

# The Heights Primary School consultation begins

There has been much debate in the press and on social media etc regarding the permanent site for The Heights Primary School; in the last two issues we have published correspondence on the subject, and the 'From the lookout post' article in the January issue also included an item on the subject. In response to this, Reading Borough Council (RBC) have issued the following clarification:

*'In reference to the article which appeared in January's edition of Caversham Bridge (Pg 4: From the Lookout Post - Heights Primary School) Reading Borough Council would like to make clear that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) remains the body responsible for choosing a site for and designing any permanent new school. The EFA has asked the Council's help to engage and consult with the local community on a permanent location for the school, which the Council is happy to facilitate. The final decision on selecting a site for the Heights remains with the EFA however. The Council would like to thank Caversham Bridge for the opportunity to make this small clarification.'*

The EFA has asked RBC to undertake a community consultation on three sites within its ownership (Mapledurham Playing Fields, Albert Road Recreation Ground and Bugs Bottom), as well as the EFA-owned Highridge (in Upper Warren Avenue).

Two meetings have been held of the Heights Stakeholder Group (a collection of local groups and individuals, the Council and Rob Wilson MP, who has provided much of the information in this article in an open letter to residents). The Group is working in collaboration with the EFA and RBC to support the aims of the consultation. It was agreed that RBC would outline the scope of the consultation, including a timetable for implementation, the consultation reach and the information that will be available to residents to ensure an informed decision can be made.

The details were outlined in a report approved for implementation by RBC Policy Committee, which can be read in full at: <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/media/2452/item10/pdf/item10.pdf>. The stakeholders agreed in principle with the consultation details; but suggested that the survey open date be amended to coincide with the public meeting (exact date to be confirmed).

The report suggests that respondents to the consultation will be able to offer alternative site options for consideration by the EFA. Other privately-owned sites have been suggested by stakeholders, the feasibility of which will now be explored by the EFA. It was agreed that these sites, if viable options, will be included in the consultation.

The consultation, which is estimated to cost £31000, was scheduled to begin on 20th January and conclude on 30th March. This consultation is not statutory and is therefore not binding.

The data collected will be categorised and validated by RBC. It will then be passed to the EFA for consideration and a final decision made on the school's permanent home.

Sufficient information will be provided to ensure that residents are factually well-informed and it is hoped that the community will be able to reach some sort of consensus.

The consultation process will have three stages: awareness; information sharing; and expressions of preference:

The **Awareness** stage will be aimed at ensuring that as many people as possible in the consultation broad reach area are made aware of the process, the timetable and how they can express their preference. This will take the form of a marketing campaign including direct mail, press and social media coverage undertaken by the council. This should be supported by outreach from all stakeholder groups including schools.

The **Information sharing** stage will consist of a period of time during which anyone can access an information pack for each site. It is proposed to make these packs available from a website operated by RBC and to encourage local residents

groups to promote them to their members. It is hoped that the packs will facilitate informed discussion amongst the different communities and allow balanced considerations to be made.

The information packs will include site maps and outline site proposals. These packs will not be fully worked up scheme details but will outline the relative strengths and concerns about each site.

During this stage, it is proposed to hold an open meeting at which the EFA, RBC and a representative for each site will engage in a debate led by questions from the public. The stakeholder group will be consulted on the final makeup of the panel. It is expected that this will be a large meeting and needs to be held within Caversham, with attendance by ticket only, and attendees can submit initial questions in advance. The meeting should be recorded and published so that everyone who wishes can hear the whole debate.

The final stage, **Expressions of Preference**, will follow the open meeting and be an individual, online-only survey response, hosted by RBC. Those without online access at home can take part from any computer, including those at libraries, in the Civic Offices or via any arrangements local groups wish to offer.

The outline timetable is

19th January	Policy Committee confirms process for consultation.
20th January	Consultation process begins with awareness generation.
2nd February	Information packs published by EFA, bookings for open meeting begin.
17th February	Open meeting initial question submission closes.
25th February	Provisional date for Open meeting.
26th February	Survey site opens with access to recording of Open meeting.
20th March	Survey site closes.
30th March	Consultation output published and passed to the EFA.

It is then the EFA's responsibility to select a preferred site. If this site is not in EFA ownership, they will seek to acquire it and will engage with whichever process is required. In the event that the land is held in charitable trust, it is likely that the Charity Commission will have to agree with the overall proposal.

Once a site has been acquired, the EFA will develop detailed plans which will have to comply with the requirements of the statutory planning processes. It is possible for a scheme to not achieve planning consent.

## Third bridge traffic study

A feasibility study into a third River Thames bridge in the Reading area has been given council backing.

Four councils are to provide £250,000 funding for a detailed model of the traffic on both sides of the proposed bridge.

The idea for a new bridge to ease congestion in Reading town centre has been circulating since before World War 2.

There are two main routes over the Thames between Caversham and Reading. The nearest bridge outside the area is at Sonning.

Wokingham and Reading Borough Councils, Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council will jointly fund the study, the purpose of which is to establish the need for a third bridge and the best location for it. The bridge is needed to ease traffic congestion in Reading and in Sonning. As we have seen several times in the last few years, the traffic congestion in Caversham becomes intolerable when Sonning Bridge is closed, which happens whenever the river level rises substantially.

Reading East MP Rob Wilson, who supports the idea of a new bridge, said on local radio that this study was a major step forward, and it was possible that the bridge could be built within five to seven years.

The bridge and any road alterations are estimated to cost between £60m and £100m, and would require government funding.

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## Caversham Clergy

### ANGLICAN St Barnabas

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

### St Andrews

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2 South View Avenue.  
Tel: 947 1787.  
Deacon: Hugh Anscombe  
Fr Paul Rowan

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev'd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

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## TALKING POINT

by Jenny Dowding

### Church is good for our community

Recently, something called the Social Integration Commission reported the results of an unprecedented social experiment, which attempts to map thousands of people's social networks to determine how closely people of different classes and generations mix in modern Britain. We're accustomed to reading negative commentary on the life of the Christian church in this country, so it was good to see the Daily Telegraph's coverage of the report. It highlighted the discovery that churches are probably now the only place where modern Britons are likely to even meet their neighbours. The commission analysed the friendship networks of almost 4,300 people aged 13 to 80 and identified churches and sporting events as the best places for neighbourliness and integration in Britain today. The research found that 'churches and other places of worship are more successful than any other social setting at bringing people of different backgrounds together, well ahead of gatherings such as parties, meetings, weddings or venues such as pubs and clubs.'

Social integration is not the only positive aspect of church life. Earlier last year, we heard that figures drawn from the Office for National Statistics data found that overall job satisfaction has little to do with salary. Employees reporting greatest job satisfaction were vicars, while publicans – who on average earn almost £5,000 a year more – were the least happy in their work. Other older pieces of research have often found that people active in church life tend to live longer, healthier lives than non-churchgoers.

One Christmas, when my children were small, they received a large plastic working clock made up of separate parts that could be assembled and then taken apart again. Several adults pounced on it while the children were absorbed elsewhere, and assembled the clock, turning the key to start it. It instantly whizzed round at a great pace – they had omitted the one important part which controlled the speed at which the cogs turned. They should have read the maker's instructions, but were convinced that they could assemble a toy using purely 'common sense'.

Churches are fallible human institutions and by no means get everything right! However, at their best, they can be models of how human beings are meant to live in relation to each other and to God. Our Maker created us to be social beings, people who need to live in relationships – in families and communities. Our personal physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing is not a simply private matter, but our wholeness depends on good relationships, strong community networks and a sense of mutual interdependence. For all that the churches often fail, we should rejoice that we get some things right as we follow the Maker's instructions.

*The Rev'd Jenny Dowding is a minister of Caversham Methodist Churches*

## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ANGLICAN

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

8.00am Holy Communion  
9.45am Parish Communion  
6.30pm Evensong

#### St John's, Gosbrook Road

8.30am Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)  
10.00am Parish Communion (except 2nd Sunday)  
10.00am All Age Worship (2nd Sunday)

#### St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

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

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

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

#### St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

### RIVERSIDE CHURCH (READING)

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

### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Meeting at Caversham Park School

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Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)  
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10.30am Morning Worship each Sunday  
8.00pm House of Prayer (praise and prayer) –  
2nd Sunday each month  
3.45pm Messy Church – for all the family  
First Sunday of the month

### GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church  
6.30pm Prayer Meeting

### THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

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

#### Gosbrook Road

10.30am  
Woodcote Parish Church  
9.45am (second Sunday)

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

Saturday 5.30pm,  
Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm  
Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

### SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

Church Street, Reading

10.30am  
(House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Church Street, Caversham

9.30am Sunday School  
11.00am Divine Worship  
6.00pm Evening Service

## Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the March 2015 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 2nd February**. The date for the April 2015 issue is **Monday 2nd March**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk  
Advertising copy for the February issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by Friday 30th January. The date for the April issue is **Friday 27th February**.

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## Why is Pancake Day called Shrove Tuesday?

### Or Why do we eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday? And what does 'Shrove' mean?

Well, Shrove Tuesday, which this year falls on February 17th, is the day before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. It is a movable date, and occurs exactly 47 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a time of fasting, and the custom developed, many centuries ago, of eating, before Lent began, all the food which was not allowed to be eaten during Lent, such as meat and fish, butter, eggs etc, all of which would not last until the end of Lent. Often these would be all cooked up together in the form of pancakes, hence the name Pancake Day. In French speaking countries it became known as 'mardi gras', or 'fat Tuesday', and was often a time of celebration or carnival.

In the three days before Lent started, people were expected to make confession. The ancient verb 'shrive' means to confess one's sins and to be absolved from them, and 'shrove' is the past tense of this verb. The three days before Lent were known as 'shrovetide', but only the last of these, Shrove Tuesday, survives today. People who had obtained absolution were said to have been shriven.

You will find very few references to the word today. One is in a version of the nursery rhyme 'the house that Jack built', which contains the lines

*This is the cock that crowed in the morn  
That woke the priest all shriven and  
shorn  
That married the man all tattered and  
torn  
That kissed the maiden all forlorn  
That milked the cow with the crumpled  
horn....*

[in some versions, the word 'shriven'  
has become 'shaven']

If the priest did not have enough time to hear full confessions, or if the person confessing did not have enough time to complete any penance imposed to absolve him or her from their sins (often because he was a criminal facing summary execution), he was said to be given 'short shrift', a term which survives to this day, meaning 'to give little attention to'.

Shrove Tuesday is not celebrated as a religious festival, but Ash Wednesday is often commemorated by church services, and a number of Caversham churches will be marking the start of Lent with special services on that day.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, which lasts for 40 days (not counting Sundays) and finishes on Easter Saturday, symbolising the 40 days that Christ spent fasting in the wilderness. Ash Wednesday derives its name from the practice of blessing ashes made from palm branches blessed on Palm Sunday the previous year, and making the sign of the cross on the foreheads of people as a sign of repentance and confession.

*If you reply to any  
advertisement in this paper,  
please tell the advertiser where  
you saw their name*

### Women's World Day of Prayer

Everyone is welcome to attend the service, men, women and children, which will be held at St John's C of E Church on Friday March 6th at 8.00pm.

The theme of the service, prepared by the Christian women from the Bahamas, is taken from St John's Gospel chapter 13. Jesus said to them "Do you know what I have done for you?" It challenges us to demonstrate the same radical, unconditional love for others that Jesus showed when he washed the feet of his disciples.

### Reading Festival Chorus

Reading Festival Chorus will be performing Haydn's Mass in Time of War (*Paukenmesse*) and Parry's *Songs of Farewell* in St. Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham on 21st March at 7.30 pm. Tickets and further information may be obtained from Alison Mackay (tel. 0118 983 4253 or email [tickets@readingfestivalchorus.org.uk](mailto:tickets@readingfestivalchorus.org.uk)). You are also invited to visit the Reading Festival Chorus website at [www.readingfestivalchorus.org.uk](http://www.readingfestivalchorus.org.uk) to learn more about the choir's activities.

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### The first people

When God first made the world, there were no people living there. There was sky, sea, and land. There was a sun, a moon and lots of twinkly stars, but no people.

Then God made a man. The man began to breathe. He opened his eyes, stretched his legs and arms, and started to walk around.

God made a beautiful garden where the man could live.

God made trees and plants, flowers and fruit.

"Please look after my world," God said to the man.

Then God thought, "Maybe the man will be lonely living on his own in the garden." So, God made a woman to help the man and be his friend. "Be happy living here," God told them, "and please look after my world."

Genesis 2:5-25





## Road Watch

Following the report on the Highmoor Road/Albert Road junction in the January *Caversham Bridge*, the following is an extract from a letter from Harry Walmsley:

*I think a change of priorities would cure the problems there, so that traffic on Albert Road would have to give way to that using Highmoor Road. Some traffic calming may be needed.*

Do you agree with this view? This is one of the options being considered for this junction

The traffic lights at the Caversham Park Road/Henley Road junction were upgraded during December, causing long queues at times while the work was in progress. The completion of this operation means that most of the traffic lights in Caversham have now been upgraded.

A previous edition of *Caversham Bridge* referred to the problem of people cycling in St Martins precinct and on nearby pavements which are heavily used by pedestrians. The local police are now reacting to calls over the last few months from residents who have complained about the issue. From the middle of January, they are issuing a £30 fine to any cyclist caught cycling on pavements.

Local police had been on the streets to enforce the message that cycling on pavements is not permitted, and had previously been warning those whom they caught cycling on pavements. The police had been giving out three warnings, but now they will be issuing £30 penalty tickets to people caught cycling on the pavement. They are covering the areas in Caversham of most concern, around the shopping precinct and Caversham Bridge. A number of cyclists had been issued with warning letters. One pedestrian has been hit by a cyclist going quite fast, which could have had serious consequences.

Following an article covering the difficulties pedestrians face at the Church Street/Bridge Street junction, local resident Francis Serjeant writes:

*I was interested in reading the articles about pedestrians and traffic in Caversham. Ironically seeing that there was a photograph of the junction, the crossing from Barclay's Bank to Romans/Walmsley Estate Agents is still a hazardous business for anyone attempting to cross the last stretch from the central island. The timing of the traffic lights is such that there is c2 seconds gap from the last of the traffic heading to the bridge from either Church Road or Church Street. It does not help either that the phasing of the lights means that north bound traffic is stopped before the Church Street southbound traffic, giving the dangerous illusion that the road is clear before traffic is released to turn right towards the bridge from Church Road. It also does not help that the road curves by Lloyds Bank so any vehicle travelling towards the bridge cannot be seen until a few yards away by a person crossing this junction.*

*This is a busy pedestrian crossing as many pedestrians use the route via St Peter's churchyard and Caversham Court to walk to Reading. All we ask is a few more seconds to safely cross this busy junction.*

## Come and sing 'St John Passion'

On 7th February between 10.00am and 5.00pm at St Mary's church, Henley-on-Thames.

You are invited to come and sing the magnificent St John Passion in German with Henley Choral Society and dynamic 23-year old musical director, Benjamin Goodson. We will be looking at how Bach sets the Passion narrative, and the role that the chorus plays in portraying the drama. The workshop will suit singers who are familiar with the work, and who wish to explore the vocal qualities that the high drama of the piece demands. If you don't know the work, then sight-reading ability is an advantage. We will be joined by William Balkwill to sing the Evangelist's narration and our regular accompanist David Smith. The workshop is open to ages 16-plus.

Don't miss a wonderful opportunity to explore this masterpiece of the choral repertoire.

The timetable for the day is

Registration: 10.00am.

Workshop: 10.30am-12.30pm, 1.30-3.30pm and 4.00-5.00pm.

Tea & cakes at 3.30pm.

The cost is £15.00 before 31st Jan, £20.00 after that date or on the door, free for under 25s. Score hire £3.00 or bring your own, preferably The New Novello Choral Edition.

Call Jenny Fleming 01491 575165, or email: hcsaltos@gmail.com, www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir

I was very interested in your article 'Golden Twin Anyone' [see *Caversham Bridge* December 2014]. Frederick William Slade was my grandfather and this is the only picture I have seen of him as a young man. I believe the photo must have been taken when he first bought the shop as a newly married man. My father, Leonard William, and his brother Dennis were both born in the flat above the shop, Dennis in 1904 and my father in 1908. I think that my grandparents sold the shop mainly because of Granddad's ill health and moved to South View Avenue around 1923 which became the family home for many years.

Dennis Slade will be remembered by St Andrew's Church Caversham as he was verger there for many years until his death in the 1980s. My father was churchwarden at St John's Church in 1958 and attended there until his death in 1985. I am a member of their Mothers' Union. My Grandmother died in 1969 at the age of 94.

I contacted Mr Walton, the person who provided the photo, and he kindly gave me a copy which the family are thrilled with. Many thanks Mr Walton..

Susan Taylor (nee Slade)

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From left to right are: Rachel Stevens (volunteer), Cathy Holwill (volunteer officer), Councillor Matt Rodda, Oonagh French and Marcus Wheeler (volunteer).

## Churchyard and community garden improved by Conservation Volunteers

A group run by the Conservation Volunteers has been helping to improve a community garden and was due to work on St John the Baptist's churchyard as Caversham Bridge went to press.

The Berkshire office of the Conservation Volunteers has organised the group of residents to carry out garden maintenance to help support wildlife and improve green spaces in Caversham.

The group was due to carry out work at the churchyard on St John's Road, in January, and other projects are planned during 2015. For details contact the Conservation Volunteers on 0118 956 8959 or email [o.french@tcv.org.uk](mailto:o.french@tcv.org.uk)

The community garden project at Amersham Road Community Centre has involved volunteers laying slabs and creating leaf patterns in concrete. Volunteers also laid the garden's hedge this autumn and winter and managed it to help it support wildlife. The garden is run by Food for Families, and the Conservation Volunteers are providing assistance with heavy work.

This is part of on-going work by the Conservation Volunteers on a number of environmental and community projects in Reading and across Berkshire.



## Key events in our first half century

As part of the celebration to mark the 50th anniversary in September of the first edition of the Caversham Bridge, Ian Lowry compiled a list of the key events over the 50 years. The first few years were published in previous issues. Here are the rest.

**1997.** Hong Kong's lease expires.

March. Channel 5 is launched.

May. Tony Blair becomes Prime Minister.

August. Diana, Princess of Wales is killed in a car crash in Paris.

**1998.** Madejski Stadium opens in Reading.

April. The Good Friday Agreement is signed.

August. The Omagh Bomb atrocity. Twenty nine people are murdered.

November. The Human Rights Act receives the Royal Assent.

**1999.** Tracy Emin's *My Bed* is exhibited at the Tate Gallery.

April. Jill Dando is shot dead on the doorstep of her house in Fulham.

May. First elections to Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.

October. The Ladbroke Grove rail crash claims 31 lives.

**2000.** The year of the Dome.

April. The RUC is presented with the George Cross by the Queen.

August. The Queen Mother celebrates her 100th birthday.

October. Wembley Stadium closes after 77 years.

**2001.** The foot and mouth crisis hits British agriculture.

May. John Prescott punches an egg thrower in Rhyl.

October. USA invades Afghanistan.

**2002.** The Queen Mother dies.

July. A statue of Margaret Thatcher is decapitated.

August. Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman go missing in Soham.

**2003.** London congestion charge is introduced.

February. Rowan Williams is enthroned as Archbishop of Canterbury.

November. President George W. Bush visits Britain.

**2004.** The 60th anniversary of D-Day.

October. Opening of Scottish Parliament building in Edinburgh.

December. Thousands die in Indian Ocean tsunami.

**2005.** Prince Charles marries Camilla in a civil ceremony.

Tony Blair wins the general election.

September. England win the Ashes.

**2006.** Formation of the Royal Regiment of Scotland.

March. Opening of the Senned Chamber of the Welsh Assembly.

July. Arsenal FC move to Emirates Stadium.

**2007.** The House of Lords is reformed.

March. The new Wembley Stadium opens.

May. Madeline McCann is reported missing in Portugal.

**2008.** Boris Johnson becomes Mayor of London.

March. Heathrow Terminal 5 is opened. Over 500 flights cancelled.

November. Lewis Hamilton becomes the youngest F1 World Champion.

**2009.** The year of the banking crisis.

May. Start of the MPs' expenses controversy.

July. The Staffordshire Hoard is uncovered, the largest Anglo-Saxon treasure ever found.

**2010.** The coalition government is formed.

June. The Cumbrian massacre, when 12 people are shot dead.

October. The Equalities Act comes into effect.

**2011.** Prince William marries Kate Middleton.

May. The Queen visits the Republic of Ireland.

August. The English riots begin.

**2012.** The Queen's Diamond Jubilee is celebrated.

February. The *Sun on Sunday* is first published.

April. The Boat Race is stopped, due to a swimmer in the water. An Oxford blade is broken at the re-start. Cambridge wins.

**2013.** Prince George is born.

February. Pope Francis is elected, the first pope from the southern hemisphere.

May. Sir Alex Ferguson announces his retirement.

**2014.** The Scottish referendum votes No to independence.

July. Malaysia Flight 17 is shot down over Ukraine, 298 people die.

August. The Commonwealth Games close. England tops the medal table.



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You are warmly invited to the AGM of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens on Wednesday 4 March, 2015, 7 for 7.30pm. A brief business meeting will be followed by an illustrated talk on *Gardening through the Ages and Caversham Court*. The speaker will be plant scientist Dr John Evans.

Members and non-members are very welcome at the meeting, which will be held in Reading Canoe Club, The Warren, Caversham RG4 7TH.

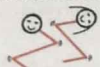
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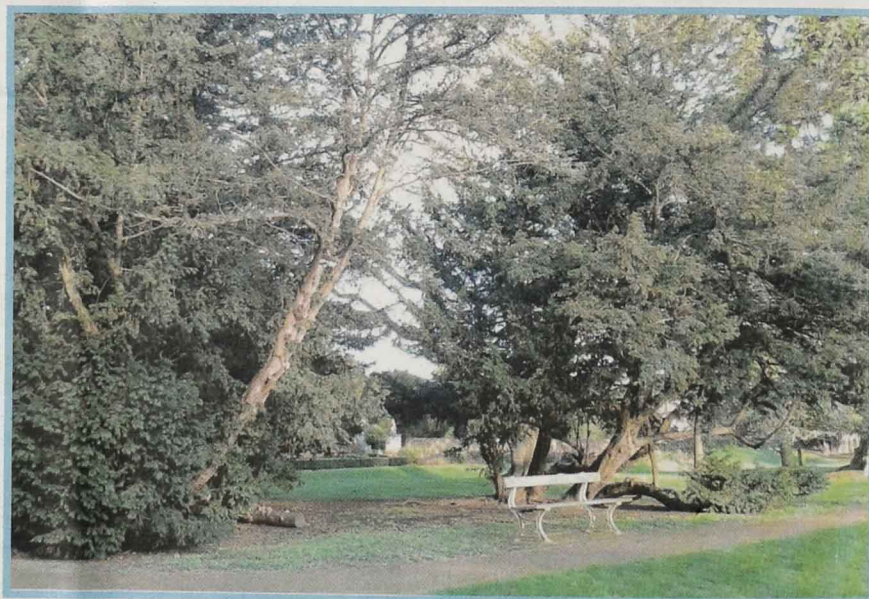
# Caversham and Magna Carta

In 1215 England was in crisis, torn by civil war and threatened by invading armies from France. King John was forced into setting his seal to Magna Carta. The ensuing truce between king and rebel barons lasted only a few months, and the charter itself was reissued several times, most notably after King John's death in 1216. The Magna Carta issued by the regency for the nine-year-old King Henry III bore the seal of William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke and lord of many lands in England, Wales, Ireland and Normandy.

Those lands included the manor of Caversham. We know little about how Caversham looked in the 13th century, but a mill was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and even before the church of St Peter was founded in the 12th century there had been a Saxon church on the site. By the time William Marshal acquired the manor in 1189, there was a castle or fortified manor house of some status close to the mill, near to where Dean's Farm is today.

After a glittering career in tournaments, William Marshal served King Henry II as a knight, counsellor and ambassador. When Richard I came to the throne, he gave the heiress Isabel de Clare to William in marriage, together with all her lands. Following Richard I's untimely death in 1199, William served King John, remaining true to his oath of loyalty despite harsh treatment and mistrust on the part of the flawed king. When John died in 1216, William Marshal was chosen as regent for the young Henry III, and his statesmanship was instrumental in ensuring that peace was restored to England.

In 1219, feeling that his end was nigh, William Marshal asked to be moved to Caversham to die. He was taken by boat along the Thames, accompanied by members of the royal household. His body was laid out in the chapel of the manor house, which William had richly endowed. After lying in state in Reading Abbey, he was buried as a Knight Templar at the Temple church in London.



Yew trees live for hundreds of years, even a thousand years. The ancient family yew in Caversham Court may have been planted when St Peter's church was founded in 1162, so the young tree could have been growing when civil war raged between John and the barons, and when Magna Carta was sealed further downriver at Runnymede.

On 15 June 2015, primary school children from Caversham will come into Caversham Court, bringing posters proclaiming some of the values that we have inherited from Magna Carta. The charter to which John set his seal was in effect a practical solution to a political crisis, and little is left on the statute books from Magna Carta today, but, the basic principles of liberty and the rule of law remain at the root of our own legal system, and inspired the American Declaration of Independence and Bill of Rights. It is fitting that those values should be hung from the venerable yew, a living link between our times and those of Magna Carta and William Marshal.

Celebrations to mark the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta are being planned all over the country, including peals of bells in which St Peter's will join. The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens will contribute a small display in the 17th century gazebo about William Marshal, renowned as the Greatest Knight and lord of vast domains - and of the manor of Caversham.

Vickie Abel, chairman of Friends of Caversham Court Gardens



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## CHURCHES

# Nativity Live!

Nativity was alive and kicking in Caversham.

On Christmas Eve people assembled at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church to re-enact the journey to Bethlehem. Costumes were put on, marshals were ready in their hi-vis jackets, and there was a large star to lead them. After a prayer led by Revd Jenny Dowding, the procession moved off, headed by two beautiful Shetland ponies, one white and one black which were called Bob and Dave respectively. Several people, not all of whom were church-going, dressed up in costume. Mary and Joseph and assorted angels led the way to St John's church where the procession stopped to hear from the shepherds. The carol 'While shepherds watched their flocks by night' was sung and the sheep were left to graze as the gathering snaked its way along Gosbrook Road, and over the busy junction at Briant's Avenue.

This was where the marshals certainly had to be on their toes, holding up three-way traffic. When everyone was safely across it was on to the inn. The innkeeper said "No room!" but agreed that they could sleep in the stable, where they would probably find a Red Cow! (the name of the pub).

Following the singing of the Calypso Carol, 'See Him lying on a bed of straw', the procession moved off to the corner by The Star Inn (now the local Cop) where it was joined by the Wise Men, who had

been studying the stars and knew that a phenomenal event was about to happen. After another carol, 'We three kings of Orient are', the 200 or so people moved on towards St John's church, where they were warmly welcomed into a beautifully decorated church.

When all were assembled in the packed church, we watched a tableau of the nativity by the children who then sang 'Away in a manger'. Revd David Jenkins told of the 'reason for the season'. This message was that *God's love is immense and He wants us to love others in the same way as He loves us. He chose to become one of us to show us this. 'Hark the herald angels sing' and 'Happy birthday to Jesus' were sung, and everyone shared in the refreshments provided by ladies of the church.*

This was a truly moving experience, going out into the dark night, being reminded of the star all those years ago and the message that it brought. Appropriately enough the space station was seen looking like a large star moving across the sky!

What a journey, but it told the same old message: 'Peace On Earth' and 'Love Your Neighbours'. Maybe we should be thinking about putting into practice this message in Caversham?

Cynthia Neave

## St Peter's Organ Appeal

I am delighted to report that we have now reached a total of £50,000. The additional £10,000 raised since the summer is the result of some great events (eg: Valuation Day, Ride & Stride and Christmas Market) and also some very generous donations.

We have made good progress on ordering the instrument. We issued an enquiry to three potential suppliers in September, and visited a number of their organ installations in churches around the region as well as their showrooms.

Following a detailed analysis of the quotations received we have selected one supplier who we believe will deliver an ideal instrument for St Peter's. We will be buying a new three-manual organ in a high quality console, with a completely new bank of speakers which will be located towards the east of the church.

Before signing the contract we plan to have a mock-up of the new organ, including testing alternative locations for the speakers. This is likely to be in February or March, and Ian Westley will be able to play the demonstration organ for us all to hear.

We have set our final target at £60,000. The latest fund raising event was a concert by the Reading Male Voice Choir at St Peter's church on January 17th. There is still some way to go to reach the target figure.

The choir is selling CDs for £5 each, and we have published a small booklet on the church organs which is available for just £2 from church.

We hope to have the new organ on order in April with installation in late summer.

Richard Larkin, Chairman - Organ Committee

## Cappuccino and tombola at St Peter's

In early December St Peter's church was transformed into a Christmas market place – complete with a cafe in the Vanderstegan Chapel! Homemade goods were for sale from Christmas cakes, puddings and chutneys, to stockings, candles, Teddy bears, wreaths and table decorations! Much fun was had playing tree tombola (pictured), guessing where the treasure was buried and also the weight of the



Photo: courtesy Paton Photography

Christmas cake, plus hoopla and more. Children also enjoyed decorating gingerbread men and a fine raffle, supported by Tesco, helped the event raise £1717 towards replacing the church organ.

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## TRIBUTE

### Ted Carter (1926 - 2014)



Grammar School. Grammar school meant an additional two years of education, a huge commitment for his parents. He played football for the school team and went on to play for Marlborough Town, G W Corinthians and Dortmund before giving up football to play hockey for the Ministry of Works hockey team.

Leaving school aged 16 on a Friday, he started work the following Monday as a Youth in Training for the GPO (now BT). He always said if you lived in Swindon you either joined the railways or the GPO. It was his neighbour who recommended the GPO.

Ted Carter was born on the eve of the general strike in 1926, the day his father, a train driver and later ticket inspector, laid his uniform on the steps of Swindon town hall. He attended Euclid Street

This meant he was in a reserved occupation during the war. He had very clear memories of how he spent D-Day and many others, ensuring the repeater station, housed in a converted pigsty just north of Cricklade, was always operational.

War over, he joined the Control Commission and went to Germany to work on the reparations.

Nearly 30 years later, returning from a family holiday in Germany, he made a long diversion north to revisit Dortmund. He was pleased, perhaps impressed, with what he saw: the regeneration of a city of which he had been a small part.

After the Control Commission, back in England he moved to Reading, bought a house and, in March 1951, he married Christine. Then followed a family life with three daughters and many hobbies, friends, holidays and lots of work and a busy career in the Post Office/BT. He became a member of the South Chilterns Lions where he was a dedicated fundraiser for many years, a bellringer at Upton Nervet Church and then later a member of the congregation at Ashampstead and then St Peter's Caversham and Emmer Green. He was also a distributor of the Caversham Bridge for many years.

## A LITTLE ARROW

Long ago I knew a Methodist minister who was looking after some German children. Toys were not so plentiful in those days, and much pleasure was derived from home-made, simple things. My friend found a long stick and fixed a free-turning cardboard arrow to it. His party set off for a walk, and at every road junction the Germans called out, "Tweest, little arrow, tweest!" Where did the arrow lead them? Perhaps back home in five minutes, or out into some lovely countryside? I hope not round the back of the gas-works, or through heaps of mud!

Real route-finding demands more than a little arrow pushed by the wind or a pair of hands. In these days, technology has advanced. In wheeled vehicles we have satnavs. Even these can go wrong, as my husband discovered on a Cornish coach tour. The driver's wrong setting landed the vehicle on a twisty, single-track lane - and into the ditch! Generally, of course, satnavs are very useful.

It is said that our good old British Ordnance Survey maps are the best in the world. Unfortunately, their days could be numbered, but as an ex-rambler I really hope not. If you compare the Spanish or Irish maps with the O.S. ones, you will soon see what I mean! Good maps can be read like books. Spend time looking at our three local ones (covering Newbury, Oxford and Reading). It's not just the roads that are important. The maps show us all sorts of interesting environmental, historical and landscape details, if we use the index of symbols carefully.



Other good route-finders are finger-posts (official and unofficial), and milestones, which have stood from time immemorial.

Our local Ridgeway National Trail is well worth following on foot, using the special sign-posts. It is easy to follow along the top of the Downs from Avebury, in Wiltshire, then over the Thames at

Goring and Streatley, and on into the Chiltern Hills to Ivinghoe Beacon. I will expand in my next 'Peg Leg' article.

Meanwhile, our Bibles are well documented with sign-posts. Turn to the Old Testament, and the last words in the Book of Exodus (Chapter 40, verses 36-38). God provided the Israelites in the desert on their way to the promised land with His finger-posts. If the cloud remained over the tabernacle by day, and the pillar of fire by night - STAY PUT! Move on when the cloud lifts!

We know torches are needed once we are out of town lights. The peoples of old knew this. Psalm 119, verse 105, tells us our Bibles are 'a lamp to our feet and a light to our path'.

May all our journeys be successful, with our compasses and maps orientated correctly!

Peg Leg

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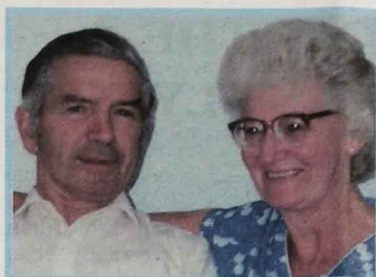


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## TRIBUTES



Henry with Barbara, his wife of nearly 64 years

### Henry Dalton (1923-2014)

Henry was born on 26th March 1923 in Harrington, Cumberland. One of seven children, he lived there until his early teens when the family moved to the Micklands estate in Caversham. He worked as a delivery boy for Kensleys grocery store on Henley Road until he joined the RAF when he was 17.

He trained as an observer, and was sent out to Burma. There he caught malaria and had to be grounded. He joined a small team of men who were sent into the jungle behind enemy lines to locate enemy positions. During one of these missions he fell seriously ill, got lost from his unit and was reported missing. He was eventually found and transported back down river on a raft by a series of local tribesmen and was the only member of the team to return alive.

After the war he ran a grocery shop in Emmer Green and it was during that time that he met Barbara. They were married in 1951 and son Malcolm was born a year later. He enjoyed playing cricket and was a member of the local RAF Association team, although he was also known to turn out for the Jewish Ex-Servicemen's Association, a connection that had developed through Barbara's employers.

Henry used to cycle to work every day, which was quite a journey in the early 1960s, so he bought himself a Lambretta scooter. Not long after that he heard about a priest in a Scottish parish who had no means of transport, so the scooter went north and Henry returned to his bicycle.

In 1960 he became caretaker of St Anne's School. In those days many of the children would be at the early morning mass, so Henry would invite them in for a cup of tea so that they didn't have to wait in the playground until school began. When he retired at the age of 65 the school presented him with a Royal Doulton tea service. In the early days of his retirement, Henry spent many happy hours in the garden, growing vegetables and keeping everything tidy and well-trimmed, and he also spent many hours playing with his granddaughters.

He and Barbara were active members of the Burma Star Association. He also devoted many long hours to St Anne's Church and regularly helped in counting the weekly offerings. He would help in whatever way he could, often climbing perilously tall step ladders to change light bulbs in the church.

He died on 13th November after a few months in a nursing home. Until then, right to the very end of his long life, Henry's mind was alert and he had retained his remarkably youthful looks and his uniquely dry sense of humour.

### Ian Ivor Cane 1927-2014

Ian Cane was born in the Knowle area of Bristol on 26th July 1927. An only child, he was brought up an Anglican but converted to Catholicism as a young man.

Just too young to serve during WWII - he received his call-up papers on the day the war ended, a source of many jokes in the ensuing years - Ian nevertheless did serve in post-war Europe, and the devastating aftermath of the conflict had a profound and lasting effect on him, although he was always very non-judgmental.

Sometime during the 1950s, the family moved to Blenheim Road in Caversham, and Ian remained in the same house, even after his parents had died, right up to his being admitted to the RBH. Many people will remember Ian, seeing him walking down into Caversham to do his shopping or on the way to church. Despite commuting daily to London to work as an administrator with the Esso oil company, he became an active member of Our Lady and St Anne's parish. He could be seen regularly serving at the altar as well as helping with the counting of the weekly offertory collections and, having trained as a catechist, he helped with the children's confirmation courses and also with the courses for adults wishing to convert to Catholicism. He was a member of the Society of St Vincent de Paul at St Anne's for over 40 years and President for about 30 years, compiling and editing the annual National Conference Report. When he took early retirement, Ian spent a lot of his time visiting the sick, elderly and housebound parishioners, and he also became a 'buddy' in the prison service.

In the mid-1990s, he felt he was getting too old to serve at the altar, so he became a member of the choir. The breadth and depth of his knowledge of all music, but particularly church music and that of his favourite composer, George Frederic Handel, was awe-inspiring. He was a very loyal member of the choir, and many of the motets which are now regularly sung are a result of Ian's suggestions and advice.

Ian loved to travel and his love of music and his deeply held religious beliefs meant that he visited many cities and towns of musical excellence and history, and many centres of religious devotion. His musical holidays were usually taken alone but he organised and led a number of pilgrimages from the parish which were always greatly enjoyed by those who travelled with him.

He died on 21st November 2014 in the RBH after suffering a number of falls.



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## ENVIRONMENT

# KEEPING THE ASPIDISTRA FLYING

No wandering this month, I'm afraid. I'm staying indoors, and writing about my aspidistra plant, which was given to me around 25 years ago.

Once a plant that symbolised Victorian and Edwardian respectability, it became an object of derision – especially when Gracie Fields sang about *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World*.

It was nicknamed 'The Cast Iron Plant' on account of indestructibility. It could survive all manner of abuse – unheated rooms, low light-levels, dust, over-watering, forgetting to water, fumes from coal fires and gas-lights, etc. Growth was slow, and most of the time, it appeared to be doing nothing at all.

Mine was like this, until November last year. New leaves appeared at about the same rate as the old ones died off. It was re-potted every few years, with the dead bits of the creeping rhizomes removed, and the living bits re-set so that the growing-tips had a bit of space to grow, but it never got any bigger.

Then, a couple of years back, I read that wild aspidistras grow on forest floors in south-east Asia – China, Japan and Vietnam. The plant was moved a bit farther from the window, and after a year was noticeably bigger.

Last year, I thought I'd give it a treat, and put it out in a shady part of the garden for the summer. In fact, it was there until late November, when we had our first warning of frost. I brought it indoors and looked at it carefully for signs of pests or damage. There was nothing to report – just a few weeds which had



seeded themselves in the compost. It was then that I noticed a couple of little knobs, poking through the soil.

I reached down a book on houseplants, to see what aspidistra flowers looked like. The book never mentioned flowers at all. A second book said that aspidistras rarely flowered, but the flowers were drab and insignificant.

After a couple of weeks, those little knobs, which proved to be the flowers, had opened, lifted just above the compost on stalks about an eighth of an inch tall, and the little cup-like flowers were about half an inch across. I counted eight segments to each flower, which peeled back so that each one was vaguely starry, and thought this odd, because aspidistras are related to lilies, which have flower-parts in threes and sixes. The stigmas were flattened in the bottoms of the cups, and the stamens I couldn't really see at all.

It used to be reckoned that, being so close the ground, the flowers must be pollinated by slugs and snails. Recent research in Japan has shown that gnats, springtails (which used to be classed as insects but now are not), and small land crustaceans called amphipods carry out the job. In fact, it appears that until recent years, little research had been done on aspidistras in the wild. Since the 1980s, the number of known species has risen from about five to over a hundred!

My book says that the fruit is a berry. Since it seems unlikely that there will be any gnats, springtails or amphipods to do the necessary pollination in my garden room, perhaps I should take a small watercolour brush to the flowers, in the hope of producing a berry. After all, if it takes another 25 years for the plant to flower again, I may not be around to see another one!

Happy Wanderer

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## CLUBS

## Caversham Heights Society

During December the Society had two meetings. The first was a talk by Sally Leonard on 'The Church in Action on the Streets - Listen, Care and Help'. Essentially this was about the role of Street Pastors not only in Reading but around the world. The idea began in 2003 when a pastor in Brixton had the idea of sending teams out on to the streets to befriend and listen to young people in an attempt to reverse the spread of knife and gun crimes in that part of London. So successful was this, and so pleased were the police by the reduction in levels of crime, that the scheme has been adopted in many other parts of the country, as well as in countries such as Nigeria, Antigua and the USA. By the end of 2014 there were over 3000 people involved as street pastors in different towns and cities in the UK.

Street Pastors, sometimes thought of as 'The Church without Walls', were established in Reading in 2009. Currently there are 79 ordinary Christians from 30 different churches in Reading acting as Street Pastors. Based at Greyfriars Church in Friar Street, and dressed in waterproof jackets clearly marked with the words 'Street Pastors', and armed with bottles of water, flip-flops and lollipops, they work closely with the Local Authority and the police. They go out in teams of three or four between 10.30pm and 4.00am on Friday and Saturday nights on to the streets of central Reading. They see their role as a form of practical care to help inebriated youngsters sober up, to listen to their problems and concerns and to help them get home safely. Since the Street Pastors began walking the streets outside bars and night clubs, crime rates and drunkenness have dropped dramatically.

At the second meeting the Tuesday Singers from Maidenhead entertained members with seasonal music and led them in singing Christmas carols. This was followed by the annual Christmas party which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Meetings are held on alternate Wednesday evenings in the hall attached to Caversham Heights Methodist Church. New members and

enquirers should contact the chairman of the Society, Jill Hodges, on 959 5307 or via [irishjill@southcote.net](mailto:irishjill@southcote.net)

## Probus

The speaker at the December meeting of the Reading and District Probus Club was the Reverend Andy Moffoot, who gave a talk entitled "Do they know it's Christmas?" at the club's joint lunch with the ladies. Andy is a Methodist minister who oversees two churches in the Tilehurst area of Reading.

The talk focused on Kenya, where Andy was the youth and children's co-ordinator from 2003 to 2007. The talk was illustrated by many slides, some of which depicted the tourist areas and the wildlife of that beautiful country. But Andy's job in Kenya meant he continually came into contact with the ordinary people, many of whom live in great poverty, and we were shown many more pictures of the conditions in which they live. These conditions include on occasions the effects of drought and flooding. Andy described the work the church is doing to help alleviate the poverty which exists there. This includes running schools, hospitals and other outreach programmes, such as providing meals, in addition to the more normal church activities of holding services, running Sunday schools etc. Andy also described the (informal) rubbish recycling that takes place in many places: his housekeeper (provided by the church) would go through his bins, extracting what she could make use of, then the warden of the complex in which he lived took what he wanted, the binmen then did the same, and finally the men at the tip scavenged what they wanted. This produced a very extensive recycling activity, with far more reuse of materials than we achieve in this country.

This was a fascinating insight into the real Kenya, and emphasised the contrast between the rich and the poor.

Probus is a club for men connected to a business or profession, who enjoy a meal once a month in the congenial company of like-minded men. Lunch is followed by a talk, on a variety of interesting subjects. The club meets at the Caversham Heath Golf Club. If you are interested in joining, then contact the secretary David Laird on 0118 9470709.

## Rosehill WI

President Margaret Pyle welcomed members to the December meeting, thanked Margaret Seal for the table flowers, and said that the record for November's meeting was available for all to see. Next, Margaret reminded us that the annual meeting resolution form was in the current issue of WI Life for anyone one who wished to select from a list of resolutions.

Margaret said that two members had been to see Esme Ellingham, who was doing fine. Thanks have been received from Doreen Mann for the flower card sent last month. We had a bring and buy stall which made about £25 - thanks to all who contributed.

Our speaker for the afternoon, Alix Booth, talked about Punch and Judy. This was very interesting and entertaining - Alix started by talking about the history of Punch and the fact that he is over 350 years old, has had different names over the years including Punchinello and does not have many redeeming features. Alix then gave us a short show with all the usual characters bringing it right up to date with one puppet looking very like Alex Salmond.

The afternoon continued with tea and mince pies concluding with the raffle.

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

## Caversham WI

Members were joined by guests from neighbouring institutes to enjoy our combined Christmas/birthday party. The entertainment was provided by 'Carol of the Bells' with a selection of Christmas songs played with great expertise on solo hand bells. There was also a chance to join in with the percussion instruments. Even supper waited while everyone had a closer look at the bells. The bring and share supper was much enjoyed, especially the cake made by Jill.

A bumper raffle ended a most enjoyable evening with everyone in the Christmas mood.

## Reading Gardeners

We have two meetings in February.

On February 11th Graham Gough of Marchants Hardy Plants in East Sussex will discuss a selection of his favourite plants in a talk entitled 'The Icing on the Cake'.

On February 25th Paul Barney of Edulis Plants in Ashampstead will talk on 'Plant Hunter in Manipur'.

Our meetings are held in Caversham Primary School at 7.30pm.

Visitors are very welcome for an entrance fee of £3.

Please go to our website [readinggardenersclub.org.uk](http://readinggardenersclub.org.uk) for more information.

## Caversham Horticultural Society

The society is awaking from winter hibernation with the reopening of the Oakley Road allotments trading shed (next to the veterinary surgery). The shed is open every Saturday until October between 10.00 and 11.30am, and supplies members with gardening sundries such as compost and fertilizers at competitive prices. The February opening coincides with the sale of several varieties of seed potatoes.

Membership is required for using this facility and costs £5.00 or £3.00 (over 60s) per household. RG4 postal district gardeners are invited to join the society for use of the trading shed. Members also enjoy free access to talks (unless a charge is specified), and usually two outings are arranged in the year to visit gardens. To join either turn up during the trading shed opening hours or contact the membership secretary at 10 Geoffreyson Road, Caversham, Reading RG4 7HS or email [membership@caversham-horticultural.org.uk](mailto:membership@caversham-horticultural.org.uk) or telephone 0118 947 0510

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Loft Conversions

Free Estimates  
Local References  
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