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Caversham Bridge

No 721

www.cavershambridge.org

March 2025

Building our community

text and photos George Grubb

AS PART of an effort to build a sense of community in our area, we are endeavouring this month to promote local businesses. The Caversham Bridge has included advertisements for local businesses since its foundation in 1964. Indeed, these have been vital in funding the production of the paper - there are more than 600 local businesses in our area!

These days, with ready access to the internet, it is all too easy to look online for goods and services. However, by shopping locally, you help keep employment and money in the community. And you will often find helpful advice and a friendly smile! For example, Neil and Carl at Caversham Homecrafts, or Rob and his team at AW Cycles, will usually be able help you solve a problem.

We have an extraordinary range of independent local businesses in Emmer Green and Caversham, from builders, plumbers and electricians, to hair salons and Yoga and Pilates instructors. You can eat your way around the globe with Chinese, Italian, Thai, Persian and many more cuisines available, as well as traditional pub fare in our local hostelrys. We have plenty of cafés and

bars for a coffee and cake, from The Bite Café in Emmer Green to The Collective on Church Road. We really are spoiled for choice.

We also have locally based financial services, such as Templar Estate Management, estate agents and furniture shops such as House of Pine and Oak (or HOPO), and a hi-fi shop, Sevenoaks Sound and Vision! Many of these businesses advertise with us, so please do mention the Caversham Bridge if you are using them.

...recently updated...

Caversham Traders' Association exists to support local businesses of all kinds, sharing experiences, news and information around the members. They have recently updated their website under the name Visit Caversham (www.visitcaversham.co.uk). Here you will find a directory of local companies with everything from animals and pets to wedding services! They also have a Facebook page where you can keep up with local events www.facebook.com/Visitcaversham.

So, before pressing the 'pay' button for an online purchase, or travelling further afield for services or goods, consider our local businesses and help to support our wider community.



The Bite Café, Emmer Green



The Collective, Church Road, Caversham



*I love to see the daffodils,
All golden in the sun,
They dance and sway so gracefully,
A sight for everyone.*

John Clare

Spring Marches On

text and photo Phil Chatfield

MARCH 1 is St David's Day (Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Sant in Welsh), so we wish our Welsh readers all the best for their celebrations. This month's Caversham Bridge has a focus on supporting local businesses (see above), with a four-page advertising supplement featuring some of our many independent businesses (pages 9 to 12), with a particular focus on Prospect Street. However, you will also find plenty more to read!

Our regular contributors include Happy Wanderer with a look back at The Caversham Bridge Hotel (p7), and Roslyn Weaver, who considers taking a break (p14). Alex Forbes from Fourbears Books reviews the latest Marlow Murder Club novel, alongside a mystery set in Ancient Egypt aimed at readers aged 9+. Our Creative Caversham subject is artist Christabel Forbes, who moved to Caversham about 18 months ago (p8), and the Fireplace Magic shop is the subject of our Local Scene painting this month (p11).

Les Cooper encourages us to prepare for

planting our vegetables (p14), and we have the welcome return of Perry Walker, with some timely skin care advice (p18). There are reports from two local schools, with St Anne's Catholic Primary School marking Holocaust Memorial Day (p5), and St Martin's Catholic Primary cutting the ribbon on their new outdoor classroom (p13).

Other regular features include Ami Roy's Wellbeing thoughts (p19), our Ecotip for the month on ground nesting bees (p13), and CV advice from Laura Harmsworth (p17). Two local sports clubs report on their charity fundraising (p15) and, on the same page, we have information on Launchpad's Pancake Day fundraiser.

We hope you enjoy the paper. The £7 annual subscription is due this month and we thank those of you who have paid already. For full payment details see page 3.

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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Light, Life, Love



Talking Point

by
David Steed

WE ARRIVE AT the season of Lent on 5 March, and it is good to consider giving things up for Lent, especially those that will assist your physical health, including eating and drinking less. It is also important to take care of our mental health, taking more time to find the rhythms in life and setting aside time for rest and relaxation.

We need to consider our spiritual health too. Perhaps to linger more in the word of God and meditate on it. To pray all kinds of prayers for the world, this country, the church, for those in need, and for ourselves, our hopes and dreams. Let's care for one another and seek intimacy with God.

I believe one of the best books in the Bible to cultivate intimacy is St John's Gospel. This book contains several rich themes. Themes of LIGHT, much needed in the dark world we live in with war in Ukraine, the Middle East and Sudan. Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world'. What is the meaning of LIFE? A question many ask, perhaps increasingly so. Jesus said, 'I have come that you might have life – life in all its fullness'. LOVE for one another, for the world, much needed amongst families, regions and countries. Let us supremely seek the love of God. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life'.

Each of these themes of light, life and love contained in John's Gospel are set out in greater detail in his letters, especially the first. They build on the deep relationship the members of the Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have with each other. We too can enter into that relationship through our union with Christ, as we put our faith and trust in Him. As we enter the season of Lent, perhaps take time to read the whole of St John's gospel over the 40 days, maybe half of one of the twenty chapters a day. It is quite deep, but don't be put off by one evangelical scholar's observation that once he had preached through the whole book he felt he didn't really understand it.

...dwell on the miracles...

So, starting with the prologue that we read at Christmas, (here quoting from the Message) 'The word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood', dwell on the miracles and teaching of Jesus to His passion, crucifixion and resurrection, and I believe it will draw us close and into deep intimacy with Him in preparation for Easter.

And enjoy the hot cross buns and Easter eggs when they arrive!

David Steed
Elder at Grace Church Caversham



Claire and Jodie

Our Kind Community

text and photo Caroline Gratrix

Celebrating Kind Community Champions: Claire and Jodie



THIS MONTH, we shine a light on two remarkable local entrepreneurs who have been making a real difference in Caversham and the local area, Claire and Jodie. If you haven't already heard of them, you've likely felt their impact.

Their journey began when they moved from Suffolk to Caversham and struggled with the hard water, inspiring them to create their own range of natural, vegan skincare products. Faced with the challenge of where to sell them, they took matters into their own hands and founded the now-thriving Caversham Artisan and Farmers Market. Held every Sunday in the car park behind St Martin's Precinct, this market has become a beloved hub for local independent businesses. It's more than just a place to shop—it's a community gathering space, complete with live music, seating, and a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

As their business grew, so did their vision. NOOD Stores, their permanent retail space, soon followed, launching alongside two other local businesses, Midrib Plants and The F Word Flower. Each of these enterprises has since flourished, outgrowing their shared space and cementing their place in the community.

Never ones to rest on their laurels, Claire and Jodie saw another opportunity and, together with Amanda Adlem from Hilton Skin and Body Clinic, transformed the old House of Cards shop into SPILL bar, which opened just before Christmas.

Beyond their own ventures, Claire and Jodie dedicate countless unpaid hours to supporting the wider business community. Claire co-chairs the Caversham Traders' Association with Katia Major from Yoga Reading, advocating for local businesses and fostering community-driven initiatives. Meanwhile, Jodie has taken the lead

in organizing Cavmas, a festive event that brings significant foot traffic and revenue to the area, all on a voluntary basis.

Their philosophy is simple yet powerful: when businesses collaborate, the entire community thrives. With this in mind, they are currently planning a summer community picnic—a free event designed to bring people together and celebrate the spirit of Caversham and the local area. Keep an eye on local social media for updates!

Their dedication, generosity, and commitment to community make Claire and Jodie true Kind Community Champions. We can't wait to see what they do next!

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Join our team

THE CAVERSHAM BRIDGE is written, produced and delivered by a team of around 100 volunteers. We are looking for some additional help, in particular with compiling our What's On listing. Could you spare a few hours a month to 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.

We are also looking for someone who could spend two to three hours a month preparing and loading articles from the paper on to our website. Experience with word-processing is essential, but previous experience of website development is not needed, as the necessary training will be provided.

To find out more, contact Phil Chatfield by email at chair@cavershambridge.org

CONCERTS in CAVERSHAM



News from Reading Museum

Lost In The Music

by Gloria Pitt

CONCERTS IN CAVERSHAM started the year with a recital by the renowned young Israeli pianist, Ariel Lanyi, at St Andrew's Church on Saturday 8 February.

The recital opened with a magnificent performance of Schubert's Sonata in G major, a long work full of contrast between dramatic fortissimo chords and lyrical melodies.

Next came the delightful 15 Hungarian Peasant Songs by Bartok – short pieces full of humour and dancing rhythms. This was followed by the final piece, Chopin's Sonata in B minor. This was the highlight for me, especially the scintillating scherzo.

...obviously enjoying himself...

Throughout the recital, Ariel was so much lost in the music, expressing every emotion in his face and body, that we, the audience, might not have been there. He was obviously enjoying himself!

This was his third visit to Caversham, and the capacity audience was rewarded by an encore, Chopin's Nocturne in C sharp minor.

How lucky we are to have such wonderful music here in Caversham, thanks to Concerts in Caversham and organiser Adrienne Black.

For news of forthcoming events, see their website, www.concertsincaversham.co.uk or Facebook page, www.facebook.com/ConcertsinCaversham



Reading Museum

photo P Chatfield

Digging up the past

READING MUSEUM'S Silchester Roman Gallery displays many of the artefacts discovered in the excavation of the Roman settlement of Calleva Atrebatum (Silchester). Professor Mike Fulford, Professor of Archaeology at the University of Reading, is to give a series of three talks on the excavations he undertook there. The proceeds of these talks will go towards funding the restoration of the Gallery.

The talks are on Saturdays 15 March, 10 April and 12 May, at 11:00 at the Museum. You have to book, and there is a charge, which is £12 per talk or £30 for all three talks (discount applied at checkout). The booking page for the first is at www.readingmuseum.org.uk/talk-1-origins-roman-silchester

Information provided by Friends of Reading Abbey



Time to renew subscriptions

£7 for 2025

THANK YOU to those who have already renewed your subscriptions. 2025 subscriptions are now due for payment. They can be paid by bank transfer, or by cash or cheque to your deliverer. We will again be available for subscription renewals and other enquiries at **Fourbears Books on Saturday 1 and 8 March, from 10:00 to 14:00**, when you will be able to pay by card as well. Payment details are as follows: Cheques for £7 should be made out to Caversham Bridge News. Writing your postcode and house number or name on the back of the cheque is

helpful. Please note the change in the company name since last year. For direct bank transfer our bank account details are:

**The Caversham Bridge News Ltd – Sort Code: 30-67-99
Account Number: 72808960**

Please include your postcode and house name or number as a reference!

Last year several payments were received which did not contain address details, meaning we have been unable to allocate the payment to the subscriber.

Gift Subscriptions

Why not give a gift subscription to the paper for a friend and family member? It costs only £7 and can be set up by simply making a direct bank transfer to our account with the postcode and house number or name of the recipient, adding the word 'gift'. We have a colourful 'Gift Subscription' card which you can use to notify the recipient, see right.

For more details contact editors@cavershambridge.org.



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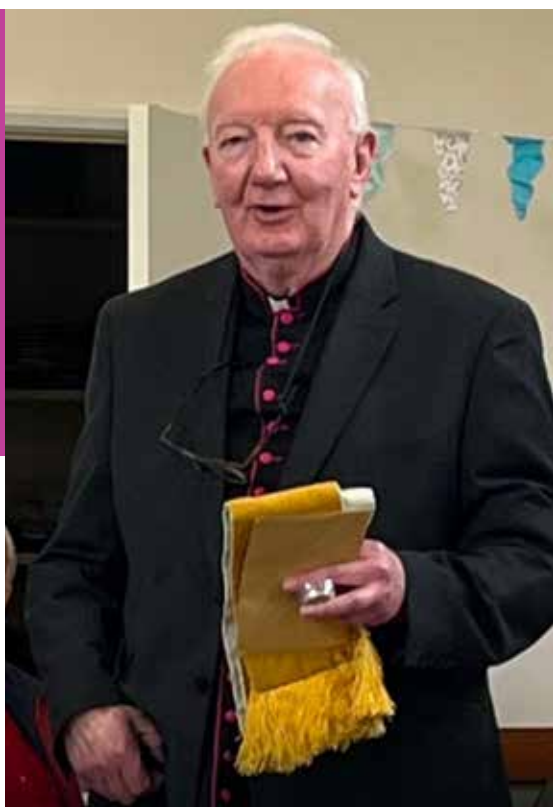
Farewell to Father Michael

by Deacon Brian Theobald

IT WAS WITH sadness that the parishioners of St Michael's Catholic Church, Sonning Common, which includes Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village, said goodbye in November to their parish priest, Fr Michael Sharkey. Earlier in the year the parish celebrated his 50th anniversary of ordination and, later, his 80th birthday. Little did we know then what was to come. A bout of serious illness late in October necessitated a stay in hospital, and his decision made to retire from active ministry.

In 2016, Fr Michael was invited by the diocesan Archbishop to fill the vacant Parish Priest position at St Michael's. He left his parish in Lichfield, northeast of Birmingham, and travelled to the southernmost tip of the Birmingham archdiocese, taking up residence in Sonning Common in November 2016, just in time for the first Sunday of Advent. He found Sonning Common quite a contrast to the cathedral city of Lichfield, where he had resided for 18 years. The smaller parish enabled him to pursue his interest of translating liturgical texts into a style accessible to all church goers. He published a series of booklets on popular Catholic devotions, including the Stations of the Cross and the Rosary. Just before his retirement, his compilation of traditional prayers, A Pocketful of Prayers, was published.

During his time at St Michael's, he built on the foundations laid by previous parish priests and the lay community. In his gentle, pastoral, style he encouraged participation in, and development of, the liturgical life of the parish. At the same time, he supported new initiatives, reaching out to the



Fr Michael

photo M O'Donnell

disadvantaged outside the parish community. He met regularly with the ministers of the other local Christian churches to find ways of working together.

He was very keen to strengthen the relationship between the parish and its school, St Martin's, in Caversham Park Village. He would celebrate a weekly Mass at the school for children, staff and parents. At other times he would simply visit the school to chat to the pupils and staff. The school community was encouraged to contribute to the Sunday Mass on the first Sunday of each month.

Very much in character, Fr Michael wanted to slip away without any fuss. He left Sonning Common on 28 November, returning to Birmingham almost 8 years to the day after his departure. The parish recently celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving for Fr Michael's pastoral care of the parish.

On a positive note, his health has shown signs of improvement, and hopefully he might have the opportunity to serve the communities where he now lives.

Like A Rolling Stone

by Phil Chatfield



SINCE READING BUSES started running a regular service to Henley last year, there has been a half hourly bus between Caversham and Henley throughout most of the day. Passing through the centre of Caversham via Gosbrook Road, Donkin Hill and the Henley Road, the new, gas powered, number 28 aqua buses, with their blue livery, are a common sight here.

Having read good reviews of the film A Complete Unknown, about the early years of Bob Dylan's musical life in New York, we decided we would like to see the film, and discovered it was being shown in The Regal Picturehouse cinema in Henley; so we booked tickets and headed down the road to the bus stop. The lunchtime bus was on time, uncrowded, and delivered us to the centre of Henley in about 20-25 minutes. No searching for a space in the car park or worrying about the parking ticket running out!

...seats were comfortable...

It has been a few years since our last visit to The Regal Picturehouse, and we had forgotten how friendly and welcoming it is, compared with larger chain cinemas elsewhere. The seats were comfortable, like most cinemas the adverts were too loud and too long, but we quickly settled in once the film started. Timothée Chalamet is very convincing in the lead role as Dylan, alongside Monica Barbaro, who gives an impressive performance as Joan Baez, and Elle Fanning as Dylan's then girlfriend. The film covers the period from 1961 to 1965, as Dylan's music reflected the social unrest of the period, and he eventually moved from an acoustic folk style to an electric guitar and a rock music style.

You don't need to be a Dylan fan to enjoy this film, it is a great story of music, people and of its time.

And best of all, it was only a short wait for the number 28 bus back to Caversham!

For the Regal Picture House programme, visit

www.picturehouses.com/cinema/regal-picturehouse

For details of the Reading Buses Aqua service, see

www.reading-buses.co.uk/services/RBUS/28

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by Alex Forbes



For your bookshelf...

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

WE WERE delighted to interview Robert Thorogood in January, creator of BBC hit *Death in Paradise* and author of the series *The Marlow Murder Club*. I've read all of the series, and it's such an interesting group of characters which Robert has crafted into a real team. The latest in the series is *Murder on the Marlow Belle*. Marlow's local Amdram group is celebrating on the River Thames when one of the organisers disappears. He later turns up dead when, inconveniently, everyone else on board was alone in their cabin at the time of his death. It's up to Judith, Becks and Suze to try to crack the case and solve another murder in Marlow. I'm glad there isn't that much crime in Caversham! I'm sure the series gets funnier with each book. Definitely one to read if you are a fan of locked room/cosy mysteries.

The book I picked out for children this month is the hilarious, brilliant, fantastic Iszi Lawrence with her new release *The Cursed Tomb*. It's 1249 BCE in ancient Egypt, and eleven-year-old Henut

is sceptical of just about everything, including the gods. But a mysterious break-in, an unsettling dream, and a strangely familiar shadowy figure lead her on a dangerous quest that could change her life. This is such a thrilling adventure, perfect for ages 9+. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it. It has tension, mystery, humour – I can't wait to hear what kids think of it. Iszi is joining us at Fourbears Fest on Monday 19 May for a creative writing session, which should be a lot of fun.

You'll see that we are starting to advertise all the Fourbears Fest events that are taking place in May. Take a look on our website or pop into the shop to say hello. As well as Iszi, we have lots on for children, including draw-along sessions, an author playing the Ukelele, and more. For adults we have Amy Jeffs and Robin Ince to name just a couple. It should be a great weekend.

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

www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk



Busy Bear

photo A Forbes



Holocaust Day at St Anne's

photo St Anne's School

80 Candles for 80 Years

by Bridget Tobin, Headteacher

ON MONDAY, 27 January 2025, St Anne's Catholic Primary School marked Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD). Last year, the school applied and was successfully chosen to participate in 80 Candles for 80 Years, an initiative organised by the Holocaust Memorial Trust.

To commemorate this, the school held a World War II Day, during which pupils learned about the Kindertransport—the rescue effort that saved thousands of children. Specifically, they studied Henry Wuga, one of the children who arrived in England through the Kindertransport. As he grew up, Henry dedicated his life to supporting others.

As part of the project, pupils worked together to decorate a train and its carriages with images and words reflecting Henry Wuga's life, along with messages of hope and positivity for the world. The school also created a candle holder and captured photos and videos of the project. These contributions became part of a special digital exhibition for HMD 2025, which was displayed on Holocaust Memorial Day and shared nationwide.

...hope, respect, kindness...

The central theme of the project was 'Sometimes, to find light, you need to make a journey'. The Kindertransport children faced fear and uncertainty, yet there was hope at the end of their journey—families willing to welcome them. The pupils were inspired by the bravery of these children and reflected on their own commitment to hope, respect, kindness, and reassurance for all.

To ensure that all age groups could connect with the project, different images and materials were used to help pupils understand Henry Wuga's story and the experiences of evacuees. A key message that emerged from this learning was:

'We will be welcoming and respectful to people of all backgrounds.'

The school's participation was organised by Miss Lee, who, reflecting on the experience, wrote

'It was an honour to be chosen for this project, and we felt the messages we wanted to share with the children were incredibly important. Our school is celebrating 125 years, and we were inspired by how much it has contributed to history. Recently, we have been focusing on teaching respect for all, and this project allowed us to bring that lesson to life.'

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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 18.

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 9375103 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 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

Wednesdays – **The Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band** – 20:00-22:00. Neville Hall, Waltham St Lawrence RG10 OJJ. Free and friendly club for brass instrumentalists. Email: waltham.band@gmail.com

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 9475544 or email duncan.knight@googlegmail.com

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](https://www.facebook.com/KeepCavershamTidy)

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

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

Wednesday 5 March – **The River Thames in Canvas, a talk by Martin Beek** – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. www.cavershamheights.org

Thursday 6 March – **Life in East Jerusalem, a talk by Nick Papadopoulos, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel** – 19:00, Wesley Methodist Church, 84 Queen's Road, Reading RG1 4BW. For more information about the programme please visit: www.eyewitnessblogs.com

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

Saturday 8 March – **Uffington walk (SU273843) 9.0 miles** – 10:30 – Walk follows ridgeway taking in Wayland Smithy and Uffington castle before descending to Uffington village and return ascent to start. One of a programme of regular walks in the area – see <https://pvrblers.org.uk/walks-programme> – This walk is for members only.

Saturday 8 March – **Artists & Makers Fair** – 10:00-16:00 at Caversham Methodist Hall, Gosbrook Road. Local artists and craftspeople display their work for sale. Free entry. For further information phone Jean at 07808 966928 or visit www.cavershamcrafts.co.uk

Wednesday 19 March – **Caversham Horticultural Society AGM** – 19:25, Caversham Baptist Church, The Annual General Meeting, where you can find out more about the society and how it is run for its members. For details, see www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk

Wednesday 19 March – **Al in Medicine in relation to Treatment of Stroke Victims, a talk by Dr. Kiruba Nagaratnam** – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. www.cavershamheights.org

Monday 24 March – **Scams: how to recognise them and how to avoid them** – 14:00 at Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. Talk to Reading u3a by a NatWest Bank fraud specialist. Free entry, non-members welcome. See www.readingu3a.org.uk

Tuesday 25 March – **Bereavement support Meet and Chat** - 11:15-12:15. A chance to meet informally over a drink and chat with others who are bereaved. All welcome, no need to book. 3Cs Cafe, St John's church, RG4 5AN

Saturday 29 March – **Exhibition of art works by members of The Ted Burnell Community Art Centre** – 10:00-16:00. Church House (next to Waitrose), 57 Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX. Exhibits will be for sale (cash or cheques only), together with homemade refreshments and a tombola. Entry free.

Saturday 29 March – **Performance of Mozart Requiem** – South Chiltern Choral Society, at Greyfriars Church, Reading RG1 1EH. For more information, please visit southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk

Saturday 29 March – **Medicine for the Monks: Medieval Monastic Infirmarys, Healthcare, and Reading Abbey, talk by Dr Ruth Salter** – 14:30 – St James's Church, Reading (next to Forbury Gardens). Friends of Reading Abbey - www.readingabbey.org.uk

Saturday 29 March – **Caversham Horticultural Society Spring Show** – 14:00-16:00 Caversham Baptist Church. For details, see www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk

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

TREES In focus this month – A proposal to prune the **Holm Oak** (PL/25/0141) at the entrance to **Caversham Precinct**. A routine but essential task carried out every few years under the supervision of the council's arboriculturalist. This will include a crown lift for the oak and the precinct's tulip trees.

The Holm Oak originally stood in the front garden of an old house that later became Caversham House Academy.

Meanwhile, a request has been made to fell a silver birch in the **Surley Row Conservation Area** (PL/25/0107).

Bridge Street Developments – The Persian Palace (PL/24/0022) is appealing the refusal of their outdoor seating terrace and canopy, which they built over the river without permission. At **No. 18** (PL/24/1627) permission was refused for a conversion and change of use to flats. And at **No. 10B** (PL/24/1098) a decision is imminent for a rear extension, flat and an HMO.

At **62 Prospect Street** (PL/24/1475), CADRA has expressed a preference for individual apartments instead of an HMO and raised concerns about bin storage arrangements. As more shops and offices in central Caversham are converted, the management of bin storage and street placement on collection days has become a growing issue. But new homes are much needed.

In **Mapledurham Parish, Reading Golf Club** (P24/S4063/FUL) has applied to create a training course and driving range on fields east of the existing course. This raises concerns about landscape changes and tree retention, as the site lies within the Chilterns National Landscape.

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

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Happy Wanderer revisits *The Caversham Bridge Hotel*

LAST THURSDAY, whilst skimming through the pages of the Reading Chronicle, I saw that the Crowne Plaza Hotel had changed ownership. It now belongs to the Village Hotel Club, which owns 33 hotels and leisure clubs across the country.

My mind went back to the time when the Caversham Bridge Hotel was on the site. It was one of the places we went to from work when someone was retiring or leaving to have a baby.

The old hotel seemed gracious, and had retained many of its late Victorian/Edwardian features. I remember wide double swing-doors with curving handles, and a dining-room looking out over a lawn which stretched down to the river. The architect was G. W. Webb of Reading, the builders were Collier and Catley and, in 1901, the licence was transferred from the old hotel next to the bridge to the building I remember.

The first hotel here was up against the end of the bridge and known as the White Hart. It was mentioned in a deed of 1614 and, from the photographs, you can see that the rather plain White Hart was given an extension to transform it into a much more impressive building with gables and fake half-timbering. This must have happened around 1885, when the name was changed to the Caversham Bridge Hotel. You can see that it's basically the same building on the same site, with the chimney stacks remaining exactly the same after the re-vamp.

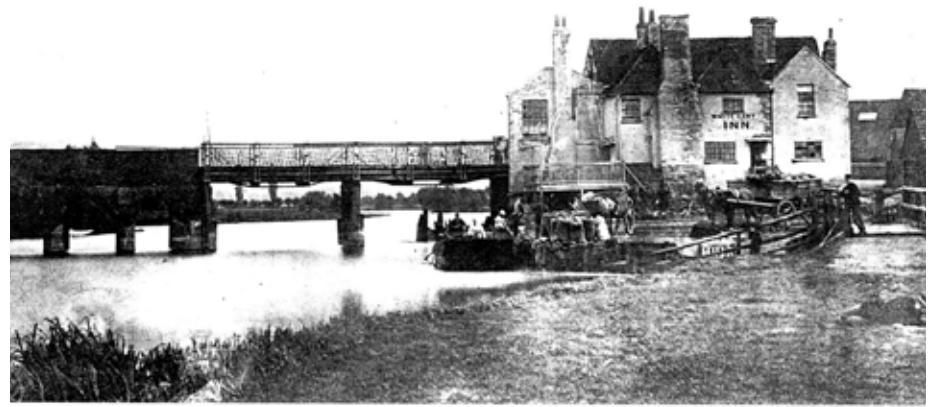
The man behind the re-vamp and the new

hotel of 1901 on a slightly different site was Antonio Giovanni Bona, who had arrived in Reading in 1878. He built up a large business, with a boatyard beside the hotel, hiring out boats and running steam launches which called at a landing-stage below the hotel.

And so, comparing the two photographs and checking facts in books and the on-line British Newspaper Archive, I spent a pleasant few hours on a rather gloomy January afternoon.

Reverting to the Chronicle article, I was surprised to see that, when the site of the Crowne Plaza was being sold off, there were suggestions that the hotel might go, to be replaced by flats, or a charging station for electric vehicles, which seemed a bit sad. Now it appears that it will remain a hotel.

But what will they call it? Most towns have a pub called the White Hart, and Reading had four of them, including this one. The white hart was the badge of King Richard II. The name of the Caversham Bridge Hotel seems entirely appropriate. The present building, which opened in 1988, always looked like a private hospital to me. At first it was called the Caversham Hotel, which I wasn't too happy about, since it wasn't in Caversham, strictly speaking. Its next name was the Holiday Inn, though I found it hard to believe that anyone would choose to go there for a holiday. The Crowne Plaza seemed ridiculous. Were we meant to think of 'olde England' or Spain? We'll just have to wait and see what they come up with next.



Caversham Bridge Hotel



Pictures by courtesy of Reading Borough Libraries

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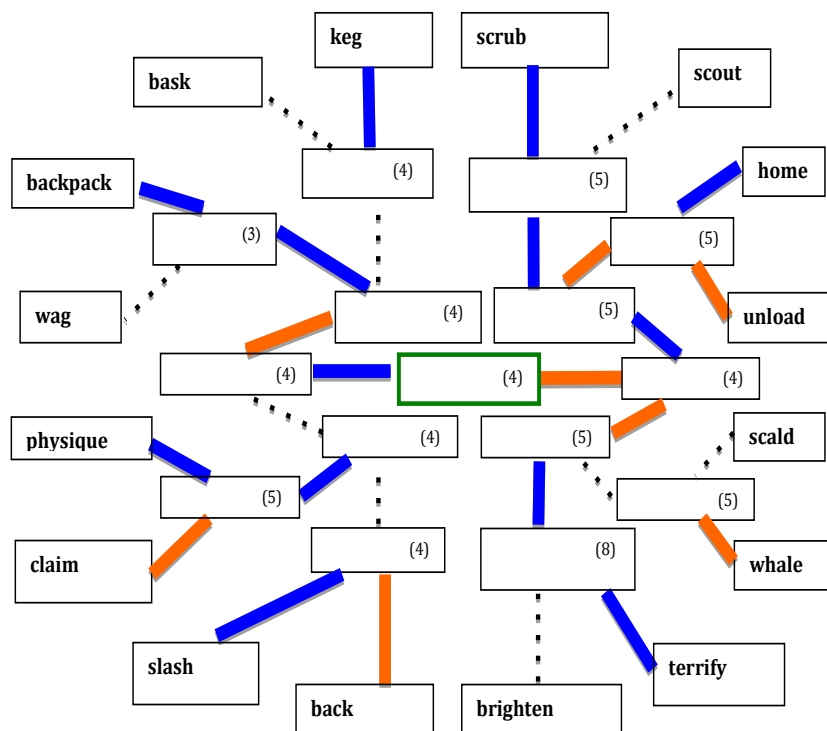
Puzzle Corner

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 ———



Answers on page 18

FOUND IN PROSPECT STREET

Can you find 22 business names in the grid?

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

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Artology
Bina
Carousel
Clays
Dancia
Fireplace Magic
Fourbears
Go Sing
Geocafe
Lilly Ink

MyPhoneDoctor
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Nicholas
Oxfam
Papa Gee
Quattro
Serdio Iberico
Spitiko
The Edit
Waltons
Zappas

Creative CAVERSHAM

Breath of fresh air



Who's that person, busy with her easel and paintbrushes, engrossed in capturing the local landscape... it's artist **Christabel Forbes**, who tells **Elestr Lee** about her passion for painting *en plein air*

MANY OF the creative people interviewed for this page have long lived here... this month we meet a relative newcomer, artist Christabel Forbes who moved to Caversham a year and a half ago and is thrilled to be getting to know this area.

Christabel, who is half French, half British, has lived and worked in a variety of different countries, so the process of setting down roots must be something of a novelty. But she is convinced her early experiences have helped shaped her as an artist. "I think it has informed my art, as I grew up in both France and in England, with both nationalities, both cultures and being bilingual. I felt I was on the move all the time, but it also meant I liked to find out about how other people live. I have always loved watching the world, and going out and about with my sketchbook, recording what I saw," Christabel explained.

Becoming an artist was always clear for

Christabel. "My mother is an artist, and I was good at both art and languages," she said. "But while I always loved art, I have tiptoed into lots of areas!"

She did a Foundation course at Falmouth – "I loved it all!" she recalls, then having completed the year, signed up with VSO. She subsequently got a place at the Royal Drawing School, where she practised drawing in lots of different ways, as well as stepping into colour. As an art student in London Christabel had to find ways to be able to afford to live there while studying, so she worked as an au pair and obtained teaching qualifications, getting a job working at the Italian school in London.

"After this I had several residencies in India and the south of France. You don't always get paid but the trips are funded, and you get somewhere to do your art. In Provence, I helped a couple with an Airbnb to run their art course, and in return I was



Painted in the open air - St Margaret's Church, Mapledurham

given some studio space. I was gaining experience, first with the residences, then later I began to take on commissions, as well as working for interior designers.

"Since moving to Caversham, I have been enjoying making pictures of the local scenes around here. I started off wanting to do observational drawings in tranquil locations where I felt comfortable.

...If the weather is bad, it's quite exciting as you must adapt to the circumstances – and the work comes even more alive.

"I love drawing outside, and I like using lots of materials, so I bring my pencils and paintbrushes and pigments, and find somewhere to set up my studio," she said. "However, I don't want to be the centre of attention – it's not about me, I want to be the fly on the wall!"

Of course, the famous British weather can be an issue... "I have a raincoat and a special umbrella and carry my materials

in a granny trolley!" she explained. "If the weather is bad, it's quite exciting as you must adapt to the circumstances – and the work comes even more alive.

"Work made in a studio is more of a 'memory', imagined – whereas something I have created on location is more 'true'."

Since moving to Caversham Christabel has gained her City & Guilds Masters and has recently stopped working in London. "So now I am finally in one place," she commented. She is loving finding new and unexpected opportunities in the area. "For example, I have discovered the Underwater Hockey Club which takes place at Queen Anne's School," she laughed. She also has plans to get involved with local creative groups, as well as to discover the great outdoors – "I would love to walk the Ridgeway!"

Towards the end of last year, she was thrilled to have her work shown at the Caversham Picture Framers, with a solo exhibition. "It was a real success," she recalled. "I sold quite a few pictures, and it was good experience to give a talk. Having only recently moved to Caversham, and being so new, I felt a bit daunted, but in fact lots of people came, and it was lovely to have a new crowd to meet and be able to sell my work to new clients."

As we head into spring Christabel is looking forward to getting outside, exploring – "and let's see where my drawing takes me!" she added.

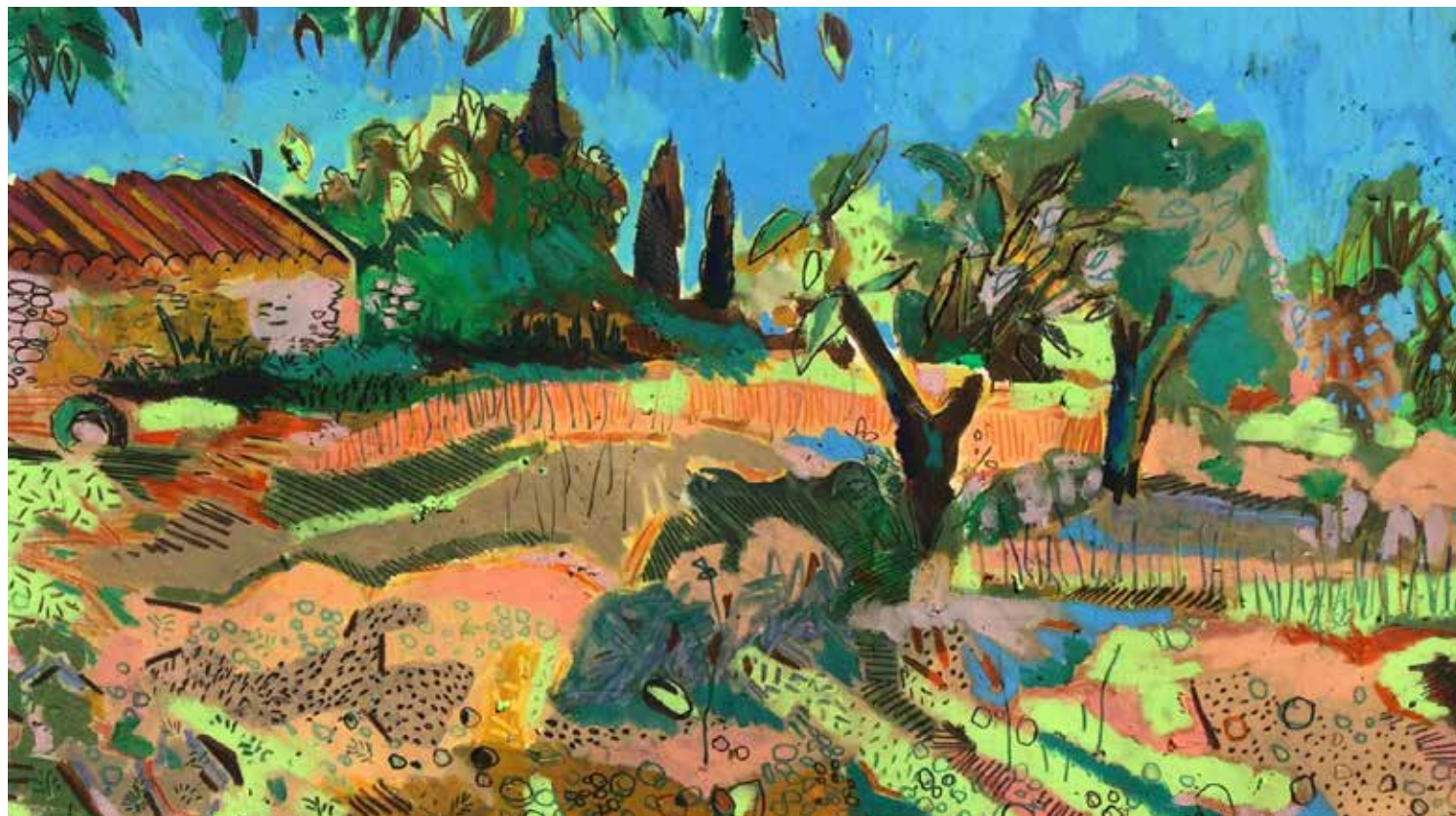
One new idea which is inspiring her is to use materials which have less impact on the environment. "Art is very consumerist," she commented. "I want to find out more about using natural dyes for pigment, using local materials. I am already experimenting with 'egg tempera' which is an old technique of using egg to fix and bind pigments. I am using this in a playful way, as it helps make my colours shiny. I want to see if I can use this to replace the usual binding agents, which can be toxic.

"But as well as experimenting with these new ideas, my passion remains in creating my landscapes."

Find out more:

christabelforbes.com

westdean.ac.uk/tutors/christabel-forbes



Christabel spent time as an artist on residencies abroad, including in Provence, pictured here

all photos C Forbes

KEEPING IT LOCAL

by Elestr Lee

THERE'S PLENTY to be proud of 'north of the river' – whereas empty shops abound in central Reading, businesses old and new are attracting customers in Caversham and Emmer Green.

The popular weekly Sunday Market takes place in the car park adjacent to Waitrose and draws in visitors from our community and beyond. Delicious artisan bread and pastries, fruit and vegetables, as well as cheeses and deli items, are always on offer, as well as giftware and hot food to sample while you browse. If you're not partial to 'al fresco' shopping, the True Food co-op in Emmer Green offers an ethical alternative to the large supermarkets, stocking a large choice of mostly organic groceries, as well as fruit and vegetables and a range of household refillables.

...meet friends inside...

This area boasts a notable selection of cafés – The Collective Café, at the junction of St Anne's Road and Church Road, has won a well-deserved reputation for hot drinks and its range of sweet and savoury offerings. Customers can meet friends inside the café, or in its patio area behind as the weather improves.

But it's not just about eating and drinking. If you are thinking of moving house, there are plenty of estate agents, including Kate Fox, who founded Fox Beckett to provide an independent service in the area. Meanwhile, Maria Lloyd provides a specialised local marketing service supporting small businesses and Hannah Conibear is a chartered accountant, who is also available to offer her specialist skills, from limited company accounts to bookkeeping.

If you're looking to de-stress or get fitter, Nood Store has a range of beauty products, calming candles and refillables, as

well as beautiful houseplants, amongst other lifestyle items. Women may wish to consult Laura Bailey for advice on weight management, women's fitness and wellbeing. For skin and beauty care, Hilton Skin Clinic offers a range of services but, if you really feel that what you need most of all is a walk in the countryside, but you don't have anyone to go with, why not get in touch with Walk Works, and join an organised ramble? It might be just what the doctor ordered!



Sunday Market Traders enjoying the Caversham Bridge! **all photos J Harper**

...whereas empty shops abound in central Reading, businesses old and new are attracting customers in Caversham and Emmer Green.



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What's In Prospect?

PROSPECT STREET

text and photos Fred Smith

AS PART of our support for local businesses this month, we are focussing on these pages on the wide range of shops and services in Prospect Street. From Walton's Jewellers at number 1 to Fireplace Magic, it is well worth exploring what there is on offer. If you need refreshment, you can find coffee shops and cafés, such as Nathan's Nibbles, with its renowned all day breakfasts and Serdio Iberico, which has a selection of Spanish specialities, including tasty 'empanadillas' and delicious hot chocolate and churros. Further along the street are restaurants offering cuisine from around the world, including Bengali and Indian cuisine at the Bina Tandoori. And why not drop in to the Angel Bar for a cocktail after your meal!

There is also a selection of takeaways to be found along the street, as well as hair salons and nail bars. If you are moving house or seeking rented property, you will find a choice of estate agents here. Other available services include a

dry cleaner, Prospect Street Dental Practice and MyPhoneDoctor at number 52, offering essential support for smartphone, tablet and laptop users, as well as a range of accessories.

The street is home to our independent bookshop, Fourbears Books, which opened as Covid-19 struck and has become a real asset to our community, hosting book launches, book clubs and organising a festival of books, the Fourbears Fest. Other specialist shops include Dancia, providing everything a dancer might need and, in complete contrast on the corner of Short Street, Fireplace Magic, supplying and servicing open fires and log burners. The nearby Artology Studio provides a chance to awaken your creativity through experiences such as pottery painting, and is a venue for creative parties.

Finally, the Oxfam shop at number 12 is always worth a browse – who knows what you might find?

So, if you are in the area, do explore Prospect Street and support the local businesses for which it is 'home'.



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The Local Scene

by Martin Andrews

Fireplace Magic

JOHN AND Amanda Lyons opened their business, Fireplace Magic, in 2002 on the corner of Prospect Street and Short Street. John had been part of a similar business in Bristol, and Amanda grew up in Caversham. At the start John ran the business, but later, Amanda discovered working in the shop fitted well with family life and gave up her job, so they now work together.

The showroom has a stylish contemporary feel, and this painting by Janina is proudly on display! John and Amanda can give expert advice on any aspect of domestic fireplaces. They move with the changing fashions and now supply a range of wood-burning stoves as well as more traditional open fires and electric and gas fires. They don't sell on the internet, as they feel a personal service is important, although they do have an excellent website. They carry out site surveys and enjoy working closely with customers – offering experience and expertise in every aspect of fire installation and maintenance. Much of their business comes through word of mouth and recommendation.

...from the Edwardian period...

Before Fireplace Magic, the premises was a bicycle shop. Looking through street directories, it appears a bicycle repair business had been established there by an S E Burt in around 1921. An old photograph of Prospect Street is displayed in the shop which looks to date from the Edwardian period and the focus is on the shop, showing that it was owned by H G Rix. Unfortunately, it is impossible to see what is in the window to tell what was on sale, and I could not find any reference to Rix in the street directories. However, in 1901 it was a boot repair shop run by Charles Venum; in 1915 it was Mrs Lovelock's greengrocery, and a number of private individuals lived there at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Our high streets need diversity, and it's great to see that Fireplace Magic is thriving, along with the many other interesting businesses in Prospect Street.



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com



A stroll through Caversham
An illustrated guide by Janina Maher

This picture is featured in
Janina's illustrated book,

A stroll through Caversham

which is available at
Fourbears Books on Prospect Street.

Murder and mayhem



report and photo Jean Harper

LOCAL AUTHOR, Robert Thorogood, entertained a packed Caversham Baptist Church as part of a series of 'in conversation with' evenings organized by Alex Forbes of Fourbears Bookshop. Marlow based Robert is the screenwriter behind the Death in Paradise TV series. Most recently he has turned to writing detective fiction, the Marlow Murder Club novels, which are now being televised. Robert was primarily there to promote his latest book, Murder on the Marlow Belle, the fourth in the series. Expertly questioned by Alex, Robert regaled us with amusing tales of his writing career, working in TV and how he is inspired by Agatha Christie. Alex tried to persuade Robert to mention Caversham in his next novel, and maybe even base it around a certain independent bookshop on Prospect Street! He replied, "You never know!", so keep an eye out!

Information on future 'in conversation with' evenings and other events can be found on the Fourbears website www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk

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SPILL – a warm and friendly welcome

text and photo Richard Wells

CAVERSHAM CENTRE has more of a buzz than ever, with a fantastic range of bars, pubs and restaurants to choose from. Recently, the owners of Nood Stores and Hilton Skin & Body Clinic joined forces to open Caversham's latest edition, Spill Bar, on the corner of St Martin's Precinct, opposite Costa Coffee.

We always love checking out anywhere new in the local area and just had to pay them a visit as soon as we were able.

They have done a great job turning the former card shop into a bar, giving the place a stylish and funky decor, complimented by lots of lush plants from Nood Stores. When you enter, you will receive a warm and friendly welcome from the experienced and knowledgeable staff. We were impressed by their passion for the drinks on offer and for providing great service.

They have an extensive cocktail menu, which was certainly proving popular when we visited. Also, the wine list has something to suit all tastes and budgets.

There's a strong focus on local produce, with local beer from Double Barrelled Brewery on tap, which is my personal favourite, and delicious hand crafted Jamaican patties from Chef Stevie, who you may recognise from the Sunday Artisan Market behind the Precinct.

Tea, coffee and cakes are available from 10:00 daily and, if you fancy something a little stronger, the full bar menu is available from 12:00 until 23:00, every night except Sunday, when they close an hour earlier.

...complement your drink...

In the evenings, they make fresh popcorn in their retro popcorn machine, which is handed out for free to complement your drink - which we thought was a nice touch!

The summer months look to be great fun at Spill Bar, with its bifold doors ready to be flung open, and seating out on the precinct. I can picture myself soaking up the sun and watching the world go by with an ice-cold drink in hand. Until then, the warm welcome will be enough to keep me coming back.





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Each species is active above ground for about three weeks in the year, in either the March-July period or September-October (the Ivy bee). The bee digs a burrow, lays the egg, stocks the burrow with pollen and nectar, seals the end and dies; the next generation appears the following year.

How can you help them? If you are on a light soil, provide a bare, firm patch (tread on it) at the edge of the flower bed, and keep the lawn short for the nesting period. If that doesn't suit your garden, then a large clay flowerpot full of sand, with some topsoil and grit, can provide the same effect (add this mix in layers, water it and tamp down). The pot can grow some small clump forming alpines too to give interest over the year. Adding some starter holes (8-13mm diameter) with a stick or pencil will help, or pushing the garden fork a little way into the lawn.

For more information on identification, and instructions for building nest sites, search 'mining bees' at the Wildlife Trust's (wildlifetrusts.org) or Peoples' Trust for Endangered Species (ptes.org) websites.

Nest holes, above and, below, bee emerging
photos Rob Stallard, Reading and District Natural History Society

Give a hand to solitary ground nesting bees

THE TERM 'solitary bee' can be a bit of a misnomer, as it is used for bee species which raise young in individual nests, rather than working in a colony. However, they can make their nests very close together if there is a suitable habitat for that species. 'Suitable' could be a wall, a snail shell, a bramble shoot, a hole in a wooden fence post, or the open ground; each species has its own preferred spot.

There are around 65 species of ground nesting bee in the UK. Most need help to provide nest sites in urban gardens. They want a firm, but light, free draining, open patch of soil, preferably on a slight slope so that rain doesn't pour into the nest hole, and very warm rather than baking hot (south-east or south-west facing, not due south). Modern trends towards longer grass and continual coverage of the soil are bad news for them.



CUTTING THE RIBBON

by Hilary Smart



Cutting the ribbon ceremony at St Martin's

photo N Scott

ST MARTIN'S SCHOOL in Caversham held an opening ceremony for their new outdoor classroom. The whole school gathered, together with parents and members of the community. Headteacher Katherine Tilling called for a countdown from the very enthusiastic children before cutting the ribbon.

The outdoor classroom was funded by the Parent and Staff Association, and Mrs Tilling offered the school's grateful thanks to those involved in raising the funds, including everyone who supported the various raffles and cake sales, and particularly the parents who volunteered their time and energy to plan and run the fairs and discos.

...a shaded space...

The outdoor classroom will provide a shaded space in the playground (from sun and rain), and will complement the wilder copse area which already gets a lot of use. The children are looking forward to occasional lessons under the shelter of its roof.

St Martin's is a Catholic state school which welcomes children of all faiths, and none, and the ceremony concluded with a prayer, the final lines of which contained a message for all on finding shelter in hard times, 'Guard me in the dark of night, and in the morning send your light'. After the very orderly reciting of the prayer there was another enthusiastic round of applause and cheering from the children to thank everyone involved in bringing the project to fruition.



A shaded space in the playground

photo V Groth

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Les Cooper



Les's dream veg patch

photo J Chatfield

Get Set, Grow!

THIS IS THE month to get started in the garden, the time to make up for all those days spent looking out of the window and thinking, "I should be out there but perhaps I will give it one more day." Time waits for no man or woman, and you will find that nature is already at work, especially the weeds!

A job I really enjoy is planting onion and shallot sets. With my busy schedule and being rather short of energy, this task thankfully doesn't take too much effort. The hardest part is preparing the bed, which shouldn't take long, especially if you forked the ground over in the autumn. But popping those little sets into the soil is easy, and it's not long before you think you've actually done some work. Another joy is deciding which variety to plant. Years ago, I grew onions from seed, and loved doing so, but then sets came along and I took to the easier option. The choice was narrow then - now the catalogues offer many more.

One of the woes of gardening is carrot root fly. I have never grown any wonder carrots (of course, I blame my soil, not my growing skills), but I have suffered disappointment when the pest has ruined my crop. The answer is to sow early under fleece or cloches. I can grow good parsnips and have grown some

beautiful ones: the variety Tender and True always sent their roots down to Australia! There are stumpy varieties, but they were not for me - I like parsnips to look like parsnips. In early autumn I would dig over a patch of the garden, two spits deep (two spade depths). At this time of year, I would sow seeds at 18-inch intervals. Parsnips are notorious for germination failure, but if you sow a good number they all seem to come up. If you only sow one seed, it will probably fail. When the seedlings appeared, I would select the best, leaving one and that was it, apart from keeping weeds away.

When it came to show time, I went along the rows to select the three best. This could be frustrating, because I would spend ages burrowing down to get every inch of the root out only to discover at the very last that the darned thing had divided. Finally, after digging most of them up, I would have three, nearly perfect, parsnips. And at the Society show it was a first for sure and once even 'the best in the show award'.

Definitely worth the effort and the ten-shilling note prize money! I recommend taking part in garden society shows, where you can feel proud of your skills but mainly enjoy the opportunity to socialise with fellow gardeners.

A season of stopping to start again

IF YOU ARE reading this paper, then you are probably taking a break from something else. A stop, a rest from usual activities, a moment to reset and recharge.

In many ways this time of year is a more formal break, a stop in the year marking a shift. March sees a new season, Spring, and the vernal equinox - halfway between the shortest and longest days of the year. It is also the start of Lent, a word drawn from the Old English lencten, associated with the lengthening days of Spring. Lent itself is a kind of spiritual pause, a slowing down and reset in preparation for Easter. For some people, the Lent season includes reading Psalms, which themselves contain the word Selah at various points, a word that some scholars believe means pause, possibly part of the musical arrangement. A somewhat local link to the Psalms is the 1700s translation by Reading poet and scholar, James Merrick, although the version I have seen does not include Selah.

However, if you look, prompts to stop are everywhere around us. In January's issue, Martin Andrews reminded us that a chapel once existed on an older iteration of Caversham Bridge, a place to pause on the way. That is long gone, but a viewing platform midway still offers the chance to stop and take in the view. If road traffic hardly makes it a restful stop, an alternative is Christchurch pedestrian bridge, another part-way break, this time between the two road bridges.

Or we can look at athletes, who must program dedicated rest periods to be able to recover and see gains. Or plants entering dormancy, or parts of the animal world hibernating, all taking a break from the heady rigours of usual life to get the energy back to do it all again. Most of us probably aren't going to hibernate, much as we might wish to, but even smaller breaks can be restorative, like a walk (just ask any writer), or a coffee break - or perhaps even just stopping to read the local newspaper!



text and photo Roslyn Weaver

Christchurch pedestrian bridge

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Sport supporting good causes



Harry Walmsley presenting cheque to Claire Matthews
photo G Cust

by The Editors

TWO LOCAL sports clubs have recently been making donations to their chosen charities.

On 23 January, the members of Rotherfield United Walking Football club donated over £5600, raised during 2024, to the British Heart Foundation and the Cardiac Rehab Unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. These two deserving charities have provided much needed support to several current and past members. The club

presented cheques to them before playing their usual Thursday session at Bishopswood. The money was raised at a variety of events during the year, including a raffle and an auction, and by adding an extra £1 to every match day fee.

The Club meets twice a week to play; on Monday evenings and Thursday mornings, normally at Bishopswood in Gallowstree Common. All are welcome to join – whether you have played football before or not. For more information see rotherfieldfc.com/team/walking-football/ or contact wf@rotherfieldfc.com

Two days later, on 25 January, Caversham Bowling Club had their Annual General Meeting. Each year they nominate a charity to support. For 2024, they chose two local causes, Berkshire Vision and Headway Thames Valley. Club Chairman, Harry Walmsley, presented cheques for £280 each to Clare Matthews of Berkshire Vision and Heather Evans of Headway Thames Valley. The club members have chosen to support the same charities for 2025.

The Club can be found at Albert Park, Albert Road, Caversham, Reading. RG4 7PL. It reopens after the winter in April and new members are welcome. Open days are held on Fridays from 18:00.

For more information see

www.cavershambowlsclub.org.uk

Based on information from Ian Beale and Harry Walmsley.



Walking Football Club presentation to RBH Cardiac Rehab Unit

photo S Cannan



Walking Football Club presentation to the British Heart Foundation

photo S Cannan



Pancake Race winners from last year

photo Launchpad

Battering it out

by Rick Lay, Launchpad

AUNCHPAD IS Reading's leading homelessness prevention charity, providing vital information and support for individuals, couples and families who don't have stable places to live or are at risk of losing their homes.

Launchpad's amazing annual egg-stravaganza will be entertaining Reading residents for a 27th year on Shrove Tuesday - the 4th March. Their annual Pancake Race provides much needed funding for their work, whilst being fun for the entrants and a spectacle for those who just come to watch or support entrants.

Launchpad has seen an increase of 22% in demand for its services year on year with over 1,800 people helped last year.

The winning team will walk away with Launchpad's coveted frying pan trophy. Alongside the top prize, there are prizes for second and third placed teams, best team spirit, best fancy dress, and best fundraising team. 2024's winners, a team from RSM UK Ltd, beat 34 teams in their animal onesies to claim champion team bragging rights. Will they make it two years in a row?

We can't wait to see what this year's winners will be wearing! Every year the outfits get better and better. Over the last 26 years we've had clowns, bananas, dinosaurs, chickens, fast food and astronauts, and many others - all scrambling for first place.

To take part, you'll need a team of four, an amazing fancy dress outfit, and £150 to pay the entry fee. There are 36 places up for grabs for teams of four. Places are allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

To sign up visit: launchpadreading.enthuse.com/cf/pcr25

Launchpad is also asking for volunteers to help – with team registration, bucket collections, and monitoring participating teams' pancake flips!

If you would like to get involved, please email fundraising@launchpadreading.org.uk for details.

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Sporting Profiles

by Jenny Bates

Olympic Dreams



Jenny Bates

photo AllMarkOne

BORN AT THE Royal Berkshire Hospital in 1999, and raised in Caversham, I was always a sporty child. My school peers voted me 'most likely to become an Olympian', but little did I know that rowing would become the sport for me to chase my Olympian dream!

For 17 years I had been a synchronised swimmer, but I made the switch to rowing through a Talent ID programme aimed at identifying people with Olympic potential. And before long I was taking my first strokes at Reading Rowing Club, fitting in two sessions a day before and after school - St Joseph's, where I was studying for A-levels in PE, Geography and Spanish.

My rowing career did not get off to the smoothest of starts; I had many failed races, snapped blades, and even completely missed a race due to bad timing. It continued at Hartpury University, Gloucestershire, where I studied PE and School Sport. Unfortunately, a year later, illness forced me to stop training, so I took 18 months off to pursue other passions.

In 2020, when lockdown began, I returned to my family home in Caversham and started to regain my health. In the meantime, my father had taken up rowing at Reading Rowing Club, and had invested in some cardio equipment,

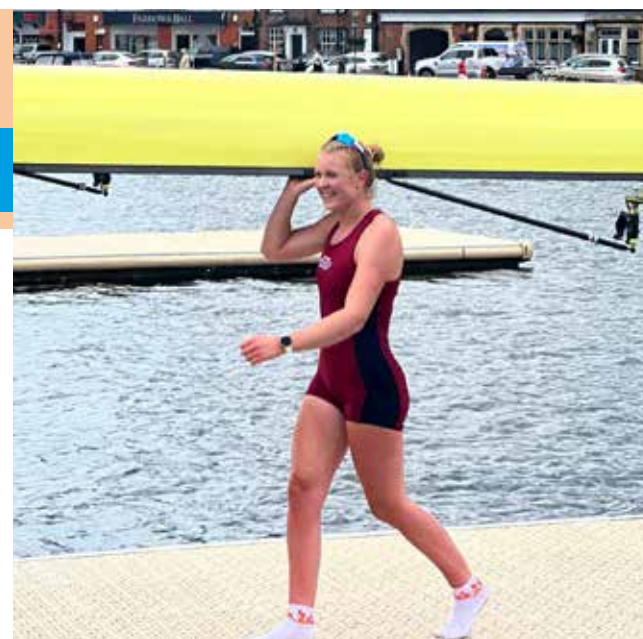
which I started to use. I didn't want Dad to beat my scores, so I stepped up my training and caught the rowing bug again.

During this time, I decided to change my postgraduate plans and study at Oxford Brookes University so that I could get back into rowing, embarking on a Masters in Marketing & Entrepreneurship. I started off at the bottom of the rowing squad, and slowly climbed the ranks until eventually, in my third year at Brookes, I was in the top eight.

...a broken rib...

After coming sixth in my first National Trials and winning the prestigious Henley Royal Regatta, I spent a year training full time at a GB development centre. But, due to a broken rib, I missed out on the final Paris Olympic testing. In summer 2024, I won the final GB trials and was selected to represent GB at a World Cup, gaining sixth place.

In October 2024, I started training at the National Training centre at the Redgrave and Pinsent rowing lake in Caversham. This year, I'm working towards the World Cups, European Championships and the World Championships in September, in Shanghai.



Carrying boat at Henley

photo J Keegan

The set-up at the training centre is amazing, with world-class support in the form of coaches, physiotherapists, physiologists and sports scientists, and even a Michelin star chef! The incredible facilities and equipment include their very own 'Sleep Den', making it easy to have naps in between training sessions.

My training programme is brutal, with two to three sessions six days a week, spending much of the year at training camps in Portugal or Italy. The centre and my training are made possible by the National Lottery.



Jenny celebrating another victory

photo AllMarkOne



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First Impressions Matter



by
Laura Harmsworth

Overcoming the Overqualified Label

BEING OVERQUALIFIED can feel like a disadvantage, but you can turn it into a strength. While employers may worry that your extensive experience will lead to boredom or higher demands, you can address these concerns proactively and present yourself as the ideal candidate.

Cover Letter

Start by addressing the issue head-on in your cover letter. Explain why the role excites you - perhaps it aligns with your long-term goals, offers a better work-life balance, or your values align. Highlighting your interest reassures employers you're applying for the right reasons.

CV

Tailor your CV to the specific job by focusing on the most relevant skills and achievements. Downplay anything that might overshadow the role's requirements. Instead of listing every managerial role you've held, focus on how your expertise aligns with the job and how you can solve the company's challenges (consider using a skills-based CV). Avoid jargon and over-the-top claims, ensuring your CV feels approachable and tailored to the role.

Interview

During the interview, show enthusiasm for the position. Employers want to see that you'll be engaged and motivated. Highlight how your experience enables you to contribute from day one while also demonstrating your openness to learning and adapting. Be transparent about salary expectations and career intentions to ease any concerns about mismatched ambitions. By using the above strategies, you're more likely to be seen as an asset, not a risk.

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From Our Readers



Enthralling February sunset

photo A Roy



Thameside Promenade at sunset

photo O Badziak

WE ARE ALWAYS pleased to hear from our readers. Following a rather gloomy spell of weather in January, the first Sunday in February was a glorious sunny day.

Regular reader Olwen Badziak wrote:

'Hello! The bright sun and blue sky of Sunday 2 February sent me down to Caversham Bridge at sunset to photograph the river birds there. Humans and birds alike were enjoying themselves and the light was beautiful.'

Regular contributor Ami Roy was also struck by the beautiful sunset and sent us her photo of the sky and setting sun, saying

'The sunset today had me totally in its thrall!!!'

If you have any photos of our area you would like to share, please email

editors@cavershambridge.org



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Winter skin care



Image by senivpetro on Freepik

If you are struggling with your skin this winter, here are some timely tips for hydration and rejuvenation to quench your thirsty winter skin.



by Perry Walker

Owner of Perry's Beauty, Caversham
@perrys_beautyroom

IN WINTER, a mixture of the cold weather, hot temperatures from central heating, and constant fluctuation of hot to cold can mean your skin needs a little more TLC than usual. Particularly true when it comes to moisturising your skin and making sure it receives the hydration it needs.

In the winter weather, dry skin needs to be exfoliated at least once a week to maintain a bright complexion and to enable your moisturiser to work to maximum effect. Try using an enzymatic exfoliant instead of a particle based exfoliant. The enzymes will gently yet effectively 'eat' away the dead skin to reveal the fresh, new skin below. If you can use an enzyme exfoliant two to three times a week you will see improvements very quickly indeed!

You can book a deeper exfoliating facial in a salon to give your winter skin a real 'kick start'. Look for a HydraFacial or a mild skin

peel to rejuvenate the tired, dull appearance of your winter skin. Facials are a great way to take some self-care time too.

If your skin is suffering from the cold, it probably needs something more than your regular daily moisturiser. Apply a weekly moisturising mask to soothe and hydrate your skin intensely, leaving it revitalized and quenched. Dryness can lead to irritation and redness, so switch to moisturisers which address these issues to provide comfort and visibly calm redness and blotchiness.

For those of you who just use soap and water; this may be causing you more issues, as soap is alkaline and disrupts the skin's natural acidic Ph balance. This strips away essential oils and leaves the skin dry. You want to try to use products designed to reach down to the deeper dermal layers of the skin to deliver changes. With the correct products, you can see dramatic changes to the skin in a matter of a couple of weeks.

Finally, don't forget to use a facial SPF* after applying your moisturizer for all year-round protection. SPF works as an effective barrier against free radicals as well as UVA and UVB.

*SPF stands for sun protection factor, a measure of how well a sunscreen blocks harmful UVB rays in natural light.

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(From left to right from the top)

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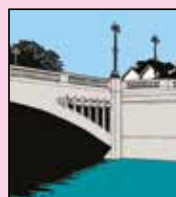
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For the youngest members of our community

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



CAVERSHAM COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Open Tuesdays, 9.30 am to 2.00 pm, see www.3cscafe.co.uk to check dates.

Serving espresso coffees, teas, light snacks, cakes and biscuits.

Eat in or take away.

St John's Church, Gosbrook Road, Caversham
Community led and volunteer run



Wellbeing *with Ami Roy*

Be your own hero

WE'VE ALL looked up to someone and felt inspired — whether it's our parents, a friend, a teacher, or a celebrity. It's fine to have good role models, but when we lean too heavily on someone else, we lose sight of who we are.

The key to ending our unhealthy reliance on perfectionistic standards is to redefine what a hero really is. Rather than looking outside ourselves and judging ourselves against others, we should focus our attention inwards. Consider the following:

- Others can't succeed for us. No role model can make us successful — we have to do it ourselves.
- Valuing ourselves makes us more accountable.
- It's easy to blame our heroes when things go wrong — perhaps they weren't particularly inspiring that week, or they didn't tell us that we did a good job. However, the moment we decide to be our own inspiration, we start holding ourselves accountable for our actions.

- Heroes can come and go.
- We don't have to sacrifice our beliefs or become someone we're not comfortable being.
- We can inspire others.
- The respect we have for ourselves, the hard work we do and the confidence we have, help us to become a role model for others. By staying true to ourselves, we're a more realistic inspiration to those around us. Plus, having others look up to us boosts our confidence even more.
- We know ourselves, including our strengths and weaknesses. We know we're not perfect and it makes us better role models.

I'd like to share a simple journaling exercise:

Sit in a quiet place with a notebook and write down three incidents from your day when you acted like a hero. This doesn't mean that you were as talented as your favourite musician, sports star, or actor. It doesn't mean that you were as successful or as conventionally beautiful as some of

the people you follow on social media. It definitely doesn't mean the comic book idea of a hero, fighting evil or saving lives. What you are looking for are those small moments of heroism that we can so easily overlook in the daily stress of our lives. Did you present as a positive person in a negative situation? Did you make a phone call that you have been dreading, or hit a deadline that was a struggle? Did you do something difficult for your children or partner simply because you love and care for them? By regularly reminding ourselves that we are heroic in our own individual ways, we loosen our reliance on external heroes, placing more trust in ourselves. We allow ourselves to fully blossom and move through life with a heroic and grateful attitude.



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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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