

EASTER SERVICES

Churches Together in Caversham Walk of Witness with donkey sets off at 9.30am on Palm Sunday 20th March from Copperfields Albert Road

Caversham Heights Methodist

March 21st 7.30pm Meditation
March 24th 7.30pm Tenebrae a service of Holy Communion, with readings by candlelight
March 27th 8am Holy Communion
9am Easter Breakfast
10.30am Family Worship with Holy Communion lead by Revd David Jenkins

Caversham Gosbrook Road Methodist

March 21st 7.30pm Meditation
March 27th 9am Easter Breakfast
10.30am Family Worship with Holy Communion led by Rev'd Jenny Dowding

Caversham Baptist

March 25th 10.30am followed by Walk of Witness to Caversham Court.
March 27th 10.30am family Easter celebration

New Testament Church of God

March 24th 7.30pm Christ's Last Supper including washing the saints feet
March 25th 11am Good Friday service
March 26th 11am Easter Sunday service

St John's

March 20th 9.30am Holy Communion
March 25th 10am All Age service
March 27th 10am Festival Communion

St Margaret's

March 20th 11.15am Holy Communion
March 24th Communion and supper at Trench Green Hall (need to book)

St Andrew's

March 24th Last Supper meal and Eucharist (need to book)
March 25th 2pm The Liturgy of the Cross
March 26th 7.15pm The Easter Liturgy
March 27th 8am and 10am Easter Day services



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St Peter's

March 20th 8am Matins (BCP)
9.30am Holy Communion
6.30pm Evensong
March 21st 8pm Compline
March 22nd 8pm Compline
March 23rd 9.30am Holy Communion
March 24th 8pm Holy Communion with foot washing, stripping the altar and vigil
March 25th 12 Midday Three hour devotional service led by Rev'd Johnathan Edwards
March 27th 6am Sunrise service 9.30am Festival Communion (No evening service)

St Barnabas

March 24th 8pm 'In the Upper Room' a Reflective Communion Service
March 25th 2-3pm Readings and Prayers around the Cross
March 27th 6am Dawn Communion
8am Traditional Communion (BCP)
9.30am Family Communion

Our Lady and St Ann's

March 20th 10am, 5.30pm and 6.30pm Mass with blessing and distribution of palms
March 24th 7.30pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper.
11.45pm Night Prayer
March 25th 3pm Celebration of the Lord's Passion
7pm Stations of the cross
March 26th 9am Office of readings and morning prayer
8pm The Easter Vigil
March 27th 10am and 6.30pm Mass

Grace Church

March 25th 10.30am
March 27th 10.30am,

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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

Riverside Church (Reading)

Rev'd Rob Beardsley Tel: 07736 353233

Email: rob.beadsley@sky.com

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

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

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Transitional Minister Rev'd Jonathan Edwards

Church office tel 954 5353

Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Crispin Fairbairn

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 (contact)

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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TALKING POINT

by Crispin Fairbairn



This is Jacob. I met him in 2007; or to be more accurate, I bought him in 2007.

Jacob had been living in a children's home built by HopeAsia, a Caversham based charity, in rural Cambodia but he had made some unwise choices and got himself into trouble. He was abducted and sold as a slave onto a rubber plantation where he was put in charge of the animals.

Things didn't go well for Jacob; he wasn't fed properly, he was forced to work without a break for seven days a week and eventually he fell gravely ill. Not surprisingly there was

no medical care offered to Jacob. He was lost, alone with no future and close to death.

Of course he was no use to his employer either and after a few months of searching we managed to track him down. We negotiated a price of £50 to buy him and another boy. The deal was done, the price was paid and he was ours.

We took him back to the children's home. We fed him, clothed him, taught him and loved him. Now he had a family, he had a home, a place of safety.

At Easter we remember that we are all Jacobs. The Bible teaches us that we are lost, that we are enslaved and that we are without hope; unable to do anything to save ourselves we are powerless, just like Jacob. But there was one who could help us and one who was willing to pay the ransom; to pay the price to redeem us from slavery. But the price wasn't a monetary one, the price was infinitely more than £50, the price was the blood of Jesus.

In Marks' gospel chapter 10 verse 45, as he heads towards Jerusalem and the cross, Jesus tells his disciples for the first time why it was he came. He told them that he would give his life as a ransom, that he would redeem, he would buy back many people from slavery. And that includes you and me.

That is why Easter is such an important celebration. It's not about fluffy bunnies, chirpy chicks and eating our own bodyweight in chocolate. It's about remembering that we were lost and Jesus came to find us and redeem us. That's worth a celebration.

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me; I once was lost but now am found was blind but now I see!"

See more details - <http://www.hopeasia.org>

Crispin Fairbairn is Pastor at Grace Church, Caversham

CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS

Are you a people person?

Caversham Good Neighbours is a group formed to offer essential transport to the elderly and disabled in our neighbourhood and visits to the sick or housebound. If you would like to give to the community by joining us as a volunteer driver or as a visitor, then do get in touch with us.

www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk
0118 948 3466

Monday to Friday 9.30am - 11.30am
Church House 59 Church Street Caversham RG4 8AX

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

8.30am Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)

10.00am Parish Communion (except 2nd Sunday)

10.00am All Age Worship (2nd Sunday)

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)

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

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

First Sunday of the month

GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church

6.30pm Prayer Meeting

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 May 2016 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 4th April**. The date for the June 2016 Issue is **Monday 2nd May** Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the May issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue. Caversham. By **Friday 1st April**. The date for the June issue is **Friday 29th April**.

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX

Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 12.00noon

Tel: 947 1703 email: secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

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The Real Easter Egg

Do you have children or grandchildren who might enjoy an Easter egg? Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has an Easter story booklet in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and makes a donation to charity from its sales. The Real Easter Egg was launched in 2010. It was a real struggle as all the supermarkets turned it down at first. To date, we have sold more than one million eggs with 750,000 of these sent through the post directly to churches and schools. Not only has there been an increase in Fairtrade chocolate sales, but nearly £200,000 has been donated to charity. You can order online at www.realeasteregg.co.uk or by adding your name to the list at the back of St Andrew's Church (open every day). Easter is early this year so act today!



Daffodils (Narcissus Tête à Tête) anticipating Easter

Easter Egg trail in Caversham Court

Come along to Caversham Court on Easter Saturday 26 March between 2 and 4pm when the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens will be hosting an Easter Egg Trail on a nature theme in the lovely riverside gardens. All young competitors will win an Easter Egg prize. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Entry is free, but donations to the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens will be appreciated. The Tea Kiosk will be open for refreshments all afternoon. Further information from the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens – email friends@fccg.org.uk or ring 0118 9475062.

Bounce Back 4 Kids

A children's charity in the Thames Valley is asking for support for its community project for children affected by domestic abuse in the home.

Bounce Back 4 Kids (BB4K) is a specialist support programme developed by charity Parents And Children Together (PACT). It uses therapeutic techniques to support children who have been victims or witnesses of domestic abuse.

The 10 week programme works simultaneously with children and their non-perpetrating parent or carer to help them come to terms with family breakdown and take a step towards breaking the cycle of domestic abuse.

If you, or someone you know, is affected by domestic abuse and would like to know more about Bounce Back 4 Kids services please email kathryn.warner@pactcharity or visit the website www.bounce-back4kids.org

Women's World Day of Prayer

Come and join us for the Women's World Day of Prayer service at St Peter's church, Caversham on Friday 4th March at 7.30pm. This year's theme is 'Receive children; Receive me'. This theme reflects St Mark's gospel, chapter 10 vv13-16. All are welcome: young, old, men, women and children.

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Concerts in Caversham

The next concert entitled *The Romantic Cello in the Concerts in Caversham* series will be held on 12th March at 7.30pm in

St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7PL

Peter Adams, the principal cellist with the Oxford Philharmonic, and Adrienne Black on piano, will introduce a varied programme, including some of the most beautiful and expressive music written for cello and piano. Come and enjoy what promises to be a truly inspirational evening, with our musicians introducing the programme in the warm acoustic and relaxed atmosphere of St Andrew's Church. Afterwards, you will be treated to a finger food feast, and have a chance to chat to the musicians. The programme will include well known works by Rachmaninov, Chopin, Faure and Saint Saens.

Tickets are available from Waltons the Jewellers in Caversham (closed Mondays, cash only) and cost £15 (£13 concessions) in advance or £17 (£15 concessions) on the door. Under 16s free.

See www.concertsincaversham.co.uk for more information.

Henley Choral Society

Benjamin Goodson, Henley Choral Society's conductor, has chosen Elgar's choral masterpiece, *The Dream of Gerontius*, as his last performance with the Henley choir. On Saturday 5th March at 7:30 pm Henley Choral Society relocates to the stunning Reading Concert Hall, a fitting venue for the dramatic choral work. The work brings together over 200 performers on one stage. Henley Choral Society will combine forces with The Lea Singers, also conducted by Ben, who will sing the semi-chorus. The choirs will be joined by internationally-acclaimed soloists, and accompanied by a full professional symphony orchestra. Concert tickets £18 available from Jan French on 01491 572795 or Gorvett & Stone, 21 Duke St, Henley-on-Thames.

Parenthesis Choir

Parenthesis are a mixed Reading choir, directed by Valerie Hoppe.

They are in concert on Saturday 12th March at 7.30 pm at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. The programme includes the St John Passion and other pieces. Tickets are £10. Contact 0118 9546833 or tickets@parenthesis.org.uk

Music for Lent

The Easter concert of Reading Festival Chorus will be held on 19th March at 7.30 pm in the Wesley Methodist Church, Queens Road, Reading RG1 4BW

The programme will include Stainer's *The Crucifixion*, Mozart's *Ave Verum*, as well as Finzi's *Lo, The Full, and Final Sacrifice*, Lotti's *Crucifixus* and Victoria's *Crucifixus Pro Nobis*.

The soloists are Robyn Lyn (tenor), Andrew Tipple (bass) and Simon Dinsdale (organ) with the conductor Edward-Rhys Harry.

Tickets are £13 for adults (under 16s free) and can be purchased from Alison Mackay at 0118 983 4523 or tickets@readingfestivalchorus.org.uk

Spring Concert

Reading Youth Orchestra (RYO) are delighted to announce their Spring Concert on Sunday 13th March at 7:30pm in the University of Reading's Great Hall, RG1 5AQ, raising money for local charity the League of Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

To celebrate the RYO's 70+ year history of providing opportunities to Reading's young musicians, the orchestra is excited to invite back internationally renowned pianist and RYO alumnus Simon Crawford-Phillips to play Grieg's *Piano Concerto in A Minor*. The orchestra will also play Rossini's *Tancredi Overture* and Beethoven's famous *5th Symphony*.

RYO will donate a proportion of the concert revenue to the League of Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital. This charity aims to improve the care and comfort of patients, visitors and staff, above and beyond what is funded and provided by the NHS.

Tickets are available by calling 07827 289768. £12 adult, £8 concession, £5 child and £25 family ticket. For more information please visit www.readingyouthorchestra.co.uk

Reading Haydn Choir

Reading Haydn Choir will join with Chaconne Brass on Saturday, 19th March at 19:30 in Greyfriars Church, Reading RG1 1EH for its Spring concert. The Reading Haydn Choir will perform the following programme:

Bach's motet: *Jesu Priceless Treasure (Jesu, Meine Freude, BWV 227)*

John Rutter: *Gloria* with Chaconne Brass accompanying the choir.

Tickets: Adults/Concessions - £14*/£12*, Under 17 - £5, Under 12 - Free (*£1 off for advance sales from tickets@haydnchoir.org.uk) www.haydnchoir.org.uk for more information.

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Should Easter be fixed?

In the UK, Easter is the only bank holiday which has different dates in each year. All other bank holidays occur on fixed dates (Christmas day, Boxing Day, New Year) or on the nearest Monday to a fixed date (May day, late Spring, August). Easter Sunday falls on the first Sunday after the full moon (the Paschal Full Moon) following the 21st March spring equinox. The date of Easter Sunday may vary between 22nd March and 25th April. This year it is quite early, falling on March 27th.

In addition, Easter usually, but not always, coincides with the Feast of the Passover, which is the religious festival that celebrates the deliverance of Israel from slavery under the Egyptians. [It begins on the 14th of Nisan and traditionally continues for eight days. In the Hebrew calendar, Nisan is the first month of the ecclesiastical year and the seventh month (eighth, in leap years) of the civil year. It lasts for 30 days, and corresponds to a period in March/April.]

It was announced in January that the Archbishop of Canterbury is working with other Christian churches to agree on a fixed date for Easter. The announcement was made after a meeting in Canterbury between Archbishop Justin Welby and primates from the Anglican Communion.

In the UK, an act of Parliament passed in 1928 allowed for Easter Sunday to be fixed on the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April, but this has never been activated and Easter has remained variable, occurring on a date determined as above. In 1990, the Vatican approved a proposal for a fixed date, which was subject to agreement with other Christian churches and governments. Agreement has not yet been reached.

A fixed date for Easter would be welcomed by many organisations, in particular many businesses and schools. It would mean that school terms would be of consistent lengths in all years.

The archbishop said that he had been in talks with Pope Francis, Coptic leader Pope Tawadros, and the leader of the Orthodox church, Patriarch Bartholomew. He hoped the change would happen "in between five and ten years time".

"I would love to see it before I retired", he said, although he warned the first attempt to make such a change was in the 10th Century. An Anglican source said that there had been 15 attempts to agree a common date since then. As mentioned above, Easter can be celebrated on a Sunday between 22 March and 25 April. However, the Orthodox

church follows the Julian calendar, and hence has later Easter celebrations compared with those of Western Christianity, which is another obstacle to be overcome if a fixed Easter is ever to become a reality.

What do you think? Do you support the idea of a fixed Easter, or are you happy with the variability associated with the current system?

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STOP PRESS

Date for your diary:

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Holiday at Home 2016

May 31st – June 3rd Details to follow.

Caversham Library News:

Everybody welcome to Adult's Board Games session on Fridays at 10:30. Some board games are on hand in the library but attendees can bring their own favourite game. Also tea or coffee refreshments are provided free of charge.

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*every Thursday 2pm - 4pm

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Closure of Mapledurham Pavilion until further notice



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An independant structural engineer has recommended the closure of Mapledurham Pavilion following an inspection.

The engineer was called out on the advice of the council's property services team after a recent site visit.

Following the inspection, the structural engineer said there has been a deterioration of the south facing wall, resulting in bowing, and there could be similar problems in other parts of the building.

The recommendation is that the hall, kitchen and store rooms need to be closed while further investigations and assessments are carried out. These investigative works are expected to take at least six weeks.

The changing rooms have remained open to enable football and other activities to continue.

The council have contacted the groups which regularly use the pavilion to try and help them find alternative venues.

The council has apologised to users of the building for the inconvenience and will keep them informed of any further developments.

The council had been working closely with local groups involved in fundraising to replace or refurbish the pavilion. However, the refurbishment plans were put on hold pending a decision on proposals for a new free school in Caversham from the Education Funding Agency.

Mapledurham Pavilion with Mapledurham Playing Fields are held in trust by the Official Custodian for Charities as Charity 304328 for recreational purposes for current and future generations of residents in Mapledurham and Reading with Reading Borough Council as the managing trustees.

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Mapledurham Pavilion

Evensong at St Peter's

On Sundays at 6.30pm St Peter's church in Caversham has a service of Sung Evensong according to the Book of Common Prayer led by the choir. This is found by those who come to be a more reflective service. Generally once a month this is a fully choral service with anthems, a composed setting of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and a composed set of the responses. Choral services are advertised in the Forthcoming Events page of the website, www.stpetercaversham.org.uk. The choir would love to see you there.

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ENVIRONMENT

TOOTS FARM



Regular readers will know that I tend to alternate these articles. One month it will be on some aspect of natural history, followed by one on local history the next. I'm always on the look-out for interesting old pictures of Caversham, but when I first saw this one, my heart sank. "Oh, no!" I thought. "Another unidentified farm. It could be anywhere."

On closer inspection of the picture, however, the building in the distance to the left looked vaguely familiar. The small windows and hipped roof looked very much like the 17th century granary that had belonged to Toots Farm on Caversham Heights. It was pulled down in the 1960s, despite vigorous protests. A look at the Reading Libraries website seemed to confirm this. There are photographs and measured drawings of the granary, viewable by clicking on the thumbnails. There

are also photographs of barns and stables, taken just before they were demolished. To see them, put Reading library catalogue into your Internet search engine, and use the option that begins reading-hip.epitech. Then search on toots farm.

I made a copy of the photograph, and took it with me to church on Christmas Day. On the way back, I could walk home via Darell Road, and compare the house in the picture with the present-day house called Toots Farm. Unfortunately, you can't see much of the house from the street, because of hedges and trees. Though the line of the road seems to have altered since the picture was taken, the tops of the gables and the distinctive brick crosses on the chimney stacks confirmed my first thoughts. It's the only photograph of Toots Farm that I have come across . . . so far!

To find out more, I went to the Central Library and looked in the History of Caversham by Margaret Sarah Tate, a copy of which was sitting on the shelf. It's not a published work, and frankly, it's a bit of a mess, with not much logical order, a lot of repetition, and no index. But it is valuable because the author talked to old people and visited buildings while they were still around, so you get information you wouldn't find anywhere else. On pages 89-91 she tells us that the old farmhouse was demolished in 1882, and the house in the photograph was built shortly afterwards. It was a large house, with five bedrooms, two staircases, drawing-room, dining-room, kitchen, china pantry, scullery, larder, and a laundry with a pump, a sink and a copper.

Presumably it wasn't used as a farmhouse for very long afterwards. The library also has a large-scale plan of 1898, showing the land of Toots Farm divided into lots for an auction sale.

Its name probably comes from an Old English word meaning to peep, look or gaze. It was on an eminence, with land falling away in several directions, making it a good look-out place above the Thames Valley. As for Darell Road, the land was part of the Mapledurham estate, and at the time of the sale, the Lord of the Manor was John Darell-Blount. He had married Miss Henrietta Darell, and added her maiden-name to his own surname.

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Years One and Two Explore 'The Look Out Centre'

On Thursday 21st January, years one and two pupils visited 'The Look Out Centre', in Bracknell. They all had a great day exploring the 90 hands-on science and discovery activities. All children were encouraged to investigate and have fun with science, technology, engineering, art and maths, linking to our science topic 'Pushes and Pulls'.

The children also had the opportunity to watch a show, where Baby Eric the Owl falls out of a tree and is looking for his mummy! On his way to find her, he visits places like the play area and coffee shop. The children followed Eric's journey deepening their understanding of pushes and pulls and learnt how we can make something change direction.

A big thank you goes to all the adults who came and supported the children's learning, during this visit.

Miss Talbot
Key Stage One Leader



Photos by Miss Talbot at St Anne's School show the children at the Look Out Centre

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Bible Friends**Jesus is alive!**

Some people did not like Jesus and wanted to get rid of him.

On Friday, Jesus died.

Jesus' friends were very sad. They lovingly put his body in a cave and rolled a big stone in front.

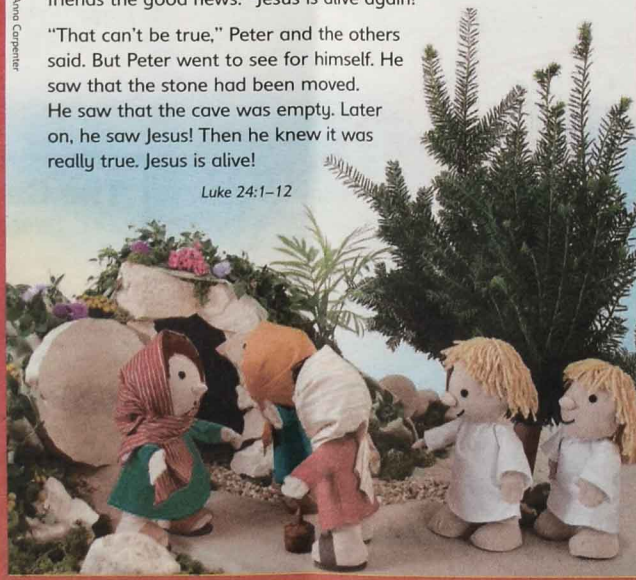
On Sunday morning, Mary and her friends went to the cave. They saw that the big stone had moved! They went into the cave. It was empty! What a surprise! Where was Jesus' body?

Suddenly two angels appeared. The women were afraid, but the angels told them, "Jesus is not here. Jesus isn't dead. He's alive again!"

Mary and her friends were amazed. They ran back to tell Jesus' friends the good news: "Jesus is alive again!"

"That can't be true," Peter and the others said. But Peter went to see for himself. He saw that the stone had been moved. He saw that the cave was empty. Later on, he saw Jesus! Then he knew it was really true. Jesus is alive!

Luke 24:1-12



From The Big Bible Storybook © 2006 Scripture Union Illustration © 2006 Mark & Anna Carpenter



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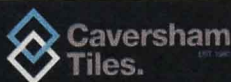
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CLUBS

Rosehill WI

President Margaret Pyle welcomed all members and visitors to our first meeting of 2016 by wishing everyone a Happy New Year. She thanked June Fisher for the table flowers – a lovely display of alstroemeria. She also thanked Margaret Seal for the birthday buttonholes. She went on to say that the record of the December 2015 meeting was available for all to see. She also made available some free samples of a cream that is supposed to make one look years younger – a bit late for most of those present!

Doris Goddard reported that she had almost made her target of 350 emergency packs for the RBH and hoped to continue sending them in 2016. Doris also gave out the birthday buttonholes as Margaret Seal was unable to attend.

The various clubs are hoping to make a good start this year.

Phyllis Clinton was asked about Margaret Slade, and Phyllis said that she was back in her home, but with live-in carers and still in a rather depressed state – let's hope she will make a recovery soon.

Secretary Mary Robinson drew our attention to several courses and outings advertised in the January issue of Berkshire News, especially the forthcoming Spring Annual Council Meeting which will be held at the Hexagon on Wednesday, 13th April. She also said that nominations for the committee will be needed before the AGM in March.

The Margaret introduced our speaker – Alan Copeland, whose talk on 'The Changing Face of Reading' was extremely interesting and well received. It was mainly a video film made and narrated by Doug Noyes of what happened when the IDR was constructed. It certainly jogged a few memories of what the Oxford Road area had looked like before the demolition. Some said afterwards that it was quite sad to see the lovely old buildings disappearing. Alan said that he now had an archive of Doug Noyes' photographs (about 6,000 in all) and had other films of different parts of Reading.

Finally, tea and biscuits were served before the raffle was drawn. Brenda Strong was pleased to announce that just over £20 had been made on the bring and buy stall – thank you to all who contributed.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at St Barnabas Church Hall in Emmer Green at 2.00 pm and would be pleased to welcome any visitors.

Caversham WI

Members and three visitors were welcomed to the first meeting of the New Year. The speaker was Maggie Hill one of our members who spoke about her work as a crystal healing and Reiki therapist. She brought several beautiful crystals to show us and finished the session with a short meditation which left everyone very relaxed.

After refreshments the competition *My New Year's Resolution* was judged. The entries were read out and Margaret Cameron was declared the winner with Claire Elliot and Sylvia Myszor as runners up. A raffle ended an interesting evening.

Next month's speaker will be talking about cats.

Chazey WI

The January meeting was well attended and the members were entertained by Graham Horn, talking about the Isle of Wight. With the use of slides Graham kept us well informed on the Island's history.

Holiday mementoes were brought by quite a few members for the exhibition table. It was pleasing to see so many exhibits. Our raffle was won by Daphne Cooper.

In December twelve members went to the Wycombe Swan to see the panto *Peter Pan*. A very enjoyable day for which we thank our President, Hilary Morrison, for organising.

Tea, coffee and biscuits were followed by the business and new members welcomed.

Chazey meets on the first Tuesday of the month at Caversham Heights Methodist Church at 7.45pm. New members welcome.

Townswomen's Guild Road Show

Come along to the Novahotel in Friar Street to find out about the Townswomen's Guild.

The Berkshire Federation of Townswomen's Guilds will be holding a Road Show from 10.30am to 3.30pm on Saturday 9th of April.

At 11am Boots the chemist will be giving a make-up demonstration. In the afternoon at 2pm Marks and Spencer will be holding a fashion show for us.

Each of the Guilds in the Berkshire area will be there for ladies to discover where the local branch is and their activities.

In addition there will be a major raffle and various craft demonstrations. IT'S ALL FREE!

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CLUBS

Probus

The speaker at the January meeting of the Reading and District Probus Club was Tony King, whose subject was 'The London Underground'. Tony, who in his working life was a surveyor in the building industry, told us the story of London's underground railway from its beginnings to the present day. London was the first city in the world to have an underground; it was opened in 1863, long before the Paris metro in 1900, and New York's subway in 1904.

The driving force in the early days was Charles Pearson, an American, who recognised the need to move London's overcrowded population around quickly and efficiently. Between 1841 and 1851 London's population increased by half a million people, many coming from eastern Europe, Ireland and the countryside. Marc Brunel (Isambard Kingdom Brunel's father) built the first Thames Tunnel, using a tunnel shield. The tunnel was 1500 feet long and 35 feet wide, and tunnelling advanced at 12 feet a week, but it was not intended as a major transport link. The first underground railway, the Metropolitan railway, which ran from Paddington, the world's first underground station, via Baker Street and Kings Cross to Faringdon Street, a distance of four miles, was begun in 1860, and completed in 1863. It was built by the 'cut and cover' method. Spoil from the digging was used in the construction of the terraces at Chelsea Football Ground. The trains were pulled by steam engines, fuelled first by coke then by coal, and did not convert to electricity until 1905. The homes of many thousands of people were demolished in the building of the line, the owners thrown out with no compensation, adding greatly to homelessness in the capital.

Expansion of the network was driven by two bitter rivals, Edward Watkins, of the Metropolitan, and James Staats Forbes of the District Line. They battled for 30 years, and eventually had to co-operate when their lines met at High Street Kensington, the outcome of this being the Circle Line.

In 1933 the London Underground company took control of the whole network, and the Piccadilly line became the premier line. But the growing network required a simplified map, and Henry Beck invented the now familiar underground map, with straight lines. There were now 14 lines. The British Empire exhibition of 1924 at Wembley, with the stadium as its showpiece, and which millions attended, was important in the development of the Metropolitan railway, which was due to extend via Aylesbury to Quainton Road, but this never happened, and the final parts were abandoned in 1936.

Today there are 214 stations and over 250 miles of track, and 1.7 billion passenger journeys per year are made on the system.

This was a fascinating talk, only a small part of which is recorded here.

Probus is a club for retired men, who enjoy a meal once a month in the congenial company of like-minded men. Lunch is followed by a talk, which may be on a variety of interesting subjects. The club meets at the Caversham Heath Golf Club. For further information visit the club's website www.probusclub-reading.org.uk. If you are interested in joining, please contact the secretary David Laird on 0118 9470709.

Reading Gardeners

Our programme for March has two very interesting speakers.

March 9th – Alan Street, Head Nurseryman from Avon Bulbs in Somerset will give a talk on Snowdrops and early Spring Bulbs. He will bring a selection of Snowdrops for sale but early ordering from the list is recommended.

March 23rd – Dr. Stephen Jury, one of our long standing Vice Presidents, will talk about Special Mediterranean Plants – and what climate change might mean for us.

Our meetings are in Caversham Primary School Hall at 7.30pm
For more details see our website readinggardenersclub.org.uk

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Caversham Horticultural Society

Calling all gardeners to remind you that the trading shed at the Oakley Road allotments is open for members to purchase composts and other gardening supplies at very competitive prices. Membership can be obtained at the shed during opening time on Saturdays between 10 and 11.30am. Annual household membership is only £5 and £3 for gardeners over 60 years old.

An advance date for your diary. The society's first talk held at Caversham Primary School is on Wednesday 13th April when Steven Desmond will give an illustrated talk titled . Details of this talk will be given in the next issue of Caversham Bridge.

The Caversham Heights Society

Members of the Caversham Heights Society were enlightened by two very different but equally informative talks during January, one on Rasputin, the other on the founding of Australia.

Most of us are vaguely aware of Rasputin, a mysterious character who exercised a very strong influence over the last Tsar of Russia, Nicholas II, and especially over the Tsarina, Alexandra, after he 'miraculously' healed the Crown Prince of haemophilia in 1905, and that his unpopularity in some way led to his murder in 1916 at the hands of several noblemen and eventually to the downfall of the Russian monarchy. What none of us, or at least very few of us, were aware of were the origins of, and the very colourful life story of Rasputin until Hugh Granger elaborated on 'The Truth about Rasputin' in his talk on 6th January. Hugh's fascinating talk was both scholarly and detailed as he described the origins and somewhat dubious lifestyle of one of the most enigmatic and charismatic figures in Russian history.

Malcolm Nelson's talk on 'The Founding of Australia; Birth of a Nation of Thieves' on 20th January was in stark contrast since it described how British convicts and settlers colonised and tamed the New South Wales area of what is now Australia. We were told about the known background of Australia in the late 18th century; the erroneous information about Australia provided by Captain Cook following his exploration trips, the uneven, and often pernicious, punishments for petty crimes conducted in Britain at that time eg for desertion from the armed services, petty theft, burning haystacks at night, poaching, smuggling wool out of the country, petty larceny etc all of which led the authorities in England to decide to send these 'convicts' to a new settlement on the other side of the world. We were told about the first convoy of 40 ships, led by HMS Sirius, that set sail from Portsmouth on 13th May 1787 and landed at Botany Bay 8 months later. We were told about the numbers of convicts, service personnel, and settlers who set sail and the discrepancies of the first census. Above all we were told of the numerous problems that had to be overcome - lack of skills, food, tools and the lack of clarity as to whether or not the settlement was to be a prison or a colony, smallpox etc. Yet despite the odds within 20 years several thriving settlements were in existence: Tasmania [1804], Brisbane [1824], Melbourne [1835] and Adelaide [1837]. Appetites have been whetted for another instalment of Australia's development at another time.

Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday evenings at 8pm from September to April, preceded by coffee in the hall of Caversham Heights Methodist Church. New members are always welcome. For further information please contact Jill Hodges on 0118 959 5307 or via irishjill@southcote.net

Agreed move for the Wootcote Way Post Office

The Post Office has agreed to relocate Wootcote Way Post Office to Conisboro Stores, 46 Conisboro Avenue, Caversham, RG4 7JB with significantly longer opening hours.

The new branch will be known as Caversham Heights. This will be a modern open-plan branch with Post Office services provided from a till at the retail counter.

Services would be provided throughout the stores opening hours Monday - Saturday: 7am - 9pm; Sunday: 8am - 8pm. This will be an extra 50 hours a week of Post Office service including opening earlier and closing significantly later. This will make it more convenient for customers to visit.

The current branch at 30 Wootcote Way, Caversham, RG4 7HJ is to close on Monday 21 March at 5.30pm and the new branch is due to open on Tuesday 22 March at 1pm. During the transfer alternative branches include:

Caversham Post Office, Day Lewis Pharmacy, 30 Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AU

Emmer Green Post Office, Milestone Way Precinct, Cavendish Rd, Reading RG4 8XW
Reading Post Office, 21-22 Market Place, Reading, RG1 2DQ

Whilst we appreciate that Conisboro Stores is 650 metres from the existing branch and for some customers this will mean a longer journey, there are other customers who welcome the new location and will find it more conveniently located. For those unable to access the new location, Readibus is a dial a ride assisted bus service, which may provide an alternative option for customers with restricted mobility wishing to access the new branch.

Parking is outside our control, however, we have conducted a review. Roadside parking is restricted immediately outside the new site, however, parking is available further along Conisboro Avenue and Uplands Road. We are therefore satisfied that parking at the new location will meet the needs of customers using the Post Office.

Will Russell, Regional Manager said: "We are making it easier for customers to get their cash, send and collect their mail and do their banking because we know how important these services are to local residents. We are confident that this vibrant new-style Post Office at the heart of the local community will meet customer needs. This modernisation is part of a major investment programme, the largest in the history of the Post Office and will secure services for the future."

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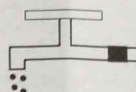
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