

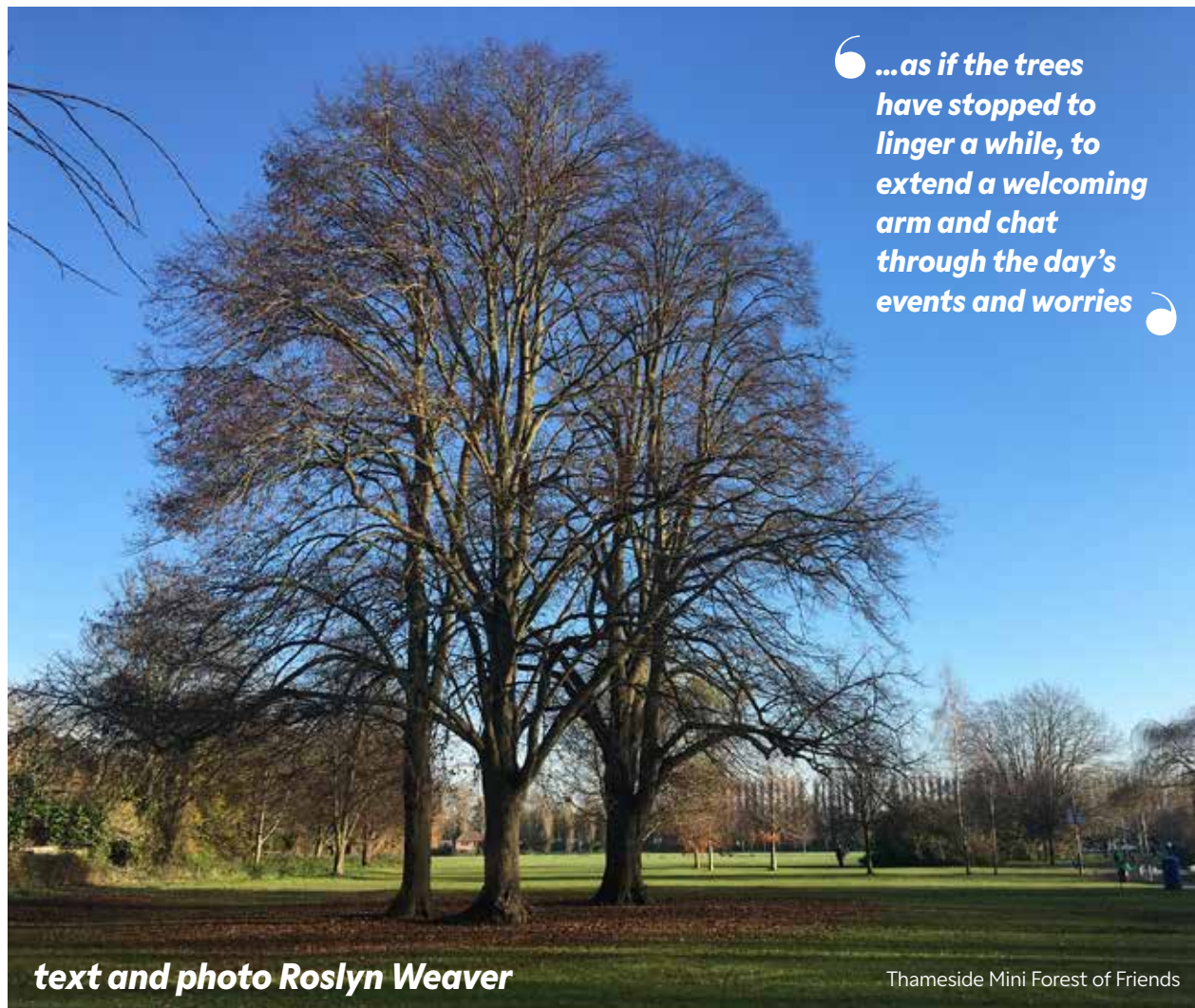
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Caversham Bridge

No 720

www.cavershambridge.org

February 2025



...as if the trees have stopped to linger a while, to extend a welcoming arm and chat through the day's events and worries

text and photo Roslyn Weaver

Thameside Mini Forest of Friends

Stronger together

ONE OF OUR area's literary connections is Alexander Pope, who lived in Binfield in the early 1700s and spent time nearby, including Mapledurham. His works show a love of nature in this part of the world, with a particular delight in the 'green retreats' of woodlands in his Windsor Forest poem.

Those of us without a wooded area at hand can still find similar inspiration. Take a wander through Caversham and sometimes, beside busy streets, you will find a small group of trees standing together in an otherwise tree-less park. Three or four grow closely together, branches meeting each other, as if the trees have stopped to linger a while, to extend a welcoming arm and chat through the day's events and worries; a mini forest of friends in an otherwise barren space.

...neighbourly trees...

Trees growing near each other might be understood as competing for light, but it appears that neighbourly trees may support each other instead. For example, trees together form a greater protective barrier against

wind forces than on their own. Not all scientists agree but some, such as Peter Wohlleben in *The Hidden Life of Trees*, even argue that trees form a sort of social network, sharing water, nutrients and even communication signals in underground fungal networks (or, as some like to call it, the wood-wide web); stronger as communities than as individuals.

...showing kindness...

In a month when the weather can be dispiritingly grim, it might be no accident that February sees many awareness events aimed at improving wellbeing: Children's Mental Health Week, Time to Talk Day, Send a Card to a Friend Day, Galentine's and Valentine's Days, Random Acts of Kindness Day, and National Nestbox Week. The common theme is friendship and caring for others by improving mental health, building positive social and romantic and societal relationships, showing kindness to others and to the natural world around us. Like Pope, we can be well served by forest retreats, but ours might be the sanctuary of friendships, extending our arms to those around us, and sharing what resources or kindness we can for the benefit of others.

A LESSON FROM THE TREES

by Phil Chatfield



Rivarate singing in the Precinct in December

photo M Apar

THIS MONTH the Caversham Bridge leads with Roslyn Weaver's reflection on trees and their mutual support systems (*left*). Our community is similar in many ways, with our complex connections and support systems. Like local choir Rivarate (*above*), we are at our best working in harmony. The articles in this edition include a look back at community activities over the Christmas period, with the Scout Post raising funds for a local charity and local store owner, Pritpal, providing hospitality on Christmas Day (*both p3*).

We celebrate kindness in our community with Caroline Gatrix's story about Laura Bailey (*p4*), and our long record of welcoming English language students from Germany (*p13*). Jo Deacon, of the recently opened BKRY in Caversham's precinct, is the subject of our *Community Connections* (*p8*), and we record the retirement of Angie Stargatt, the long-serving manager of *House of Cards* (*p5*).

...the creative theme...

Our *Talking Point*, inspired by thoughts of St Valentine's Day, considers love and marriage, and we also have a nostalgic Valentines Day memory (*both p2*). As usual, we have contributions from our regular writers: Happy Wanderer provides a warning about the Stinking Hellebore (*p7*), and Alex Forbes reviews two books centred on mysteries – one by local author Kate Wells and an award-winning children's book by Siobhan Dowd (*p5*). Our *Creative Caversham* subject is another local author, Rebecca Netley (*p12*). Following the creative theme, this month's *Local Scene* features Janina Maher's painting of takeaway *Go Sing* on Prospect Street, alongside the building's history from Martin Andrews (*p11*).

There is much more inside, including our *What's On* listing (*p6*), and regular events for the youngest members of our community, including a new Toddlers' Group on Fridays at Church House (*p14*).

If you have a friend or neighbour who might like to subscribe to the paper, please let us know and we will arrange delivery of a complimentary copy.

As always, we hope you enjoy your latest Caversham Bridge. We welcome your feedback and contributions.

You can contact us by email at editors@cavershambridge.org or by post, c/o Church House, Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX with your contributions.

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New smoke control rules – John Lyons

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Love and Marriage



Talking Point

by Rev'd
Kevin Lovell

IT'S FEBRUARY: we're looking towards Spring and the card shops are full of Valentine's Day cards. You could say love is in the air. This year, I am looking forward to marrying three couples at St Barnabas: we tend not to have many weddings, so this is an above-average year for us!

As I mused over the preparation for these couples, the words of an old song came to mind: 'Love and marriage, love and marriage, they go together like a horse and carriage.' What struck me was how out of date it sounded. It may have been the most natural thing to say when Frank Sinatra first sang it in 1955, but to say 'Love and marriage ... you can't have one without the other': who would write those lyrics today?

It's remarkable how our attitudes have changed. Now 70 years is a long time, and we imagine marriage to be one of those unchanging things in society, yet many people have responded by choosing not to marry. Marriage without love is a bad idea. But love without marriage has become commonplace. Even the introduction of civil partnerships and same-sex marriage has not reversed the trend: a few years ago, we passed the point at which less than 50% of people in the UK are married and many predict the downward trend will continue.

The Christian idea of marriage is that we seek to emulate God's love for us: in other words, within



marriage we support and encourage unending, unconditional love. We can never do this perfectly, but we try hard because it's valuable. In the marriage service, a couple underline this by making solemn vows that they will love each other, come what may, until their lives' end. The congregation witness this: for their part, they are asked to promise to support the couple in those vows.

All this may seem anachronistic to some, yet this sense of constancy and commitment is strangely life-giving. If taken seriously by both parties, it helps us hold together through tough times: loving and forgiving, so that everyone comes out stronger. It is a sound basis for family life, giving children a stable bedrock, helping young fragile lives to grow healthy and strong.

Love seems as popular as ever it was; marriage less so. I wonder what difference it makes?

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, Vicar of St Barnabas, Emmer Green and Caversham Park

Who will be... my Valentine? by Glyn Picton



HOW ABOUT a stroll down Memory Lane? Whether boy or girl, we played safely in the streets where we lived in the early 1950s, with boys playing leapfrog, whilst the girls skipped and played hop scotch. All in the past now, just fond memories of childhood. But, just a minute, what was this St Valentine's Day I'd heard about behind the bike shed?

Ah yes, I do remember something happening around the beginning of February each year. As far as I recall, I first fell in love with a girl called Pauline who was in my class at the local infant school which I attended. We would have been about six years old at the time and I had never heard of St Valentine. I learned from my school friends behind the same bike shed that on St Valentine's Day you could send a card (without your name on) to someone you fancied. So I sketched out a crayon image of a heart on a crumpled exercise book page, and added a few kisses, making sure I had not added my name.

When darkness fell, I furtively pushed my very first home made 'Valentine card' through the letter box of Number 73 and scuttled my way through the dark street back home before their big retriever dog caught up with me.

Thus ended my very first attempt to win over a damsel who perhaps could have been a potential new wife in about fifteen years' time. Alas, it was not to be, because fate intervened in class 4B because she chose to marry my best friend Gordon when they were old enough. On reflection, I think she chose him because he told her he was going to have a flashy green Francis Barnett motor bike when he was old enough. I was still saving up for a new pump and lamp for my rusty old pushbike, so I gave up the chase.

So ended my brush with St Valentine — a disaster. In due course (well, to be honest when I was in my 30s), for two years I did have consecutive Valentine Cards from someone called 'Little Red Riding Hood'. This scarlet coated vamp gave up on me, probably thinking I might have been the Big Bad Wolf in disguise.

Ah well — better to have loved a little than not at all. I was never a good loser, so carry on St Valentine — I'm sure you'll do fine without my business! Also, I never did become a billionaire — Why? Because I blew the saved-up money I would have spent on getting married by adding a new bell to my rusty old bike! Big sigh. Cut.



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Cornershop Christmas Cheer



Pritpal Singh Malhotra and wife Kuljeet entertain friends on Christmas Day
all photos Pritpal Singh Malhotra

by Steve Mills

ON CHRISTMAS DAY, Pritpal Singh Malhotra – known to many of his customers as Paul – once again opened the doors of his convenience store and post office in Conisboro Avenue, Caversham Heights to welcome those who found themselves alone at Christmas.

“We had about 75 people at last year’s event,” said Pritpal, “And attendance this year was even better. I do think an event like this is helpful for those who find themselves without company at this special time of year. I don’t want anyone be alone at Christmas.”

As he did last year, Pritpal posted notices in advance, offering free tea, coffee, mulled wine and mince pies from 11:00 until 14:00. He and his wife, Kuljeet, were kept very busy serving food and drink while the guests chatted around a wood burner. As they munched on home-made cookies, the guests were very enthusiastic about the initiative, and some have even sent thank-you notes.

One of the store’s regular customers said afterwards, “Pritpal is a fantastic example of Sikh hospitality. He even delivered some refreshments to one of his elderly customers who was not well enough to come to the store herself. He is a real asset to the area.”

Scout Post 2024

by Elaine Rae

89th Christmas Post team

THANK YOU to everyone who posted their Christmas cards using the 89th Reading (Milestone Wood) Scout Christmas Post service. They have been running this service for over 40 years, and this year Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and



Dressed for the part!

Explorers delivered 1789 Christmas cards across Caversham, Caversham Heights, Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village.

The Scouts raised over £1,000 towards a new workshop for Branching Up. Branching Up provides a Day Service to adults who have varying levels of learning disability, giving them a chance to learn new skills and providing an opportunity to work as part of a team.

We are already planning for next Christmas, so keep an eye out for notices in November!



Up the garden path

photos 89th Reading Scouts

Don't miss an issue



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Our Kind Community

text and photo Caroline Gratrix



This month... Laura Bailey

Stories of kindness within our community. If you have something you contribute, please send it to editors@cavershambridge.org including the word 'kind' in the title.

LAURA BAILEY is our kind soul this month. Having spent most of her career in the wine industry, she made some big mid-life decisions, deciding to qualify as a personal trainer in 2023 and setting up her own private studio in the spring of 2024. She is passionate about women's physical and overall health, so as well as providing physical training, she offers nutritional coaching.

In addition to managing her own business and the normal life of a busy working Mum, Laura



Laura Bailey

is a Run Angel* and one of the two community leaders for This Woman Runs Reading. Laura, with her friend Jennie Jennings, currently head this community, which plans and leads a free, weekly running support group in Caversham.

This Woman Runs is a supportive online and in-person running community for women. It has over 200,000 members globally, and we are lucky to have a weekly community run in Caversham. The organisation was set up with the idea that no woman should feel it's a struggle to be active. Its mission is to provide a connected social community, where all women feel they belong, with opportunities to be more active, more often, at every stage of their lives

Laura assures me they are inclusive and supportive. Anyone who can run for 30 minutes at any pace is welcome. The group ethos is about encouraging women to move more and to feel better, with a focus on friendship, community, movement and being a safe place for women to run together. It is not about winning races!

If you are curious about running or looking to get back into it, download the free app, see below.

iOS – <https://tinyurl.com/twrios>
or Android – <https://tinyurl.com/twrandroid>
Or join the local Facebook group:
facebook.com/groups/thiswomanrunsreading
Website www.thiswomanruns.com
You can contact Laura by email at
welcomelaurabaileypersonaltraining.co.uk

*A Run Angel is a volunteer who has been This Woman Runs trained and will lead weekly runs.

MY MUSIC

by Edward Bradley

CAMP FIRE SONGS



Image by freepik

SOMETIMES ask myself why I can remember words of old popular songs and yet never the words of more modern ones. Maybe it's a sign of my age, but how is it I can still sing such 'classics' as *How much is that doggy in the window*, when I cannot remember a word of any Gary Barlow song. I guess it is only natural we should retain the music of the past, but some songs still stand out. My conjecture is, those of us who attended youth organisations still retain fond and lasting memories of the tunes we sang way back.

When I reached the age of eight, I joined the Wolf Cubs, and then later went on to the Boy Scouts. In those days we met in the Iron Room, a corrugated iron building that stood beside St John's Church. My leaders were first Mr Emmons with the cubs and then Fred 'Skipper' Knight in the scouts. These were great days, and I still have off pat the tunes we used to sing around the blazing campfires. Songs and actions still linger in my brain like *Ging Gang Goolie*, *If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands* and *Head, shoulders, knees and toes*.

...crest of the wave...

Those too were the days of Ralph Reader and the Gang Shows, and I vividly recall going to see one of them. Many people still remember *I'm riding along on the crest of wave* and *the sun is in the sky*.

It was much the same with the Boys' Brigade, when similar campfire songs were sung, but also some memorable religious ones such as *Lord bless the Boys' Brigade* and *Will your anchor hold in the storms of life*. More serious but just as enjoyable.

My wife was in the Woodcraft Folk, where there was hiking and camping and, of course, singing. The Woodcraft Folk was very international and sang a whole range of songs from abroad, and she still remembers word for word a song from Russia, which begins 'We are young and the girls in our village are as bright as the stars up above'. Then there were ones like *Old McDonald had a farm*, *Shenandoah* and *Waltzing Matilda*. Happy Days...

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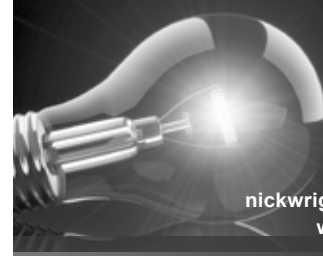
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by Alex Forbes



For your bookshelf...

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

I WAS DELIGHTED when the latest instalment in The Malvern Mysteries series by the fabulous Kate Wells landed on my reading pile. Death in the Hills is the fourth in the series set on Jude's farm in the Malvern Hills. In this mystery, Jude discovers a car accident involving a member of her walking group, who sadly dies from her injuries. Jude isn't sure the accident is quite what it seems, so starts looking into the person's past and those that interacted with her in the hours leading up to her death. This series from Kate Wells grows from strength to strength. There's an added tension in some of the scenes which feels different from her previous books, which I thoroughly enjoyed. With the foundations of the characters (and loveable farm animals) already in place, it really gives Kate the freedom to flex and develop her storylines alongside a strong mystery which kept me guessing until the end. We can't wait for the next in the series and to see what Jude and the gang get up to.

Sticking with the mystery theme, the children's book is the award-winning London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd. At 11.32am, Ted and his

sister, Kat, watch their cousin, Salim, board the London Eye. The pod rises from the ground, high above the city. At 12.02 the pod lands and the doors open. Everyone exits - everyone but Salim. The theories are spontaneous combustion, a kidnapping, or whether he is even alive. Even the police are baffled. This is a great book for readers aged 9-11. Kat and Ted follow a trail of clues across London, trying to solve this mystery. It had me gripped from the opening chapter and kept me guessing throughout. All royalties from the book go to the Siobhan Dowd Trust, which uses the money to bring the joy of reading to children who otherwise would not have access to books. This is a splendid book and one I completely enjoyed, and I know I would have loved it as a kid.

You'll see that we are starting to advertise events for Fourbears Fest taking place in May. Take a look on our website or pop into the shop to say hello. Kate Wells will be one of the guests at Progress Theatre.

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

www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk



The Bear loves a mystery!

photo A Forbes



Angie at the helm!

Retirement is on the Cards

text and photo by Phil Chatfield

AFTER MORE than sixteen years at Caversham's House of Cards shop, store manager, Angie Stargatt, has decided it's time to retire. Angie has been there for many of us over the years as we have looked for cards and, increasingly, gifts to celebrate festivities or to mark special events.

Angie grew up in Emmer Green, attending primary school there and then Highdown School. She worked in the local pre-school when her two sons were young, before moving to the Day-Lewis Pharmacy on Church Street. From there, she crossed the road to House of Cards more than 16 years ago, working 3 days a week. She then became branch manager, overseeing the move to the current premises in 2022.

Angie has always lived here and loves the 'village' feel in Caversham. She enjoys being able to walk to work and the ready access to Reading, walking through the riverside parks. When I asked what she would miss about work, she did not hesitate. "People: those I worked with and the customers. Over the years I have chatted with many customers, sharing both their joy and sadness, as they look for suitable cards. Some even brought flowers in for me when I lost my parents and my brother."

Angie's last day at the shop was 18 January and she is looking forward to a holiday, more walking and having time for dancing, something she enjoyed in the past. It will also be nice to know her weekends are free! She has no plans to move, so you may well see her around the village in the future.

House of Cards is a small local company with seven branches. Angie told me the business has adapted over the years, selling a wider range of cards reflecting changes in our society, for example for Hanukkah and Eid, and an increasing proportion of gifts. See www.houseofcards.co.uk for details.

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What's On

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to whatson@cavershambridge.org. We need to receive these no later than the 10th of the month before the event for inclusion in the printed paper. Later submissions can be included in our online What's On, which is updated regularly. To see what has been added check: cavershambridge.org/archives/category/around-caversham

Please note, we have moved the listing of baby and toddler groups to a new entry on page 14.

Caversham Library – 09:00-17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00-19:00 Thursday and 10:00-15:00 Saturday. Regular events include: *Rhymetimes for the little ones* – popular, so please book first! Every Tuesday at 10:15 and 11:15.

Games Club, Friday mornings 10:30-12:00. All adults welcome – refreshments!

Sit and Stitch 17:30-19:45, on 2nd and 4th Thursdays every month. Refreshments – come and be inspired. Tel: 0118 937 5103 or see

reading.gov.uk/leisure/all-libraries/caversham-library

Geo Café – *Artists Against Homelessness*, an ongoing and changing exhibition of art by local artists at Geo Café, Prospect Street. For each sale the artist makes a donation to Launchpad Reading. Open every day.

Mondays – **Caversham Park Bridge Club** – at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start. Phone Lin 0118 334 8195 for further information: bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

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

Wednesdays – **Caversham Writers** – Welcoming enthusiastic hobbyists and aspiring authors alike. Meeting weekly in person or via Zoom. Free to all. For details: [meetup.com/CavershamWriters](https://www.meetup.com/CavershamWriters) or [@CavershamWriter](https://twitter.com/CavershamWriter) on Twitter (X)

Wednesdays – **Light on the Hill Café** – 19:30-21:30 at Grace Church, 119 Peppard Road, RG4 8TR. A wellbeing café for adults 18+. Come as you are for tea and a chat.

Please see: www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Thursdays – **Friendly Over-60s Social Club** – 10:00-13:00 at Milestone Centre, Caversham Park Village. Hot lunch, quizzes and the chance to chat. Contact Cheryl at 07964 750182 or Trina at 07477 570541

Thursdays – **Weller Centre Craft Group** – 13:00-15:00. Be creative with friends. For details contact Pam Chatfield at pamch32@gmail.com Mobile 07986 905784 or Weller Centre 0118 947 5828

Thursdays – **New Caversham Heights Bridge Club** – 14:00 at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. For details contact Duncan Knight on 0118 947 5544 or email duncan.knight@googlemail.com

Thursdays – **Mapledurham Bridge Club** – 19:15 for 19:30 start. Mapledurham Pavilion, Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham. For more information see their website at

www.bridgewebs.com/mapledurham

or email lindasueclark@hotmail.co.uk

Fridays – **Warm Welcome Space** – 10:00-13:30 at Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, RG4 8HY. All welcome, just drop in for free refreshments, including hot soup from 12:00. Tel: 0118 954 5353 www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Saturdays – **Keep Caversham Tidy** – A local charity dedicated to eliminating litter and improving public spaces in Caversham. Free to join and no ongoing commitment. Families welcome! Email Keepcavershamtidy@gmail.com, FB **Keep Caversham Tidy**

Sundays – **Caversham Artisan & Farmers Market** – Caversham Precinct, 10:00-15:00. See www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Sundays – **Nordic Walk (or just walking)**. Free to all. Tel: 07931 754096 or email Pat at Wirralbird@hotmail.com

Sundays – **Readifolk Song and Music Club** – 20:00-22:30 in the Community Hall, Watlington House, RG1 4RA. £8 admission for performances, £3 on singing nights. See www.redifolk.co.uk

Tuesday 4 February – **Caversham Women's Institute** – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel: 0118 947 5176

Wednesday 5 February – **Cold Ash walk SU510703 5.3 miles** – 10:30. Start in recreation ground CP on Hermitage Road (nearest Post Code RG18 9JH). A varied walk to Grimsbury Castle (the site of an Iron Age 'multiple enclosure' Hill Fort) via Westrop Green before returning. Pang Valley Ramblers. One of a series of regular walks in the area – see <https://pvramblers.org.uk/walks-programme>

Wednesday 5 February – **Rosehill Ladies** – 14:00 at St Barnabas Hall, Emmer Green. Tel: Sue 0118 947 7570 or email suegreen@hotmail.com

Wednesday 5 February – **Assistance Dogs – Hearing Dogs for the Deaf**, a talk by Irene Rich – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. www.cavershamheights.org

Friday 7 February – **Bereavement Café** – 14:00-15:30 at St. Barnabas, Emmer Green. A safe place to find others who have had their own loss and can appreciate something of your experience. For further info Tel. Gill at 0118 947 8772

Friday 7 February – **Chazey Women's Institute** – 14:30 at St Andrew's Church Hall. Tel: 0118 947 0964, or e-mail rowena@primology.com

Saturday 8 February – **Concerts in Caversham Early Spring Concert with pianist Ariel Lanyi** – 19:30 St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7PL. Tickets: £26, £24, £18 under 16s free. For details and to book, visit www.concertsincaversham.co.uk/concerts/early-spring-concert-2

Wednesday 19 February – **The Winter Garden, a talk from Richard Barnes** – 19:30. Online via Zoom. Caversham Horticultural Society. For details, see www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk

Wednesday 19 February – **Brunel and the Great Western Railway, a talk by Lionel Williams** – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. www.cavershamheights.org

Monday 24 February – **The Questionable History of the TV Quiz Show, a talk by Jeff Evans** – 14.00 at Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. Reading u3a. Non-members welcome, free entry. See www.readingu3a.org.uk

Friday 28 February – **Un quiz de pub** – 19:30-21:30 at Church House, 59 Church Street, RG4 8AX. Test your general knowledge and have fun with a team pub quiz hosted by Carol Flett. Le Cercle Français, for those who are learning French, love France and for French nationals. Admission £5 welcome drink included. Email readingcerclefrancais@gmail.com Website www.readingfrenchcircle.co.uk

Advance notice for gardeners

Saturday 29 March – **Caversham Horticultural Society Spring Show** – Caversham Baptist Church Hall 13:00 to 15:00 See www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/spring-show for details including the show schedule.

CAN YOU HELP WITH OUR WHAT'S ON?

Could you spare a couple of hours a month to compile our What's On listing? We are looking for a volunteer who could gather information on events in our area and compile the listings. Access to the internet and Word essential. No fixed working hours, but the listing needs to be ready for publication by 10th of the month.

Contact Phil Chatfield at chair@cavershambridge.org for details

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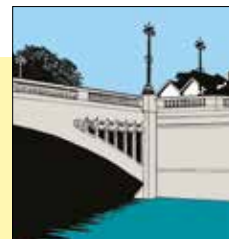
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CADRA Planning Bulletin

A summary of planning and transport matters affecting the RG4 area, provided by Caversham and District Residents Association www.cadra.org.uk

AN APPLICATION to build four detached houses on land at **Atterbury Gardens**, to the rear of 23-25 Richmond Road, (PL/24/1659) is causing a lot of concern locally. The site would be accessed via the narrow section of Woodford Close, raising concerns for pedestrian safety, bin collection and construction access. It is also a significant area for wildlife.

An application to replace and relocate the property at **Warren Creek**, The Warren has complex issues for flood risk and biodiversity (PL/24/1614).

On **Surley Row**, within the Conservation Area, there is an application to replace a row of conifers with an alternative and to remove a Beech Tree. (PL/25/0017).

62 Prospect Street is proposed for conversion to a 6-bedroom House of Multiple Occupation (HMO) and a studio flat with a single storey rear extension (PL/24/1475). As is often the case, the question of bin storage and refuse collection is hard to resolve.

The **Crowne Plaza Hotel** is now closed following sale to the Village Hotel Club. Extensive renovation is planned to provide 'stylish bedrooms', a Pub & Grill, meetings and events space, a Starbucks coffee shop and a Health and Wellness centre.

Following a water leak on **Kidmore Road**, a large sink hole has developed. Bus routes Pink 22 and Route 81 have been diverted.

The previous parking signs and lines on **Kidmore End Road** have still not been replaced, despite authorisation in May 2024.

See www.cadra.org.uk for links to these planning applications.

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Happy Wanderer's warning about

THE STINKING HELLEBORE

AN UNPLEASANT-SOUNDING name for a handsome and fascinating plant, which flowers early in the year, from February onwards. It can be encountered around Caversham, usually on chalk downland, and on the edges of woods.

I wrote about Hellebores in general back in 2006, with a photograph of the Green Hellebore, taken near Woodcote. Perhaps the first thing to say about the Stinking Hellebore is that you don't smell it unless you break or crush it, and even then, it doesn't smell particularly bad or pungent. However, the whole plant is poisonous, and the toxins can be absorbed through the skin, so please take care if, like me, you find it hard to resist the urge to feel and smell things.

...cocktail of dangerous drugs...

Last year I bought a book from a charity shop in Henley, with the title *Poisonous Plants in Britain – a Celebration*, by Chris Howkins. Writing this article gave me the incentive to dip into it, and the relevant pages listed a whole cocktail of dangerous drugs – glycosides, saponosides, heterosides, and cardenolide compounds among them. In the past, the plant was used to treat spots and boils, which gave it the name Fellon-Grass in northern England. It was used to treat intestinal worms in children, and Gilbert White, the naturalist and author of *The Natural History of Selborne*, wrote: 'Where it killed not the patient, it would certainly kill the worms; but the worst of it is, it will sometimes kill both.' Its use as a heart stimulant has been recorded. If the heart needed

to be slowed again, the antidote was Deadly Nightshade (!) which contains atropine.

The usual English name for this Hellebore was Bear's Foot, though there seems to be no obvious reason for it. Another name was Setterwort or Setter-Grass, coming from an old name for a thread made from a Hellebore root, which was drawn through the dewlaps of wheezing cattle, to help drain the respiratory tract – decidedly gruesome!

...a striking plant...

Despite the dire consequences of coming into contact with the Stinking Hellebore, it is a striking plant, and can grow to around three feet in height. The leaves are dark green and toothed, but the stems and flowers are a pale yellowish-green. The petals are sometimes purple edged. My photograph was taken on The Holies, the National Trust Nature Reserve above Streatley.

I had assumed that the name *Hellebore* was a translation of the name of this plant in Ancient Greek, but it seems this is not so. The experts seem undecided on what the word originally meant – maybe a food that did you harm, or a food that was eaten by fawns. Or maybe the word was first applied to a different plant which looked similar but wasn't one of this group of plants.

There's another group of plants, the Helleborines, a name signifying plants that are like Hellebores. While Hellebores are related to buttercups, Helleborines are orchids and, in Great Britain, we have nine species, some of which crop up in our area. Now there's a thought for another article later in the year!



The striking Stinking Hellebore photo Happy Wanderer

Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

WORD PUZZLE

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

Rhyme ———

Letter change

Meaning ———

tap

unlit

fastening

sword

melody

beer

worship

war

job

witch

park

pointer

sparrow

rear

deem

hat

(5)

(4)

(5)

(4)

(4)

(5)

(4)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(5)

(3)

(4)

(4)

(5)

Answers on page 14

EARLY YEARS

Can you find 22 words relating to babies in the grid?

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

- Baby

Babycarrier

Bath

Blanket

Bottle

Bouncy Chair

Carrycot

Changing Mat

Cot

Maternity

Midwife
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Mother

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Community Connections

This month Sarah Stuffsins speaks to Jo Deacon of BKRY



Jo (right) with colleague Candi (left)

photo S Stuffsins

JO DEACON opened BKRY in the narrow space between House of Cards and Superdrug in September 2024, but had been baking for the local community and corporate clients since 2018 out of a converted bedroom in her mother's house. All this while working as a supply teacher in local schools. Having outgrown this set up, she looked around for premises where she could run classes as well as sell her baked goods.

Jo had a clear vision and a good business plan so, although money was tight, she took on the lease of the premises and undertook the conversion to a shop downstairs and a kitchen and workshop space upstairs. The first day of business went very well, selling out in only 3 hours, but it is a measure of how close the margins are for small businesses to know she still had to borrow money to buy ingredients for the next day.

Since last September, Jo has forged ahead, selling not only cakes and hot drinks downstairs, but running workshops upstairs and welcoming in other professionals to run classes, such as wreath-making and sip and paint sessions. Plans are well in hand to offer much more in 2025.

How long have you lived in RG4?

Jo has lived in and around Caversham for most of her life and currently lives in the centre of the village, so she has just a short walk to work.

Where are your favourite places to eat, drink and shop in our area?

Jo loves an after-work drink in The Angel Bar. For a quick midweek dinner, you can't go wrong with The Moderation.

How do you think we can be eco-friendlier here?

As a business, we already do quite a lot, such as using recyclable packaging and local produce where possible. There should be more recycling of soft plastics in general. We would love to discover some better piping bags!

How would you strengthen our sense of community?

The team at BKRY love it when the local community gets together and think use should be made of local spaces to host different types of events to bring people together. They are keen to allow use of their upstairs space by other local professionals for events.

If you could bring anything here, such as an event, experience or a shop, what would it be?

The return to Caversham of some of the lost businesses, such as banks and a greengrocer.



Playtime by Kerry Hulbert

In our January edition, we looked at the role of outdoor play for children. This month we asked Kerry Hulbert, a counsellor and play therapist from Lower Caversham, to write about the overall importance of play for children.

PLAY IS THE universal language of childhood. It is central to a child's learning, helping children to find meaning and understanding in the world. Play is about pretending and imagining, and is recognised as one of the most important factors in the social, emotional and physical development of a child.

Play helps children to learn about negotiating and taking the initiative. They learn to face fears and solve problems, building confidence and ultimately reducing anxiety. It allows the discovery of new things; there are plans to be made and boundaries to be enforced. The more creative and imaginative the game the better!

When children engage in free play, without parental involvement, they learn important lessons about cause and effect, social skills and unstructured social interactions. They learn about taking turns, sharing and co-operating, and the all-important conflict resolution. Structure and rules are created and there is opportunity for exploration and experimentation, and for leadership and problem-solving skills to be honed and developed.

In a world of multi-scheduled and organised activities, it has never been more important for parents to make time for free play. A time for children to make their own choices, where play can be loud, messy or quiet. A time when adult hats

are removed and for recognising what may seem unrealistic to an adult may be an important way for a child to develop creativity and independence. And when there is opportunity to play with your children, release your inner child and get stuck in, remembering to play alongside your child, allowing them to lead and tell you what to do, no matter how difficult this feels!

As parents, consider trading screen time for outdoor play for all members of the family. The sensory experience of the natural world provides a nurturing environment for the physical, cognitive, social and emotional growth of a child, and is nature's way of allowing children (and adults!) to practice skills needed to enjoy a productive, confident and meaningful life.

Let's find ways to bring a little more play into the world!

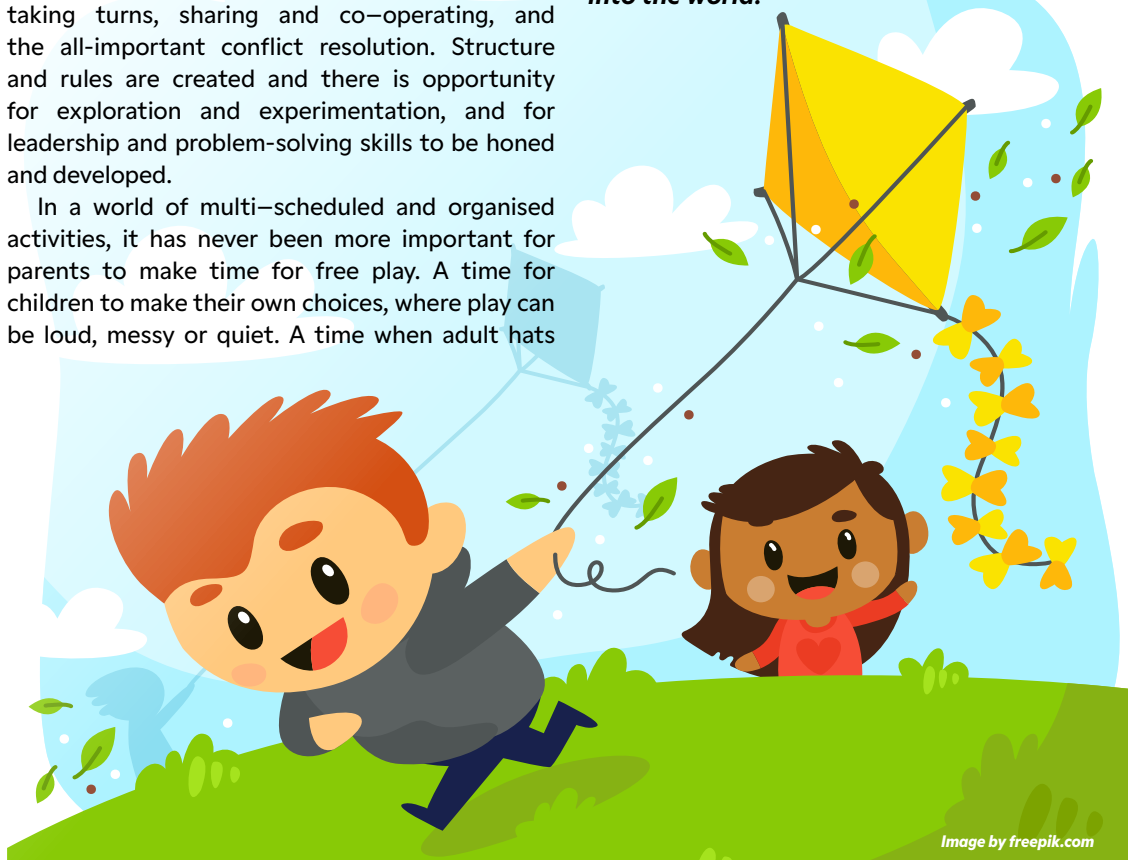


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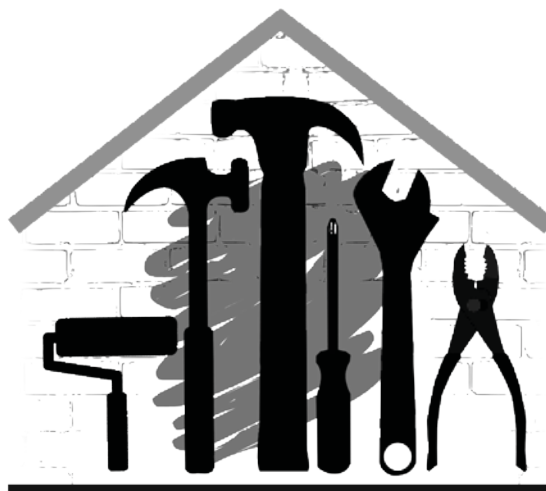
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Home for Bees

SOLITARY BEES use hollow plant stems or holes in the ground to protect developing larvae and provide shelter from bad weather.

There are many bee hotels for sale at garden centres or online but, however beautiful the design, make sure it is suitable for bees! The length of the tubes should be greater than 100mm (preferably 150), the diameter of the holes between 2-10mm, and the design should provide protection from rain with either a roof overhang, or the tube entrances recessed into the box, or the tubes sloping downwards at the entrance. Site the bee hotel at least one metre above ground level and facing south-east to east so any sheltering bees can warm up in the mornings before flight.

Alternatively, make your own. Any open ended container can be stuffed with hollow twigs and stems: a

plastic bottle with ends cut off, a length of drainpipe or a beautiful wooden box made from offcuts (not treated wood). It's a great use of bamboo, particularly if you need to prevent it from rampaging around the garden, or have slender ends left over after harvesting for garden canes. Be sure to cut your lengths from between the nodes, as the hollow tube is blocked at each node (or better still cut the bamboo so there is a node at one end to form the back of the tube, saving the bee a little work).

Expect to replace the tubes every two years to avoid mould and disease, or give the bee hotel a good scrub with very hot water. Most solitary bees which use bee hotels will overwinter as an egg or larva and the adult will have provided the necessary food and blocked the end of the tube. Do any refurbishment of the box after the tubes are unblocked in the spring, when the new adults emerge.



Bottle bee home

photo G Grubb

Stop smoking!

by John Lyons

Following confused messages in December about new smoke control regulations, we asked John Lyons of Fireplace Magic, in Prospect Street, if he could clarify the rules for our readers.

IN A DRIVE to improve air quality in the Reading area, Reading Borough Council has introduced new legislation from 1 December 2024 which designates the entire borough as a Smoke Control Area. However, this does not mean you cannot still enjoy a solid fuel fire in your home. The Act requires that you burn only an authorised manufactured smokeless fuel, such as smokeless coal, or install a DEFRA* exempted appliance which can legally burn unauthorised fuels such as wood. Under the new regulations, the council can issue a financial penalty of up to £300 for the emission of smoke from a chimney in the Smoke Control Area.

A DEFRA Smoke Exempt appliance is a wood-burning

stove that has been rigorously tested and passed the government's criteria for emission levels. They are specifically designed to keep the smoke in the fire box for longer and at higher temperatures, resulting in lower emissions into the flue and more heat being released into the room. All newly-manufactured stoves are also more efficient than both open fires and older model stoves, meaning less fuel is required to produce the same amount of heat.

Using an approved appliance means cleaner burning, and this is aided by regular maintenance, such as chimney sweeping, stove servicing and using the correct fuel. Logs purchased for burning in an approved stove should bear the 'Ready to Burn' logo, as these will have a moisture content of less than 20%, ensuring efficient burning.

Any steps that can be taken to ensure solid fuel is burnt more efficiently, and with fewer emissions, are good news for the Reading area and will help to provide a healthier environment for local residents.

*DEFRA – Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

...the council can issue a financial penalty of up to £300 for the emission of smoke from a chimney in the Smoke Control Area.



John Lyons

photo Fireplace Magic



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www.concertsincaversham.co.uk/concerts/early-spring-concert-2

Tickets also available from the Caversham Art Gallery and Picture Framers on Church Street.

The Christmas Concert was completely sold out a whole week in advance – to avoid disappointment book early!



Les Cooper



Sweet Pea seedlings

photo F Smith

Construction time

ONE THING we are always told by the garden 'experts' is to ensure we have height in our gardens. They are quite right, a few clematis, a patch of climbing sweet peas and a rambling rose can make a great difference to the look of your garden. The other day I happened to read a garden magazine which recommended building a gazebo. Actually, they suggested buying one. Call me Scrooge if you like, but I don't fancy paying a fortune for a gazebo in my small garden. Anyway, for someone who always came last in the woodworking class at school, building my own is a non-starter.

Some years ago, I bought a batch of wooden slats from a DIY store and nailed them together to construct a small wooden fence with a gateway. I managed to cut a large circle in the top half of the gate and painted the whole wonder-work light blue. For some reason we called it our 'Moon gate' and hey presto success. It did look good but did not survive many years; a few strong winds and my boredom probably finished it off. And that is the total of my home-made climbing frame construction efforts...

Moving on to the present day, I am going to buy and erect an arch and one or two frames for my clematis to climb. It appears to me our current wet weather suits clematis. Am I right in thinking this, or have I now put a curse on the weather, resulting in a drought? If they survive the winter, I have at least six plants. This means I need to buy some cheap metal frames. These are quite flimsy and never last very long, but gardens are forever changing anyway. Clematis needs something to cling to, so a covering of plastic netting is needed. These frames, usually made in China, have a tiny instruction pamphlet containing a multitude of small, 'helpful' drawings. With my wife's assistance, I usually manage construction, despite the instructions, with only a few 'take it apart and start again' moments and the occasional swear word.

In October I sowed a packet of sweet peas and every single one came up. As a result, I must now find frames for them to climb on. When the plants have survived the winter I just haven't the heart to throw any seedlings away. Hence I have to find frames for them too. Why do we gardeners keep making work for ourselves?

Making, mending ...and lend by Elestr Lee

THIS YEAR will mark important milestones for two local community ventures – it is a decade since rLab moved into its premises in Weldale Street, just off Caversham Road, back in 2015, while the Library of Things in Southview Park will be celebrating its first year this February.

The idea of creating a space for makers and fixers, sharing equipment one person alone can't justify or afford has been spreading globally for some time. In Reading the 'hackspace' idea has evolved, attracting increasing numbers, and a dedicated space was needed. And for the past ten years an industrial unit in Weldale Street has proved the perfect location for an amazing array of basic craft tools to hi-tech equipment which members can use.

"We now have around 260 members, who pay a monthly contribution of £25," explained director Najey Rifal. "Once people are signed up, the space is available 24/7. Everyone has an access card, which allows you to use machines you have been inducted on."

The emphasis is on members of rLab coming together and sharing their knowledge and expertise with each other. "People won't have thought of laser cutting," said Mark Binns, business director of rLab. "But when they see how easy it is, they want to do it too! We have the full range of tools, from chisels, planes and saws to hi-tech. You are always going to need to learn the basics, but people who come here are hobbyists. And making, fixing and re-purposing is also very therapeutic."

Director Stuart Ward is also now involved

in the Library of Things, which opened in Caversham a year ago this month. "The idea is that people often need tools, perhaps to do some DIY, decorating or gardening, which once used may not be needed again for quite some time. People pay an annual subscription of £25 per year (or whatever they can afford), so they can borrow what they need, then return them, rather than buy. Everything we lend has been donated."

Find out more:

rLab.org.uk

Visit on open nights, from 19:00, third Wednesday of each month

Reading Library of Things:
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photo E Lee

Stuart Ward (left) and Mark Binns, both directors of rLab

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Go Sing Chinese Takeaway

IN MY MEMORY there has been a Chinese Takeaway on the corner of Prospect Street and Chester Street for many years. I can remember going there while our children were little, when we were too tired to cook and wanted something special as a treat. Today Thai dishes have been added to the extensive menu of essentially Chinese cuisine, and food can be delivered to your home as well as taken away.

On the wall above the Go Sing Takeaway at number 30 Prospect Street is evidence of the building's history – a large advertisement hand painted onto the brickwork which, after many decades, is still clear today and is featured in a number of old photographs and views of Prospect Street. The main sign advertises 'Corn, Hay, Straw, Meal, Offal, etc.' and another sign over the door reads 'Patent Malt Bread', clearly referring to previous businesses that occupied the building. A photograph in the Reading Local Studies Library, probably dating from the early 1900s, shows number 30 in detail. Written on a frieze above the windows is 'Family Bakers' and you can just make out the name 'Turner' over the door.

...changed career...

While searching online, I came across an ancestry website, Mahoganybox.net, which had a history of the 'Caversham Turners', and many members of the family going back generations were Master Bakers. Charles Turner was born in Caversham in 1819 and, after working as a carpenter in Reading, he changed career to become a baker following in his father's footsteps. In the early 1850s, Charles moved

A 'fly' was a one-horse, two-wheeled light carriage, which the proprietor would hire out, often with a driver...

his family to Caversham and set up a bakery. The 1861 census records that Charles was living in Prospect Street with his wife, four children, a niece and bakery servant, George Pitts, aged 19. As well as the bakery, Charles had other business interests – as a Corn Merchant, supplying animal feed, which explains the wording of the painted advertisement, and as a 'Fly proprietor'. A 'fly' was a one-horse, two-wheeled light carriage, which the proprietor would hire out, often with a driver.

Charles Junior, the eldest son, was also a baker and, by the census of 1881, had moved his family (he had six children) into the accommodation above the shop and had taken over the business from his father. He carried on the business until he died in 1901. Probably some of his children continued to work in the shop, but I could not find out when 'Turners' finally closed its doors. However, the hand painted advertisement is still there to remind us of the past.

This picture is featured in Janina's illustrated book, **A stroll through Caversham** which is available at Fourbears Books on Prospect Street.



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

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Creative CAVERSHAM



Writing from the heart

A passion for words and writing has always driven **Rebecca Netley** ...resulting in two gothic historical novels being published by Penguin Michael Joseph. *The Whistling*, which appeared in 2021, was adapted into a play last year, and performed at the Mill at Sonning. **Elestr Lee** enjoyed a fireside chat with the author

“‘VE ALWAYS written, and there are a lot of writers in my family,” Rebecca told me when we met just before Christmas. “I always loved writing short stories, lyrics for songs as well as poetry. I have a passion for words, and how words come together. When I was in my 20s, I won a couple of short story competitions. But after I married and

the children came along, I didn’t have the time and stopped writing. I was busy doing the accounts for my husband’s business, so I decided to take on an accountancy course – I thought that the skills I had learned could come in useful – but I absolutely hated it!

“I gave up the course and sat down for three to four months to write a thriller. I

managed to finish it, and it was published by a small publishing company, which has sadly since closed.

“The whole experience gave me the confidence to go on writing. I wanted to move on to a bigger publisher, but I had learned that they don’t accept manuscripts, you must be taken on by an agent. To get an agent you need to submit three chapters and a synopsis of your novel – a lot of writers do up to 60 submissions. You must be able to deal with a lot of rejection letters. Tenacity is your greatest strength!”

Rebecca changed tack from writing thrillers to the gothic historical genre. “When I had my children, I found I didn’t want to read long, literary novels, but I was drawn to thrillers. I really got the structure, and thought ‘I could do that!’ In fact, I thoroughly enjoyed writing my first novel, even though it had to be edited heavily – but the whole experience whetted my appetite, and I wanted to write another novel.

“I knew that the thriller market was flooded, however there was a revival of interest in gothic historical fiction. Writing a gothic story had more potential to be noticed – the idea and premise of my story came to me, and an agent was interested!”

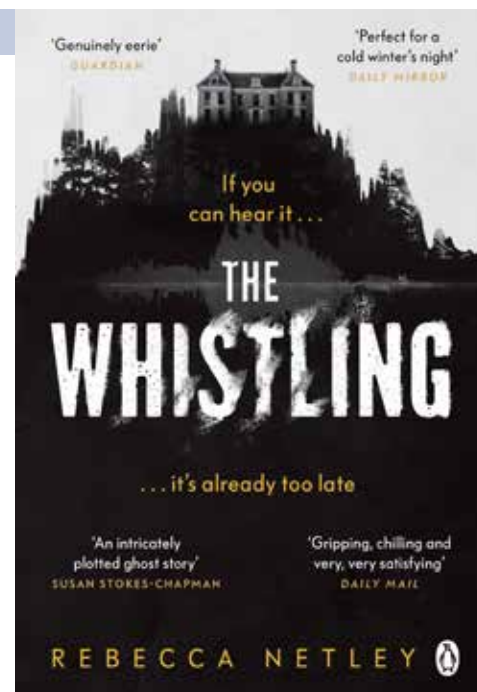
In fact, Rebecca’s agent got her a two-book deal with Penguin Michael Joseph. “*The Whistling* was published in 2021, and it has done very well, being translated into five languages, and there is also a deal for it to appear in Canada. My second for Penguin, *The Black Feathers*, set on the Yorkshire moors, was published in October 2023.”

...sense of isolation...

Rebecca candidly describes herself as a ‘chaotic’ writer, but her fascination lies in the atmosphere of the places where her novels are set. “My husband Hugh and I used to do a lot of wild walking. We went to Rum, a tiny island off the Inner Hebrides, and it was an incredible experience. We have also been walking in Pembroke and Cornwall in February, during the winter – I am inspired by the dramatic locations, the sense of isolation and wildness.”

Fans of Rebecca’s novels are drawn to the spooky atmosphere she creates, and *The Whistling*, set on the remote Scottish island of Skelthsea in 1860, has won the Exeter Prize and been longlisted for the Michael Ondaatje Prize, which is awarded to novels which ‘invoke the spirit of a place’.

Last autumn *The Whistling* was adapted into a play and produced at The Mill at Sonning. “Adam Rolston, who is co-artistic director at The Mill, had wanted to commission a new play. He had read my



The *Whistling* author Rebecca (left) is now working on a contemporary ghost novel
portrait photo Frances Sutton;
cover Penguin Michael Joseph

“...You must be able to deal with a lot of rejection letters. Tenacity is your greatest strength!”

book but had no idea I was local – it was a complete coincidence!

“He approached my agent, and once it was all agreed, he found two scriptwriters who adapted my novel into a play, as well as a composer who created the music, then of course all the actors... I was completely blown away when I saw it!”

After *The Black Feathers* Rebecca was approached to write a third gothic historical novel, but instead she is now working on a contemporary ghost story. “The setting of the story is the most important consideration for me,” Rebecca explained. “The setting opens the door to the characters I create. I do think it is important to know what places feel/taste/smell like. Most importantly, I must write what’s in my heart. Each book will take at least a year to write – I am working to get the next one done!

“It is something I have to do. I write every day, for as long as I can – until I can’t write any more.”

Find out more:

The Whistling
The Black Feathers, both by
Rebecca Netley, published by Penguin
Michael Joseph, available from
Four Bears Bookshop



photos Pamela Raith

Rebecca was thrilled when her novel was adapted and staged at the Mill at Sonning (above and right)



Building bridges

– one student, one family, one conversation at a time



by Heather Jephcote

FOR NEARLY 50 years, students from Germany have been travelling to Reading to improve their English and experience British culture in a truly unique way—by staying with local host families for between 5-14 days. It's not just about learning a language - it's about living it! These trips have been organised by Sutherland Travels, a German company founded by Dennis Sutherland. It all started with a newspaper ad in The Times, as a result of which Dennis moved to Germany. He and his wife Brigitte organized the first language trip back in 1976.

Students often say their host families are the best part of the trip. They get to practise English in natural, everyday situations—discussing plans for the day over breakfast, chatting about their adventures during family meals, or reflecting on shared experiences. Fully immersed in British life, these small, meaningful interactions help build confidence and make the language come alive in ways they never imagined.

But hosting isn't just rewarding for the students; it's a transformative experience for families too. Host siblings have the chance to learn about different cultures, inspiring curiosity about new

languages and traditions. Sutherland Travels values the work of hosts, knowing the effort they put into providing a welcoming atmosphere, so families receive compensation for hosting and are supported by experienced Sutherland team leaders throughout the process.

Families who have hosted through the scheme often speak of the joy in seeing students grow in confidence while forging connections across cultures. It's a wonderful way to bring the world into your home and to make a genuine difference in a young person's life.

Reading may have changed significantly over the past 50 years, but its sense of community remains as welcoming as ever, so the company and their many students would like to take this opportunity to thank the many local families who have hosted over the years.

Sutherland Travels is always looking for new host families so, if you think this might be for you, call their representative, Heather on 07481 457964 or email hostfamilies@sutherland-travels.de to find out more. Whether you've hosted before or are considering it for the first time, they make joining this inclusive network straightforward and rewarding. Hosting a student could mark the start of an unforgettable journey—for your family and for them.

Uncover Caversham's Gems with the My Local Marketer Podcast by Maria Lloyd

WHEN WAS THE last time you tried something new in your local area? For example, visited a new independent shop or local group? If you have, that's great! Do get in touch with me to let me know what you tried and your thoughts. If you haven't, then I'm going to save you time and give you a way to keep up with local activities and businesses which will work around your hectic schedule. Who knows, you may even come across something you want to try for yourself.

My solution is the *My Local Marketer* podcast, which I set up in July 2024. A podcast is a series of audio episodes on a theme, which you can listen to by downloading or streaming online. They're very handy if you want to learn or be entertained on the go while you're commuting or doing chores. Nowadays you can find a podcast series on almost anything which interests you. The *My Local Marketer* Podcast is your one-stop shop to discover hidden gems in Caversham and Reading. A new episode is published every Thursday, each highlighting a wonderful independent business, a group, or people in and around Caversham. It also aims to share what they've learned to help others develop their own skills and businesses.

Caversham businesses and groups interviewed so far include Damian from Pop Classics, Alex from Fourbears Books, Meena from Angel Bar, Caroline and Liz from Walk Works, and Adrian from Caversham Writers.

You can listen to the episodes on your preferred podcast platform, or on the landing page for each episode, which can be found on the following web page: <https://mylocalmarketer.co.uk/mlm-podcast/>

If you have ideas for other independent businesses or groups you'd like to see featured, or if you have any questions, please do feel free to email me at maria@mylocalmarketer.co.uk

In the meantime, happy exploring!



Maria and Damian

photo M Lloyd



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First Impressions Matter *by Laura Harmsworth*

February Job Search Boost:

EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



FEBRUARY OFFERS unique opportunities for job seekers, so here are some tips on how to align your job search with this month's key events:

National Apprenticeship Week (10-16 February 2025)

This major event highlights the value of apprenticeships across industries. Attend local events, explore apprenticeship job boards, and connect with training providers. Even if you're not seeking an apprenticeship, use the week as motivation to explore training opportunities in your field.

<https://www.amazingapprenticeships.com/naw/>

Valentine's Day: Love Your Career

- Use Valentine's Day as a reminder to pursue work you're passionate about. Reflect on roles that excite you.
- Update your CV to showcase projects you've loved, and that made a significant impact.
- Apply for roles that align with your values and strengths.

Financial Year-End Hiring Push

Employers often hire before the financial year ends in April. Tailor your CV to highlight relevant skills and achievements. Follow up on earlier applications to stay top of mind.

Upskill and Learn

Consider taking a short course to boost your employability. Online platforms like LinkedIn Learning and FutureLearn offer free courses to develop in-demand skills, making your CV stand out.

Seasonal Networking Opportunities

Check for industry events, expos, and webinars happening in February. Attend them in person or virtually, then follow up with connections on LinkedIn to build professional relationships.

Here are some places to look for opportunities:

- Websites like Eventbrite and Meetup list professional and industry-specific events, including job fairs, workshops, and networking evenings.
- Check your industry's professional associations or governing bodies for events, conferences, and webinars.
- Use LinkedIn's event search feature to find webinars, virtual career expos, and workshops hosted by companies or career coaches.
- If you're a student or recent graduate, university career services often advertise career fairs and employer presentations.
- The UK's National Careers Service lists government-supported career events and training sessions.
- Many local job centres and libraries run free career workshops, CV-writing sessions, and employer meetups.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

on LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

Website: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email: contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right from the top)

strap, dark, chord, arrow, cord, dart, core, **heart**, hart, adore, stag, revere, deer, chore, hag.



The Caversham Bridge is a community newspaper produced by Caversham Bridge News Ltd

Future editions:

Contributions for the March issue

should be submitted by 1 February and for the April edition by 1 March.

These should be emailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy

are 1 February for the March issue and 1 March for the April issue.

These should be emailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org

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For the youngest members of our community

LISTED BELOW are regular term-time events for toddlers, babies and their carers.

All are free of charge, although donations towards costs are welcome.

Mondays – Little Lambs and You – Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, Caversham RG4 8HY 10:00-11:30. Baby and toddler group. Numbers are limited, so there is an online booking system. See www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk/Groups/382970/Little_Lambs.aspx

Mondays – Busy Bees – Parish Centre, St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA – 14:00-15:00, including half terms. Contact Debbie children@saintbarnabas.org.uk for more information

Tuesdays – Babies and Toddlers – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, RG4 8EB. 10:00 - 11:30. Refreshments available. All welcome. cavershammethodist.org.uk/baby-toddler-group

Tuesdays – St. John's Baby and Toddler Group – Caversham Hall, St. John's Road, RG4 5AN. 09:30 - 11:00. All welcome.

Thursdays – Toddler Thursday – St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA. 8:45-10:00. Friendly group for preschoolers and parents/carers, refreshments available. www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

Thursdays – Baby Massage with midwife Katie – 12:15-12:55 at the Weller Centre during term times. Suitable for babies from 6 weeks to crawling. 50p donation towards costs, refreshments available.

Fridays – Tiddlers for Babies and Toddlers – St Andrew's Church, Albert Road. Caversham Heights. RG4 7PL. 9:30-11:00. All are welcome, refreshments available. www.facebook.com/groups/209815529592564

Fridays – Baby and Toddler Group – Church House, Church Road, Caversham, RG4 8AX. 9:30 – 11:00. Step-free access at the back. See www.ctmparish.org.uk/stpeter for details

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Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Eight Dimensions of Wellness

THERE ARE eight dimensions of wellness which work together and impact directly on our health. Too much or too little focus on any one of these can cause adverse effects on the body. They are:

1. Physical Wellness:

This involves having a healthy body and good health habits, including nutrition, sleep and exercise. It refers to taking care of our physical body. Examples of beneficial behaviour could include not sitting for long periods of time - perhaps taking a standing break every hour and meal-prepping healthy meals and snacks, packing a lunch instead of eating out. Or even booking a yoga class!

2. Social Wellness

Social wellness refers to relationships with family, friends, co-workers and the community. This allows us to have an interest and concern for the needs of others. However, social interactions look different for everyone. An extrovert

might need eight hours of socializing a day while, for an introvert, two hours of socializing might be enough before exhaustion hits.

3. Emotional Wellness:

As the name suggests, emotional wellness is the ability to express feelings, adjust to emotional challenges, cope with stress and actively enjoy life. In this dimension, it is important to understand our personal strengths as well as what we can do to improve ourselves with goals and the help of others.

4. Spiritual Wellness:

Spiritual health refers to our belief system about the world or universe and our purpose. So why is it a part of our health? Simply put, if we're in a place of mistrust or chaos about the world or our role in it, it can cause stress. The concept of spiritual wellness can be difficult to grasp and takes time to establish.

5. Intellectual Wellness:

This dimension aims to ensure our brain is active and constantly expanding its perspective. Making time for creativity and learning can be important in reducing stress, increasing cognition, and staying happy and fulfilled. In terms of wellness, this can look like reading books, learning an instrument, taking courses, having deep conversations, or gaining a qualification.

6. Occupational Wellness:

Occupational (or vocational) wellness involves participating in meaningful and purposeful activities such as work and education. It should involve personal satisfaction and enrichment from our work. Improving occupational health may mean finding a new job, or doing less work and spending more time with family. Work/life balance is key!

7. Financial Wellness:

Often tied to stress, this is an important aspect of our daily lives. There are many opinions on what is considered to be financially well, but it depends on what our goals are. Financial wellness involves things like savings, debt and income, as well as our personal understanding of our financial situation and aspirations.

8. Environment Wellness:

This is about access to clean air, food and water, as well as preserving the areas in which we live, learn, and work. It refers to the sense of safety and comfort, and connection with our physical surroundings.

Local Clergy and Church Services

ANGLICAN

Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry

St Margaret, St Peter, St John

Rev'd Mike Smith,

The Rectory, 20 Church Rd, Caversham RG4 7AD
Tel: 0118 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810
penny@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Rachel Ross Smith Tel: 07884 371688
rachel@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Dr Catherine Radcliffe Tel: 07740 475697
catherine@ctmparish.org.uk

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

Current services

St Margaret's Church

Mapledurham – 11:15. 1st, 2nd, 4th Sunday Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday Service of the Word.

St Peter's Church

1st Sunday of the month: 9.30 All Age Service of the Word, with music group and choir
18.30 Holy Communion with prayers for healing, with choir
2nd and 4th Sundays: 8.00 said BCP Holy Communion
9.30 Holy Communion with choir and activities for young people, primary and secondary age
3rd Sunday: 9.30 All Age Holy Communion in a shorter format, with choir – 18.30 Choral Evensong
Wednesday: 9.30 said Holy Communion
All services live streamed on Zoom. For Zoom details go to www.ctmparish.org.uk/services/online/

St John's Church

Gosbrook Road Sunday services
8:00 Online CTM Youtube channel (stays available to watch anytime)
9:30 1st and 3rd Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd All Age Worship, 4th Service of the Word
Sunday Club for children on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

St Andrew's

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.
Tel: 0118 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current services

St Andrew's weekly services are Sundays at 8:00 and 10:00. The 10:00 is also livestreamed on the St Andrew's YouTube channel. Prayer Book Communion at 11.30 on the first Sunday of each month. More info on the parish website. www.standrewscaversham.org/services
Compline: 8.30 on Mondays during BST (in church)

St Barnabas, Emmer Green and Caversham Park

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk
Church Office Tel: 0118 947 5214

Current Services

Sundays: 8:00 BCP Holy Communion (1st Sunday only)
9:30 Parish Communion (Service of the Word on 2nd Sunday)
11:15 All Age Worship (Café Church or Family Communion)
Wednesdays: 10:30 Midweek Communion
Morning Prayer: Tuesdays 8:30 in church; Mon/Weds/Thurs 8:00. online at
www.facebook.com/StBarnabasEmmerGreen/live_videos
Full details at www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church Caversham

Rev'd Jeongsook Kim Tel: 0118 947 2223
Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592
www.cavershammethodist.org.uk

Current services

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Highmoor Road
Sunday – 10.30 – Also available on YouTube.

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

Current services: Sunday – 10:30
New Testament Church of God

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson
Tel: 0118 946 3009

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

United Reformed Church, Caversham Park

Contact: Dr Alison Johnston
Tel: 0118 947 5152 www.cavershamparkurc.com

Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube
Details on their web site at:
<https://cpurc.org.uk/live-stream>

BAPTIST CHURCH

Caversham Baptist Church

Pastor: Colin Baker
Church office Tel: 0118 954 5353
Email: secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Current services

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

Grace Church (formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Elders Nick King and David Steed
Tel: 0118 947 4529 www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk
See their web site for details:
www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Riverside Church (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne

Fr Joe McLoughlin, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue
Tel: 0118 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for services at:
www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

St Michael, Sonning Common

(including Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village)
Parish Deacon Brian Theobald, St Michael's,
Sonning Common – Tel: 0118 972 3418
<http://saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk>

For details of the services being held at each of our churches, please visit their respective websites (on this page) or the Churches Together in Caversham website www.cavershamchurch.org



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