid of St Peter's Church Caversham and The Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital Charity.

The concert is entitled English Choral Music fit for a Coronation and not surprisingly it will focus on coronation anthems including music written for the coronation of the present queen by Walton and Vaughan Williams and music for previous coronations by Henry Purcell, John Blow and Hubert Parry.

Other music to be sung will be the Tippett Negro Spirituals from A Child of our time and the Missa Brevis by contemporary composer Jonathan Dove.

The choir will be accompanied by organist Philip Aspden who will also play some solos on the recently installed Viscount organ.

Tickets are available from Maggie Nunn (07946 620560) Richard Larkin (07557 049092) or on the door priced at £12 (£10 concessions and £5 students) including refreshments.

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## Reading Bach Choir

For the final concert in their 50th anniversary celebrations the Reading Bach Choir will be performing some of the favourites and some of the greatest from their history at Reading Minster at 7.30pm on 8th July. The programme celebrates the range and variety of their performance over 50 years of music making since the first concert in January 1967.

The concert is a tribute to the choir's love and dedication to music so it's fitting that they sing Britten's *Hymn to St Cecilia* the patron saint of music.

The great Tallis 40 part motet *Spem in Alium* is one of the greatest early pieces from the choral repertoire and shows the choir's strength with many of the 40 parts being sung by single voices.

Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden* has been performed

seven times over their history! This shows the depth of the choir's ambition in singing music over five centuries and their fearless approach to bringing more unusual or difficult music to a wider audience. This is a lush and intensely emotional piece written in the early 20th century.

JS Bach's *Der Geist* is included and then to complete the tribute to music over the centuries, Brahms' *Fest und Gedenksprüche*.

The whole programme is a fitting way to celebrate 50 glorious years of music making.

All the details are on the website at [www.readingbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.readingbachchoir.org.uk)

Tickets £15, concessions £13, students and 16-18 £8, under 16 £5 are available from E-mail [tickets@readingbachchoir.org.uk](mailto:tickets@readingbachchoir.org.uk) or phone 0118 947 8097

## The Glass Ensemble: BAISKELI

Glass Ensemble, formerly known as Tapestry Choir, are pleased to announce their next concert on Friday 23rd June 2017, in the Recital Room, South Hill Park, Ringmead, Bracknell, RG12 7PA, from 7.30 pm - 9.30 pm.

The concert as part of the choir's fifth anniversary celebration, featuring folk songs from around the world, learnt and performed by ear. Expect to hear call and response from West Africa, Gaelic melodies, Indian raga and American blues, among many others. Starting

with traditional songs from every continent, this 20 voice ensemble will use improvisation, movement and body percussion to create a unique and innovative performance.

Box Office 01344 484 123 [www.southhillpark.org.uk](http://www.southhillpark.org.uk) or via Susie on 0118 9479997

## 'Concerts in Caversham'

### Summer Concert

17th June 7.30pm

St Andrew's Church Albert Rd. RG4 7PL

Come and enjoy what promises to be an uplifting evening of melodious and lively music. All of our superb musicians from the String Concert Series come together, and a special role will be played by the double bass. Schubert's Trout Quintet, Dvorak's Dumke piano trio and two beautiful double bass solos will complete the series for the strings. This will be followed by a jazz concert in October and then a wood-wind series of concerts culminating in Mozart's wonderful Serenade for Thirteen Wind in the summer of 2019! Lots to look forward to.

Tickets: £16, £18, £20 from Waltons the Jewellers in Caversham

[www.concertsincaversham.co.uk](http://www.concertsincaversham.co.uk) for more details

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## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

## South Chiltern Choral Society Summer Concert

A beautiful bouquet of summer songs is being offered up by the South Chiltern Choral Society on Saturday 8 July when they perform John Rutter's 'The Sprig of Thyme' – a collection of eleven folk songs from across the British Isles and Ireland. The concert also features uplifting choral pieces by Haydn, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Faure and Franck.

You are invited to picnic in the grounds of the venue before the concert from 5pm, the concert will start at 7pm. So please come along with your picnic hampers to Queen Anne's School, Henley Road, Caversham, RG4 6DX. There is free parking and wheelchair access.

Tickets cost £12 (under 21s £6) and are available via the choir's website [www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk](http://www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk) or the box office on 07500 032840 nearer the concert date



Previous summer concert at Queen Anne's

## T S Eliot's Four Quartets

Wednesday 21 June 2017,  
7.45pm

'A beautiful and revelatory telling of Eliot's masterpiece' with master storytellers Ashley Ramsden & Flora Pethybridge

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*Will be to arrive where we started*

*And know the place for the first time.'*

South Street Arts Centre, South Street, Reading RG1 4QU Tickets £14/£11 concessions  
Tickets from: [www.readingarts.com](http://www.readingarts.com)



## Caversham Croquet Club

Croquet is a sport where you hit a ball through a series of hoops with a long mallet. It needs skill and tactics rather than brute strength, and is one of the few sports where both sexes and all ages compete on equal terms. Some people come to the game in middle age to remain physically active, others discover it at a younger age, appreciating the unique combination of physical skill and strategic thinking required. Some play competitively, others play socially for exercise and enjoyment.

Caversham Croquet Club, based in Albert Road Recreation Ground, offers the only opportunity for playing this sport in the Reading area.

We are open on National Croquet Day, Sunday 4 June, between 10.00 am and 5.00 pm, when we will again welcome visitors wishing to try the game.

Experienced members of the Club will provide free coaching for complete beginners and for those who may have played in the past. There is no need to book, just turn up for a warm welcome from members of the Club. If you are new to the game but can't come on those days, call John Wakeford, our Chairman on 0118 917120. Up to six lessons are available before you decide whether to join.

There is free parking at Albert Road Recreation Ground. The 22 bus stops nearby at the St Andrews Church stop.

## St Andrew's Summer Tea Party

Saturday June 10th 2 - 4 pm

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## ENVIRONMENT

## CAPER SPURGE

I rather like the piquancy of capers. On Good Friday I popped some into a fish pie I was making, and then a week or so later I was in a restaurant in the Oracle eating a pork schnitzel in a butter and caper sauce. Today, a week after that, I have just returned from the pub in Peppard at the end of the No 25 bus route, having enjoyed fish and chips with tartare sauce – which contained bits of capers as well as gherkins and dill.

Capers are the pickled flower-buds of a spiny shrub that grows round the Mediterranean – its Latin name is *Capparis spinosa*.

Before ever the word caper was used to mean a frolic, it appeared in English meaning the spiny shrub. The first mention came in John Wycliffe's 1382 translation of the Bible – Ecclesiastes 12:5. He translated the name as caperis. By the time of William Turner's *New Herbal* of 1551, the plant was called capers. Today, we think of the plant as the caper bush, and of its pickled flower-buds as capers.

Caper spurge is something completely different. It has appeared as a weed in each of the four gardens I've had in Reading, and it is poisonous.

The spurges are an odd-looking and very variable family of plants. Most are poisonous, and have been used in medicine as purgatives: the name comes from the Latin, *expurgare*, to purge. Around the Mediterranean I've seen them as dwarf spiny shrubs, but on the Canary Islands I've seen spurges with tall swollen stems looking like organ-pipes, while on Madeira, they grow like trees. In my back garden I have *Euphorbia stygiana*, which is tall, handsome, and comes back each year, even after a rigorous tidying up in the autumn. And in Marks and Spencer in Reading, spurges appear just before Christmas as poinsettias.

The experts seem undecided as to whether or not the caper spurge is native in the British Isles. It may well have been brought here by monks, to grow in their physic gardens for its medicinal properties,

and it obviously seeds itself readily.

The male flowers are little more like tiny stamens, and the female flowers are carried above them, and develop into three-lobed pods, looking a bit like capers. But they are not – people have been known to die from eating them. The plant's milky sap has been thought to get rid of warts when applied to them, and the plant itself has been said to repel moles – of the furry burrowing variety. But these are just old wives' tales.

However, if you don't have small children to worry about, it's rather fun just to let the odd one or two plants grow. In a suitable position they can grow to four feet tall, and are rather handsome. The stalkless leaves grow in pairs on opposite sides of the main stems, and both leaves and stems are glaucous, in the way that pea-plants are. The flowers are much bigger than those of most *euphorbias*, so you can easily see their curious structure, and when you've had enough of them, they are easy enough to uproot!

Happy Wanderer



## Emmer Green Resident's Association 2017 AGM

This year's EGRA AGM, the 33rd, took place on 28th March in St Barnabas Church with light refreshments available in the church room before the meeting. More than 40 members were present.

Annette Fairweather, the chairperson, led the formal business and discussions where held about the Gladman development proposal. EGRA is working closely with other local groups under the CAGE umbrella (Campaign Against Gladman in Eye and Dunsden). Plans are being discussed about how best to present local views and EGRA members will be kept informed.

Annette thanked the two current members of the committee who were stepping down. Veronica Leeke has been active and effective in Planning and Environment roles. Dorothy Parkinson has been successful in the membership role, and has done a tremendous amount of work on the information handling and consultation arising from the Gladman planning proposal.

Annette gave thanks to the support given by a number of members on tasks such as newsletter delivery, notice board maintenance, tracking environmental issues and web site upkeep. An updated and improved version of the founding Constitution had been circulated to Members and was accepted by the meeting.

After the formal part of the evening, Annette introduced the speaker, Stuart Hylton, an Emmer Green resident and long time EGRA member. Stuart is a local historian who has written numerous books about the history of Reading. His talk was taken from his most recent book, *Reading in 50 Buildings* but he began by suggesting that a better title for the talk, might be *Bits of Reading in 5½ Buildings*.

The buildings and structures that he selected were from Caversham Park, Caversham library, St Mary's Butts, Cemetery Junction, the Kennet & Avon Canal and Caversham Bridge. He gave an interesting presentation on the part these have played in Reading's history.

In fact, Stuart told us the entire history of England could almost be told through the story of Caversham Park, beginning before the Norman Conquest, when the older brother of Harold II held the estate. For a brief while in 1219, all England was ruled from Caversham Park, as the owner then, William Marshall, was regent for Henry III and operated from his home. The present house is the fifth or sixth on the estate.

The money to build Caversham library in 1907 was given by the Scottish American philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie. Passionate about making education accessible to ordinary people, he funded more than 2500 libraries worldwide. At first there was no phone in the building and the staff used to send messages by semaphore to the Central Library in Reading, which was at that time in the line of sight! EGRA website [www.egra.co.uk](http://www.egra.co.uk).

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## CHURCHES

### Visit of Riding Lights to Caversham 15th April

We were privileged to once more host the Christian theatre company Riding Lights at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Saturday 15th April – Easter Saturday. We welcomed many visitors, both local and those who had travelled from around the Methodist circuit. This was the last night of a nationwide tour, and how appropriate it was on that day.

We were introduced to the evening thus: "Crosslight tells the story of the passion of Jesus from the perspectives of three people who, perhaps, knew him best – his mother, Mary and his two closest friends, Peter and John. Through their experience of these events and in the light of the cross of Christ, we will be faced with our part in this story and challenged to reflect on the nature of our own calling."

The play looked at the events of Good Friday and Easter, in particular through the eyes of Peter. Peter is shattered at what has taken place and we were drawn into his feelings of guilt and despair as he knew that he had abandoned Jesus at the end. We were moved by his shame, shared Mary's grief but also the final realisation of the Resurrection. The three actors drew us into the story at every moment and made it very real and powerful. Simple staging and costume were very effective, enhanced by the use of sound effects and music.

The scenes of drama were interspersed with time for reflection and prayer, allowing us to think about the ways in which we have let Jesus down, but also about believing that we are loved and accepted. As we heard, "In the example of Peter, we see how Jesus loves us, his disciples. Jesus chooses men and women of clay, that by his Spirit we may be transformed into the building blocks of his kingdom."

### Tenebrae Service April 13th at Gosbrook Road with Caversham Heights

Tenebrae is the Latin word for shadow, I expect you knew that but I didn't until I came to write this. The purpose is to increase the emotional aspects of the Passion story. It is not meant to be a happy service simply because the occasion is not happy. A shadow hangs over this day because it is leading up to our Lord Jesus being crucified.

Over thirty members from both Churches sat at a long table lit only by candlelight. Hymns were sung and eight passages read from the Bible telling of the events leading to the final moment of the crucifixion. Due to Reverend Jenny Dowding being unwell our service was ably led by Brenda Caborn while Kathy Munns played the piano. As each passage was read by different members from the two Churches one candle was snuffed out until eventually only one large candle was left glowing. When this was extinguished we sat in silence praying while Allegri's Miserere was played. Then we all filed out in silence to our homes.

### Good Friday Walk of Witness

#### Easter Day dawn service

I can't honestly say that I set off with enormous zest to the Macrae's garden at 5.45 am on Easter Sunday..... my normal waking times are around 7.30!

However I had been cautious about other new ideas but found them well worthwhile and I knew that our minister and our host were self-confessed 'not morning people' so there must be a good reason for this suggestion.

In a quiet part of Ken and Barbara's beautiful spring garden a circle of chairs was arranged and smiles and quiet greetings were exchanged amongst the 20 or so people there aged from 10 - 80+.

The dawn chorus of the birds was complex, joyous and enthusiastic and they provided God's musical accompaniment throughout.

As the story of the women at the tomb on the first Easter morning was read I really felt as though I was there with them .. they too had set off apprehensively (obviously with enormous sadness and grief too) but had experienced the unexpected, new light and joy.

We passed round bread and grape juice and gave it to each other with words or in silence which made it profoundly personal and special. We remembered in a unique way the last supper Jesus shared with his friends.

As Barbara assured us no neighbours would be concerned we broke into song at the end.

For me I felt the joy of Easter in a way I had never done before.

Thank you Barbara, Ken and Jenny for making it possible.

Lesley Boardley

## News from St Barnabas Church

A very successful Alpha Course took place from January to March. In recognition of this a celebratory meal was held to thank all those who had been involved in any way.

Holy Week commenced with the customary Palm Sunday service. On Maundy Thursday Holy Communion was held at 8.00 am with an Agape Meal and short vigil in the evening. Good Friday was marked with reflections around the cross and on Easter Day a Dawn Communion took place at 5.30 am in addition to the normal Easter Day times of worship.

Following the St Barnabas Annual Parochial Church Meeting at the beginning of April, a presentation was given by the Vicar Derek Chandler. This was entitled 'Seven Signposts to God's Kingdom'. The talk focused on seven areas in which everyone should feel encouraged by what is happening at St Barnabas Church and the wider benefice of Caversham Park.

### Walking for our Lady – part two

On 1st May, a minibus was driven to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham bearing parishioners from Our Lady and St Anne's parish to see Father Paul off on his sponsored walk back to Caversham. The group spent the morning looking round Walsingham, some going to mass in the Slipper Chapel. After lunch they all joined Father Paul in the Retreat House chapel where he celebrated Mass.

Father Paul then changed into his walking clothes, donned his back-pack and set off on his walk which took him, via Peterborough and Windsor among other places, back to Caversham in eleven days.

Anyone wishing to sponsor him with a view to helping to enhance the Shrine of Our Lady in Caversham, can still do so at [www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/archdiocese-birmingham/orladyandstannechurch1](http://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/archdiocese-birmingham/orladyandstannechurch1).



Father Paul ready to set off.

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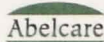
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## Stay-a-while Lunch Club

The club, which meets on  
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Munns on 0118 954 6680.

## HAPPENINGS

### Mothers Union hosts a Lent Group at St John's

During Lent this year St John's MU hosted one of the Parish groups entitled *Receiving Christ in five different ways*. We were delighted to welcome people from both our local Methodist church and the Baptist church. Our first session, *Receiving Christ as children of God* brought a discussion on prayer, our relationship with God and Jesus and our ways of prayer. The second session, *Receiving Christ in the stranger and the needy* brought the most animated conversations while we wrestled with the ways we should approach the homeless on our streets, who seemed to be increasing,

with piles of bedding in most doorways often housing sleeping bodies who did not want to make conversation and gifts of food were often rejected. We can however help organisations such as food banks. Our third session was *Receiving Christ in Holy Communion*. I expected this to be our easiest and most vocal conversations but it was not and I am still wondering why. The fourth session was *Receiving Christ through prayer and fellowship*. We talked about places and time to pray and the ways in which we pray, not just a shopping lists but what is my responsibility in my requests.

Our last session was *Christ in You*, the hope of Glory. Here we discussed the difference between brainwashing and nurturing, the latter being the important continuing factor in all our faith journeys. We were ably led by the Rev'd John Dudley and we finished each session with refreshments. On the sixth week we all met in St Johns Church for a celebration of Holy Communion. During our lent we sadly heard of the death of Harold Barker who had been a member of both churches and we met again at his funeral at the Methodist church.

Ann Deane

### Lent Film Club

The Lent Film Club took place on Thursday evenings at St Barnabas Church and Parish Centre in Emmer Green. Attendance varied, with about 14 participants on average. Each week we started with refreshments before watching a film, after which we had discussions in small groups (fuelled by more nibbles!) and ending with a plenary discussion.

Even for those who had seen the films before, watching them together and then having time for discussion of the deeper issues they raised took things to a different level. For each film we considered four questions:

1. What are the themes of the film?
2. Are there any moral issues?
3. What does this film say about faith?
4. Would you recommend this film to a friend?

The films were (deliberately) diverse, so the responses were very different each week – particularly to the final question! Feedback at the end of the course included the following comments:

"What a good way to explore issues that some of us deal with every day, whilst others have no knowledge of such issues. A nice diverse choice of films, and a good mix of people from different churches."

"The after discussion of the films is fascinating as all the other viewers' comments are very thought-provoking."

"I like the format of film followed by discussion in smaller groups, then a plenary session. This really helped appreciation of the very different films that we watched."

If there had been negative feedback, be assured we would have included a sample here! A discussion at the end of the course indicated that there was interest in keeping some kind of film group going, or at the very least in returning to this idea next Lent, so watch this space.

Judith Ryder & Derek Chandler

### Caversham Park Church Lent Groups

Caversham Park's lent course titled *At the Cross* was written by Abby Guinness, a Director of Spring Harvest and author of Bible study resources. This is a study of six individuals who were present at the Crucifixion. The Centurion: Finding Truth. The Criminal: Finding Forgiveness. Joseph of Arimathea: Finding Courage. Mary: Finding Trust. Thaddaeus: Finding Faith under Fire. Martha: Finding Life.

The course looked in detail at the changes to the lives of those who witnessed the killing of Jesus, their reactions; the barbarity of Crucifixion parallel to events unfolding in parts of the Middle East today.

Over the weeks we looked at: The truth of who Jesus is, asking for and receiving forgiveness, having courage to do the right thing, how prayer and willingness to wait for God's answer is important, persecution in the world today – the pain and struggles we may have to bear and that in Jesus, life comes through death.

The six week study was rich in Scripture, posed many questions, some we felt inadequate to answer, others brought reassurance and hope. Each week too brought 'light bulb' moments of understanding. Prayer gave the opportunity to strengthen our trust collectively as we looked to measure up to the expectations that God has for us as a Church here in Caversham and as individuals.

The two groups that were held were well attended, and well led, and on at least one occasion needed to move to a larger room.

So, we took this course to be God's blessing in disguise.

Tony Champion

### The Happiness Course

At the Happiness Course we reflected on what makes for happiness, what happiness is, and how we can increase our sense of wellbeing. Paradoxically one of the findings seems to be that happiness may not be the right word to describe what we are looking for. Fulfilment and meaning are not quite the same as happiness. We had about 30 people attending, drawn from a number of churches and quite a few who are not churchgoers. The course did not require a religious commitment although participants were well aware that it was being run by CTC. Many of the topics (such as forgiveness) are very much part of our religious thinking but are also of benefit to those who are not committed Christians. Our Happiness Course has been a truly ecumenical activity led by Nigel Jones (St Andrew's) and Lesley Boardley (Caversham Heights Methodist Church), both of whom attended a training day to run the course on a gloriously sunny day in Greenwich at the premises of Livability, the wellbeing charity, next door to the O2, with Canary Wharf twinkling in the sunlight.

### Returning Home: Christian Faith in

### Encounter with Other Faiths

What happens to the faith of Christians when they encounter the religious beliefs and practices of others? And does Christian faith take on a new and exciting perspective?

This 5-week Lent course from Churches Together in Britain and Ireland was an exploration of how Christian faith can be deepened and enriched by an encounter with people of other faiths. Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and Sikhs are people of faith who sometimes share common things with us, but more often than not have a view of the world which differs from our Christian perspectives. We were challenged to encounter other faiths and reflect on how that might deepen and strengthen our own, or help us to appreciate some particular aspect of Christianity.

About 17 people from half a dozen churches attended one or more of the sessions. Responses to the course from participants included: 'Thought-provoking', 'magic', 'challenging', 'outward-looking'. People commented: 'our beliefs are challenged by other people's beliefs and practices', and 'it helped me to try and see our faith as others might see it.' Topics that arose in conversation included money and greed, fasting, suffering. One person remarked that 'we courteously listened to other points of view.' Looking at our faith in the context of other faiths helped us to discover some of the commonalities – the importance of prayer and contemplation, for example.

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## CLUBS

## The Caversham Heights Society

With the growing interest in the possibility of locating the remains of King Henry 1 beneath the ruins of Reading Abbey, similar to the discovery of Richard III in Leicester, it was apt that the last lecture of this season's programme for the Caversham Heights Society should have focused on Reading Abbey during its heyday.

On April 5th John Mullaney, former owner of the Caversham Bookshop, enthralled Society members with his talk on 'Life in Reading Abbey, 1121 -1539.' He talked about the purpose of the medieval abbeys, their importance to local communities, their development and what life was like for the occupants. Reading Abbey was a Benedictine foundation linked to the great French abbey of Cluny. It was essentially a monastery made up of single monks who lived in community, each with their own cell and with a small patch of garden. There were also convents but, contrary to general belief, these could be for both men and women. They were less important than abbeys but nevertheless fulfilled an important role in society. There were several thousand monasteries in Europe during medieval times, the largest being Cluny which measured 600 feet long and 218 feet high. If we compare this to St Paul's Cathedral which measures 580 feet long and Reading Abbey which measured 400 feet long the scale of these buildings can be appreciated.

Several things set Reading Abbey apart from many others. It came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Salisbury. It was located at a key juncture for the many pilgrims coming from the Continent. It was designed to be the resting place for monarchy, hence the return of the remains of Henry I for burial there. It was also very wealthy. By 1539, at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Thomas Cromwell on behalf of Henry VIII, its income was £2000 per annum compared with the average of £200 for most monasteries. The number of monks living there varied between 50 and 100. Far from being lazy and sexually immoral, the view suggested by Henry VIII, most of the monks were extremely hard-working and upright though there were inevitably a few who misbehaved.

John illustrated his talk not only with pictures and photographs but also with different musical examples. Although this was a fascinating and well presented talk it was unfortunate that those at the back were unable to hear everything partly because of microphone problems. It is hoped that these will be resolved before next season.

Further information about the Society can be found on our website [cavershamheights.org](http://cavershamheights.org) or by email to [contact@cavershamheights.org](mailto:contact@cavershamheights.org)

## Caversham WI

The April meeting was the formal start of a new year. The Members welcomed Mrs Crowley, a local wool spinner. She brought along many samples of different UK sheep wools, and explained how to clean, prepare, spin and how to felt it. Members were able to handle the wools, do some carding and some Caversham WI wool was spun!

At our May meeting members discussed which of the two remaining proposed national WI resolutions to support. Either Alleviating Loneliness or Plastic Soup (keep micro-plastic fibres out of our oceans).

Our website has been updated and now includes a full version of our 2017/18 programme: see <https://tinyurl.com/hwzj6zy> or search for Caversham WI programme. Tickets for the annual boat trip on Friday 16th June and strawberry cream tea are open to include all ladies. Places are limited.

New members are very welcome to join us at our meetings on the third Thursday of the month, at 7.30 pm in the first floor meeting room at Church House, Prospect Street. A lift is available.

For further details please contact our Secretary, on 947 5176.

## Caversham Horticultural Society

John Evans will give a talk entitled *The World of Alpines* to the society on Wednesday 7th June at Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road at 7.45pm. Non-members are welcome (£3.00 entrance fee). After the talk refreshments are provided and the opportunity to meet local gardeners.

## Caversham Community Quilt

Initially a group of 15 enthusiasts met in St John's Church to design a quilt that would reflect Caversham and its surroundings. The design required the use of lots of scraps of fabric to make a simple house. We soon had a small village of houses and decided to add a few trees and churches. The group increased to 24, the village grew accordingly and we added two washing lines of quilts as our unique signature. Given the importance of the Thames to Caversham we chose fabric that represented water for the backing and edging of the quilt.

We decided to raffle the finished quilt to raise money for Berkshire Women's Aid as they need money for a new refuge in Reading. The Caversham Community Quilt was displayed in St Peter's church and at various other venues since. Donations to Berkshire Women's Aid will be entered into a raffle which will be drawn on 8 July at the Parish Summer Fete in Caversham Court Gardens.

If you would like to donate to BWA and take part in the raffle please contact Pat Jones on 07852 655848 or [patjones201@icloud.com](mailto:patjones201@icloud.com)

## Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club

Carol Bennett will be doing a number of flower designs entitled Kaleidoscopes at our meeting on Wednesday June 14th 7-30 pm at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Highmoor Road. There will be a chance to win her designs by buying a raffle ticket for 50p each.

Visitors always welcome for a £6 entrance fee. Refreshments 50p. For more information see Clubs section of the BB&O website [bbandoflowers.org.uk](http://bbandoflowers.org.uk) or find us on Facebook

## Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

The annual Townswomen's Guild Day was celebrated this year by our guild with an afternoon tea at the Riseley tea rooms with freshly made sandwiches, home baked cakes and more cups of tea than you could shake a strainer at.

Jean Hill's presentation *The Rhyme of our Lives* entertained us at our main meeting. The Social Studies group hosted Tony King with his *Shadows on the Wall* presentation. Wendy Colton held her ever popular coffee morning, much appreciated by all. Ambling, cinema, scrabble and luncheon clubs continue to be enjoyed. We are looking forward to our 56th Birthday Party this month.

## Rosehill WI

President Margaret Pyle welcomed all present (including visitors) to our April meeting and announced meetings of the various clubs and groups.

Our attention was then drawn to the Resolutions, these being *Alleviating Loneliness and Plastic Soup* (Keeping micro-plastic fibres out of our oceans). These items were discussed at our May meeting and a vote taken as to which one will be forwarded to NFWL.

An appeal was made for shawls and blankets for patients in the Dementia Ward at RBH.

Finally, we expressed our thanks to Pat and Richard Denney for printing the speaker's programme for 2017/2018.

Alan Copeland, our speaker, gave us part two of 'The Changing Face of Reading' which brought back many memories to those who have lived here for many years.

The meeting closed with the usual cup of tea and biscuit and the raffle.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at St Barnabas Village Hall, Emmer Green at 2.00 pm.

## Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

We recently held our Annual General Meeting including reports of the year's activities. We sadly reported the death of Marion Cooper, who had been an active faithful member of ours and previously of Emmer Green Guild. Our executive committee continues and we are in a new phase where many members are willing to help but don't wish to be committee members. We now look forward to the New Year with speakers on the Abbey Ruins and its Restoration, the Fishermen's Mission and an antiques quiz. We also have trips to the national arboretum in Staffordshire to witness the unveiling of the memorial to Townswomen and to Sheffield for the Annual General Meeting when our two topics are *Fracking* and *Should we change the clock times?* Meanwhile *knitting and nattering*, *scrabble* and trying out all the local eateries continue. We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 2.00 pm in Church House and visitors are always welcome. More information is available from our secretary Mrs Marianne Cross on 0118 9474814



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