

Full Closure of Reading Bridge from 18th May



Reading Bridge will be fully closed to all traffic and pedestrians for a maximum of two weeks from May 18th, as essential work to strengthen the 92-year old structure continues.

Fully signed diversion routes will be in place for the duration of the closure. Further details of these routes will be available on <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/bridges> once they have been finalised.

Reading Buses have been informed of the closure and will be diverting services accordingly.

Over the Easter period - and starting on Monday 6th April - it will be necessary to have a closure on one side of the bridge to carry out some of the carbon fibre strengthening work and to keep vehicle vibrations away from the work areas. This will involve both a lane closure and the adjacent pavement being shut for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, for a period of up to 20 days. As with previous lane closures, there will still be a lane running in each direction over the bridge, and one of the pavements will remain fully accessible to pedestrians. Off peak lane closures will then resume when this section of the work is complete.

After the two week closure in May, off peak lane closures will then resume until the completion of the project, currently estimated to be in late June or early July.

Hope for a third Bridge!

A petition signed by over 300 people from Caversham, Emmer Green, Reading, Woodley and Earley calling for a third bridge has been presented by Reading Cllr Matt Rodda to Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council, encouraging them to think again about the proposed crossing. See page 8

Will we ever see a 3rd bridge?



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Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN St Barnabas

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

St Andrews

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

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

Revd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Road,
Caversham RG4 7AD Tel: 9479505
rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Revd Jeremy Tear

St John's Vicarage, St John's Road,
Caversham RG4 5AN Tel: 946 2884

Revd Marion Pyke

26 Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7RZ
Tel: 947 5834

Revd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

RIVERSIDE CHURCH (READING)

Revd Rob Beardsley Tel: 07736 353233
Email: robg.beardsley@sky.com
www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Secretary: Dr Alison Johnston
Tel: 0118 947 5152

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Revd Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.
Tel: 947 2223

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Transitional Ministers Revd Jonathan Edwards
Church office tel 954 5353
Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptist
church.org.uk

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

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

Deacon: Hugh Anscombe

Fr Paul Rowan

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Revd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

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

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The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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TALKING POINT

by Revd Colin Bass

RENEWAL

We can read in Matthew 19. vs27 that Peter said, 'Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we have?'

Jesus had just been instructing a rich young man to 'go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.'

Then we are told that 'When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.'

At this point Peter is indignantly objecting that he and his companions have done what Jesus instructed the rich young man to do; and more. They have left everything and followed Jesus. The young man has been offered the reward of 'treasure in heaven'. Peter wants to know 'What's in it for us?'

In Jesus' reply we usually concentrate on his promise that 'everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold'.

Fair enough — it's true. Those who have had to make the choice between their families and following Christ's call will tell you that they did establish close, brotherly relationships with hundreds of men and women. You may know that from your own experience.

I was called (by the Bishop, on behalf of Jesus) to leave the church where I began my ministry to adopt my rootless, wandering ministry throughout the Reading area. I have been blessed with friends in churches all over the town, and beyond — and that's just in this life!

But Jesus' reply to Peter contained more. Before Jesus made that promise, he said this. 'Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.'

Now you can scoff at thrones if you wish. And I don't mind if you object that you would rather avoid the responsibility of judging anybody.

The phrase I want to concentrate on is: 'at the renewal of all things ...'

Because of the imagery of thrones, and of judging, we tend to skip over this phrase and push it aside. But it is a vitally important clue.

In the whole passage, Jesus is clearly talking about the afterlife and its rewards — 'treasure in heaven'; he says, and 'when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory'.

So ... Jesus expects that 'all things will be renewed' — not blown to bits in some cataclysmic, apocalyptic explosion.

Let me tell you what the New Testament teaches us to expect when our earthly lives are over.

Our bodies will be different but our personalities will continue. We shall be recognisably, identifiably ourselves, just as Jesus was after his resurrection. We shall be alive, and therefore developing, changing, improving. And we shall be given, not rest, but new responsibilities like and beyond the responsibilities we have been given here. We shall inhabit Paradise. But that is not where 'the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory'.

That is yet another development, when God decides that the time has come to merge Earth and Heaven into one. That is the 'renewal of all things' — the new Creation — where Jesus will reign, and God's intentions will be carried out 'on Earth as in Heaven'.

All this is far too exciting to skip over and push aside. Get the significance of these resurrection promises inside you, and it will change your life for ever.

Revd Colin Bass is a Third Order Anglican Franciscan who has ministered frequently in Caversham, most recently at St John's.

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
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

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9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

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Saturday 5.30pm,
Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm

Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

Church Street, Reading

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

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Church Street, Caversham

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

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the May 2015 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 6th April**. The date for the June 2015 issue is **Monday 27th April**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the May issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by Friday 3rd April. The date for the June issue is **Friday 24th April**.

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM
St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX
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LETTERS

Priory Avenue Surgery Making Progress

As Chairman of the Patient Participation Group at Priory Avenue Surgery, I would like to bring your readers up to date on developments.

The quality of the doctors and nurses has never been questioned. The view of Dr Payne, Primary Care Medical director for the Thames Valley, is that "there is no evidence of direct clinical risk". These are the reasons why I am staying on as a patient at Priory Avenue Surgery.

A prime concern is the continuity of care. The plan is to employ full time doctors where possible. In the last few months one full time and five part time doctors have left. Three new full time doctors and a part time doctor are being phased in. Dr Vishal Mittal has started as a full time doctor. Dr Nicholas Routledge has started part time and will become a full time doctor. A full time female doctor is being sought. Dr Ashram Zaman has started as a part time doctor. Short and long term locums are being employed in the interim. A new Practice Manger has started. We have been fortunate that the nursing staff have all stayed on, as have nearly all the other staff too.

In common with many other surgeries there is a patients' group. If you would like to become actively involved please come to one of our monthly meetings. The minutes are put up on a noticeboard in the surgery waiting room. For more information, minutes and newsletters, e-mail me at prioryavenuePPG@gmail.com or leave a message at reception.

Francis Brown, Chair, Priory Avenue Patient Participation Group

Dear Caversham Bridge

As a long-standing patient of Priory Avenue Surgery I want to add some points to Mr Ferguson's front-page article to give a fuller picture.

The Quality Care Commission highlighted more than failures in effectiveness and leadership in its report. It spelled out that these failures were putting patients at risk: "Patients were at risk of harm because systems and processes were not in place in a way to keep them safe."

Immediate action was called for to:

- "ensure all patients' records are updated with appropriate information and documents in relation to the care and treatment they have received." This would not affect most patients registered at the practice but if you were one of those who had been in hospital or had external care then it could be of concern as regards follow-up treatment and accuracy.

- "undertake regular infection control audits that are documented and introduce a cleaning schedule for practice equipment." This implies there was no such cleaning schedule before!

Many surgeries do still manage to supply a named doctor and this must surely be the ideal. The use of locums - and there have been some very good ones attending Priory Avenue - cannot become the norm. The word locum means someone who temporarily fulfils the duties of another.

I also dispute Priory Avenue surgery's view of the locum issue. Their website says "there are some benefits in having other clinicians oversee your health with a different pair of eyes; a sort of second opinion". Actually I find excessive use of locums to be an inefficient use of time, as you have to establish a rapport and outline symptoms with a different person. And from what one has heard they are not cost effective either.

I am sticking with the Priory Avenue, which served my family well until recently, and it deserves the chance to rectify the serious problems found there. I also agree with the need to support its staff, especially those on the front line, who have been doing their best in difficult conditions.

Your sincerely
Katherine McAleer

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The Heights Primary School Public Consultation Begins

The Education Funding Agency has asked Reading Borough Council to carry out a public consultation on its behalf. Having started on March 9th approximately 67,000 letters will have been sent to individual households in Reading and the Parishes of Mapledurham and Kidmore End, outlining how the consultation process will work.

The Heights Primary is a Free School, currently located on a

temporary site in Gosbrook Road, Central Caversham. Under Government rules, only the EFA can select where a Free School can be located and they have identified the following five possible locations.

- High Ridge, Upper Warren Avenue
- Mapledurham Playing Fields
- Albert Road Recreation Ground
- Shipnells Farm (better known as Bugs Bottom)
- Dysons Farm (Land at the junction of Shepherd's Lane and Kidmore Road)

The consultation commenced with the production of Information Packs on each of these and an Open Public Meeting held on Wednesday March 25. Hard copies of the Information Pack should be available at the Civic Offices in Bridge Street, and in local libraries and leisure centres.

A Public Survey is to be carried out during the month of April on a permanent location for The Heights Primary <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/schoolsite>. This is the opportunity for people to tell the EFA which of the five sites they prefer and the reasons behind that choice. Again, hard copies of the Public Survey will also be made available at the Civic Offices in Bridge Street, and local libraries and leisure centres. Residents giving their views will be asked to provide a name and address. The deadline for Survey responses will be 5pm on Friday May 1st.

When the Survey is complete, Reading Borough Council will collate all data and pass it to the EFA for consideration. It will then be up to the EFA to select a location for The Heights Primary School, based on the public responses received.

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The Hill Primary School Celebrates Sports Success

A table tennis team from The Hill Primary School in Caversham has won third prize at the English Schools Table Tennis Championships zonal finals.

The only school to represent Berkshire in table tennis this year, The Hill had a team of five pupils from years 5 and 6 who travelled to London on 31st January to take on the best players from the neighbouring counties in the South East. The Hill team qualified for the semi-final knockout round after finishing second in their group. They missed out on the final by being narrowly beaten on points, but were extremely pleased with their prestigious third place position.

The Hill's pupils are proving to be sporting all-rounders with the school representing Berkshire at the National Tag Rugby Finals in July of last year and the athletics team are representing the county at the Berkshire Athletics Finals this year.

Head teacher, Dawn Cox said: 'Our table tennis team had a thoroughly enjoyable time, gained some experience of a different sport and represented the school and Berkshire honourably at a national championship. Huge thanks must go to the parents of all five boys for their dedication and willingness to travel into central London on a Saturday.'

Lead Member for Education, Cllr John Ennis said: 'Congratulations to The Hill Primary School on sending sports teams to compete at regional and national levels. Special thanks should be given to the parents and teachers who have given up their free time to support the children in these competitions. Sport is an important part of any school's curriculum, and it is great to see a Reading school do so well in such different disciplines.'

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Course to help Caversham Bereaved

Caversham people who have been bereaved can benefit from a special course run by Funeral Directors A.B. Walker & Son.

The family business, which has an office in Caversham, has set up the Link Bereavement Care Group and has already provided a bereavement course for scores of its clients who have lost loved ones.

The courses have proved so successful that the service is now being opened up to the wider community. Anyone in Berkshire who has been bereaved in the past year and feels they can benefit can apply to go on the six week course.

A.B. Walker's Head of Bereavement Care, Melissa Walker, said: 'We know for many people the funeral is just the beginning of the emotional journey. Grieving is a natural part of recovering from bereavement and losing a loved one can be one of life's most difficult experiences. Everyone's experience of grief is unique but many people feel sadness, shock, anger, anxiety and despair.

'Although we recognise that the course would not necessarily suit everyone, we feel there are huge benefits in sharing experiences of loss and that's why we set up the group. We are determined to provide the best possible care for those who have lost a loved one. Our service does not end immediately after the funeral but continues afterwards, particularly through the difficult months ahead.'

The group was set up in partnership with the charity Cruse Bereavement Care.

Each session is a mixture of learning and group interaction, managed by trained group bereavement facilitators. The programme is held at A.B. Walker & Son's Reading office and is free of charge.



Pictured left to right are Melissa Walker, A.B. Walker's Head of Bereavement Care; and Jackie Cassini Mellor who set up the Link Up social group after she attended the first bereavement course

'We see a change in the people who come along,' said Melissa. 'We see them growing in confidence.'

'The courses have been emotional, tears have been shed, and special friendships have formed.

'People like to share their stories,' said Melissa. 'They can feel they are not alone, and that their feelings are normal, which has resulted in close bonds forming in the groups.'

Already 14 A.B. Walker & Son staff have volunteered and gone on a four day training course to be facilitators. They include pall bearers and funeral arrangers. 'They are naturally caring and all have huge amounts of experience to offer,' said Melissa. Each course is also run with the support of a representative from Cruse Bereavement Care.

After the course the bereaved are invited to stay in touch and join a Link Up social group which meets once a month.

Anyone from Berkshire who has been bereaved in the last year and feels they would benefit from The Link Bereavement Care Group can email Melissa Walker: melissa@abwalker.co.uk

For further information please contact Julian Walker on 0118 9839411 or 07879 448753 julian@abwalker.co.uk

Tapestry Choir

The Tapestry Choir present 'Folk Songs of the Four Seasons' a concert celebrating the changing seasons.

On Saturday 11th April between 4 and 5pm the Tapestry Female Voice Choir will be performing in the stunning setting of St. Laurence's Church Reading, conducted by its musical director Sarah Latto.

The concert will be centred on Vaughan Williams' *Folk Songs of the Four Seasons*, a cantata written in 1950 featuring British folk songs celebrating Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

This piece features a setting of 'Summer is Icumen in', which is the oldest

known musical composition written in multiple parts, and dates back to the mid-13th century. The earliest manuscript of this piece was actually discovered at Reading Abbey, and was copied between 1261 and 1264.

In addition to the Vaughan Williams cantata, Tapestry will perform some more modern songs that celebrate each season, including pieces by Joni Mitchell, Gershwin and Britten.

Please join us after the concert for refreshments.

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*every Thursday 2pm - 6pm

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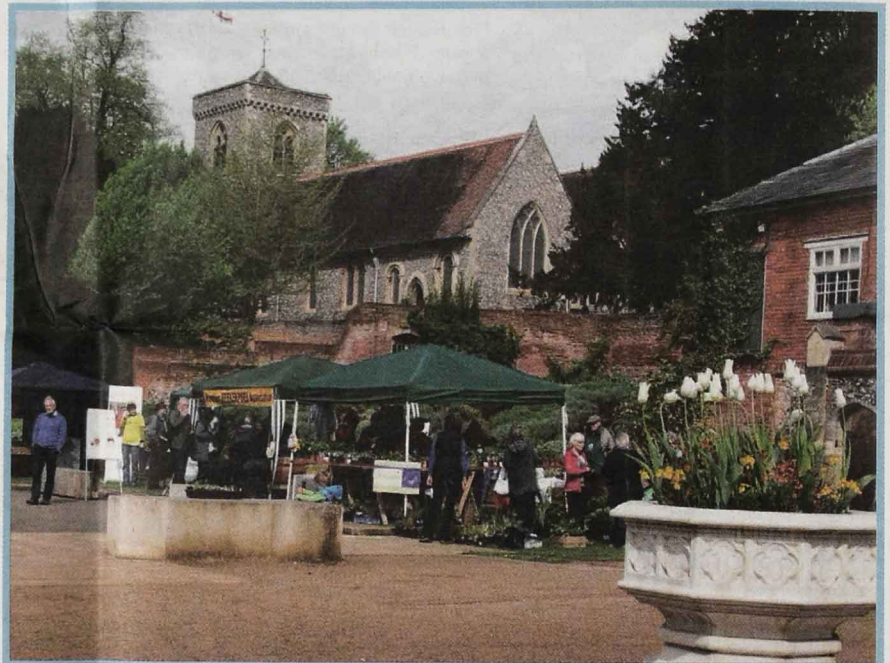
Bean Pole Day Gardeners' Event

Caversham Court Gardens will be hosting another Bean Pole event on Saturday 25th April. This is a gardeners' event, with many stalls selling vegetable and flower plants grown by local organisations, including BBOWT (Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust), also some restored previously loved garden tools. A local willow worker will be making and selling plant supports. The local beekeepers to show everyone how bees 'work'. The RSPB selling bird boxes, bird tables and bird food. Guided walks around the gardens, children's activities and of course the local woodland products including bean poles sold in bundles of 11, also pea sticks. The tea kiosk will be open for light refreshments.

The event is run by Econet, a group of local conservation volunteers

Magna Carta Crossword Solution

Across - 1. William, 24. Marshal, 5. Spur, 9. Banquet, 12. Throb, 13. Eyrie, 14. Ice, 15. Roi, 16, 19, 22. Knight, Ever, Lived, 18. John, 21. Pommel, 23, 11. Pembroke, 26. Mug, 27. Isaac, 29. Voter, 31. Grave, 32. Reddish, 33. Audi, 34. Arundel
Down - 1. Webster, 2. Liner, 3. Mitre, 4. Caversham, 6. Proviso, 7. Reeve, 8. Abbey, 10. Uzbek, 17. Idolaters, 20. England, 25. Wives, 26, 28. Magna Carta, 30. Third



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Children's Liturgy at Our Lady and St Anne

The Children's Liturgy group at Our Lady and St. Anne's Church is run at the same time as the 10am Sunday Mass. Children from tiny tots up to eight years old come along (with their parents if they wish) and listen to the Gospel, sing, dance, pray and usually take part in a drama or craft activity that represents the message of the day. The children take great pleasure at the end of Mass in showing the congregation what they have created and telling them the message they have heard. This is a wonderful way to enable young children to access the Word of God at their own level and understand His love in a personal way.

Rosamund Porter, Noel Scott and Clare Kingswood run the group. For the feast of The Baptism of Christ they prepared a model of a baptismal font and all the children wrote their names on slips of paper and stuck them onto the font.



Children with their Baptismal Font *Photo by Jane Shaw*

St Barnabas Church

Household & Handyman Sale in St. Barnabas Church Hall and Grounds, Grove Rd, Emmer Green on Saturday 2nd May from 10am till 12noon. Furniture, tools, books, Bric a Brac, plants and knife/tool sharpening and more. To offer donations please call Richard on 947 5744 or Wendy on 946 1365.

Pancake party at Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Over 60 people enjoyed a meal of bangers and mash followed by pancakes at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Tuesday 17th February. The 150 pancakes were expertly prepared by Barbara Macrae and Viv Emerson and served with lemon juice, or maple syrup and /or ice cream.

The meal was followed by a talk given by James Rowley, the husband of a former minister at the church. His subject was the Racecourse Community School in Mindola Zambia which he and his wife Rosemary Fletcher had visited a while ago. The school's mission statement is as follows: 'To work hand in hand with donors or stake holders to address the needs of orphans and vulnerable children to achieve their God-given potential and ensure them the basic right to health, food, shelter and education.'

The church has supported this school for many years and regularly sends money to support the teachers who give their services voluntarily not having been paid for five months. With support from our church and from a church in Canada the school has grown in size and has 1772 pupils and 20 staff. It has also been extended and now has six classrooms, four old ones and two newer unfinished ones. The students are taught in three shifts to fit the classrooms. They are taught to Grade 9 but ideally the school would like to be able to teach to Grade 12 but lacks the funds to extend. Student numbers have increased because of the increase in numbers of orphans and vulnerable children and the fact that the school which used to teach to Grade 6 now teaches to Grade 9.

There is no caretaker to keep the premises clean and no boundary wall so security guards have to be employed overnight. There are no toilets.

The school really needs a project manager/administrator. The staff members are just teachers trying to do their best under very difficult circumstances. The Head teacher has been very ill for the last year and the Deputy Head is Acting Head at the moment.

The total amount raised from tickets, raffle, donations and a talk given to Network, was nearly £400 which will go some way towards paying the teachers.

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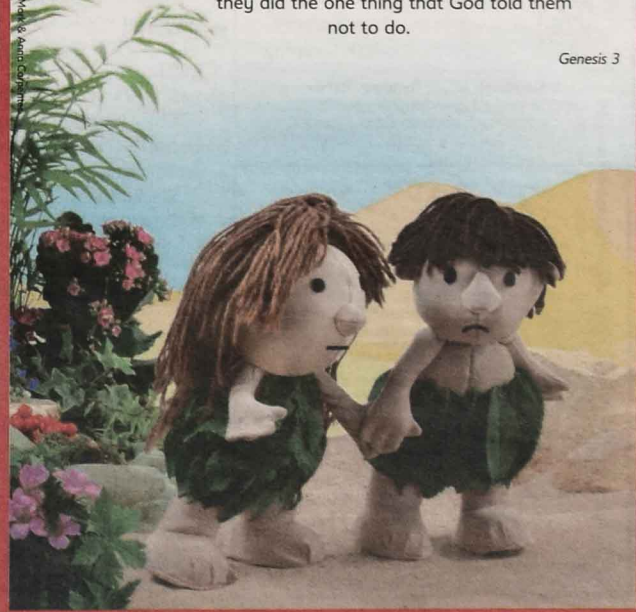
Adam and Eve lived in God's beautiful garden. They were very happy. They could go where they liked and eat anything they wanted. Except for one thing. There was just one sort of fruit that God said they must not touch or eat.

But Eve wanted to taste the fruit. One day, she picked the fruit and she tasted it, even though God had asked her not to. She thought it was so good. She gave some to Adam and he ate it too.

At first, Adam thought it was delicious. But God was upset because Adam and Eve had eaten the fruit which he told them not to eat. "You must leave the garden," God said.

So Adam and Eve had to leave the beautiful garden. All because they did the one thing that God told them not to do.

Genesis 3



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Third Bridge Petition



Reading Cllr Matt Rodda

The petition, which was, called for the following:

"We the undersigned need a third Reading bridge to reduce the chronic delays caused by floods closing Sonning Bridge, which have blighted Caversham, Emmer Green, Reading and the surrounding area, including Woodley and Earley, South Oxfordshire and other parts of Berkshire. This flood-proof bridge to the east of Reading would be used mainly for local traffic and would not be part of a new motorway to the M40.

We call on Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to recognise the benefits to their communities of a third bridge, and to work with Reading and Wokingham Councils and the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership on drawing up agreed plans and a timetable which would then be the basis of bids for any available Government Funds." ????, who presented the petition said: "It was interesting to talk to Oxfordshire councillors of all parties and to listen to their views when I spoke about local traffic problems and I do hope that views may be changing on this issue."

EARLY LEARNING

Nestling in the shadow of The Ridgeway, on the Oxfordshire/Wiltshire border, lies the village of Ashbury. It is an attractive place with many thatched cottages and streets with quaint names from centuries gone by. For me, the most interesting part is the church, with its Norman foundations. It is a place of friendly feeling, and a plaque inside may explain why - "Be it remembered that in the chancel of this church the Rev. Thomas Stock curate of this parish in the year 1777 opened a Sunday School. This later became the first of its kind in England to be housed outside the church in a building of its own, still to be seen near the present church school." Wow! - outreach of a very early kind! Apart from the scriptures, the children learned their "3 R's" before the arrival of state education.

Chorus singing was the most attractive thing I remember in my Sunday school. "Jesus loves me, this I know" and "Wide, wide as the ocean" still ring in my head today. They can form a firm bedrock to a Christian faith.

In my children's generation, syllabuses were used which combined lessons with a take-home sheet. This formed an extremely good link between church and home. We often used them at bedtimes with our children, and I know many other parents did the same.

But what of nowadays? Many Sunday schools have become very small, attracting only the children of church members. So many outside activities take place on Sundays, including sports clubs and visits to a separated parent. Often it can be impossible to have a series of lessons - many children never attend two Sundays running. Some churches manage better, but they are few and far between.

What is the answer? It has been shown in Caversham that holiday clubs go well. Lots of spiritual teaching is gently woven with plenty of fun. It's very hard work for the helpers, but "messy church" and getting parents involved is a way forward. Weekday evening clubs can work well in some places.

The youngest generation is so important, and as one who benefited enormously in younger years - this is a really deep cry from the heart!

We can't go back, but think, for a moment, of those eighteenth-century children learning and enjoying so much - in such simple ways.

Peg Leg



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By popular demand Caversham Heights Methodist Church are having another

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Details in the next edition of Caversham Bridge

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ENVIRONMENT

SPEEDWELL

Speedwell was an old English way of saying good-bye. It was short for speed you well – meaning may you prosper. One of the old names for the Speedwell flower was Farewell, and it has been suggested that the plants were given this name because they grow along roadsides. Not surprisingly, given the name, in some parts of the country, bits of the plant were sewn into clothes, to give protection to travellers.

Another common English name for Speedwell was Bird's-eye, from the shape of the flowers, and the fact that many of them have a concentric ring. Some of the childish superstitions which grew up around picking the flowers were quite bizarre – birds would come and peck out your eyes, or your mother's eyes would fall out. It was also thought that if you stared at the flowers for too long, you would go blind.

There are over twenty species of Speedwell growing wild in Great Britain. Some of them, as farmers and gardeners will know, are common weeds in gardens, especially in lawns, and in arable fields. Some will only grow in dry, sandy soil, like the Breckland Speedwell. Others grow in water, like the Brooklime, which you find by rivers and streams around Caversham. The Spiked Speedwell is handsome and rare, and the Rock Speedwell is rarer still. It grows on limestone in a handful of locations in the Highlands of Scotland.



As a photograph to accompany this article, I have chosen a picture of the Slender Speedwell, taken at Easter time on the edge of a golf course not a million miles from Caversham. Apologies if you have this one as a pest in your lawn, but I thought that the flowers, with the blue fading into pale mauve, looked particularly attractive. It was covering a large area. The plant is not native, and was introduced from northern Turkey and the Caucasus in the 1830s. It escaped, and is now widespread. In this country it rarely sets seed, but even very small bits of it will take root easily, hence its rapid spread. Roy Vickery, in his book, *The Oxford Dictionary of Plant Lore*, tells us that it was so common in Shropshire, that they nicknamed it Everlasting Sin, because it was so attractive, and so prevalent!

Speedwells seemed appropriate for this time of the year, because many of them will be flowering, and because of their botanical name, Veronica, making one think of Saint Veronica and the Easter story. I haven't come across an explanation as to why the name was applied to this particular genus of plants.

St. Veronica does not appear in the Bible, and there is no early documentary evidence for her existence. Her name is said to have been Berenike, a Greek name which in Latin became Veronica, and it signified a true image. The story goes that when Christ was on the Via Dolorosa, Veronica took pity on him, and offered her veil so that he could wipe off the sweat from his face. Some versions of the story call the cloth a handkerchief, and some a towel, and some say that Veronica herself wiped the sweat from Jesus's face. The miracle was that ever after that, the cloth carried a true image of the face of Jesus. The original cloth is said to be preserved in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and there are several early copies of it in different places. And now, for understandable reasons, St. Veronica is the patron saint of photographers . . . and laundry workers!

Happy Wanderer

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CLUBS

Caversham Heights Society

The Caversham Heights Society held two contrasting meetings during February, both of which were highly informative. The first talk, by Francis Brown, was on 'Computer Security', a topic very much on the minds of many of our members given the frequency with which the media raise the issue. Francis basically looked at *What do the Bad Guys Want and What can we do to stay safe?* Under the first heading he stressed that fraudsters wanted to steal your credit card information and your email passwords. If they do break into your system they would disable your computer and then use different means to extract money from you. The cost of cyber fraud in the UK alone amounts to over £30 billion a year! Globally it is over a thousand times that. Measures you can take to protect yourselves are: avoid Scareware; use common sense; keep the software up to date; keep Adobe up to date; do not allow anyone else access to your password; your password should be a mixture of at least 8 symbols, a mixture of numbers and letters; if anything suspicious suddenly pops up either delete it or, if in doubt, switch off your computer. Whatever you do, do NOT download anything suspicious. If you fear that you have been attacked then phone 0330 123 2040, a specialist police number or report it on line to www.actionfraud.police.uk While many of us were shaken by what Francis had to say we nevertheless felt we knew what we had to do to protect ourselves.

Our second speaker took us way back before computers and the internet were invented. With speed, enthusiasm and humour John Rogers talked about the *History of the Post Office: Kings, Boxes and Dots*. Our journey went backwards from the current largely automated systems used for sorting the mail to the beginnings when messages, usually from those connected with the royal court, were sent by horseback. By the late seventeenth century and during the eighteenth century missives/letters were sent by stagecoach along certain routes. The recipient was expected to pay but if the missive could easily be read such payment was invariably not forthcoming! By the early Victorian period Rowland Hill and Anthony Trollope suggested that this was inefficient and the sender should pay. Thus began the system of postage stamps, beginning with the penny black in 1840. With improvements in transport, most notably the railway, the postal system expanded across the country. Trains also enabled the development of parcel post. By the early twentieth century there were several deliveries a day, usually between two and eight, though in parts of London there were as many as 24! Apart from delivering mail the Post Office was responsible for telephones (and boxes), telegrams, stamps and post offices, often in very remote villages. Most post boxes were placed along strategic routes. Each new monarch, even Edward VIII, had a new set of boxes with their emblem on the front. Sadly some of the designs leaked and had to be replaced! During the post-war period the Post Office had a crucial role to play but because it was labour intensive, costs were rising, and new automation was being introduced which used dots and bar codes to simplify the process, its importance has diminished. It is being kept afloat largely because of junk mail and charity mail but because of increasing competition from electronic mail as well as private companies it is contracting, especially in rural areas. The survival of the Post Office will depend on merging with village stores, local pubs or even combining with banks to provide a much needed service. All in all an enthralling evening.

Meetings are held on the first and third Wednesday evenings between September and April in Caversham Heights Methodist Church hall at 8.00pm. New members are always welcome. Those interested should contact Jill Hodges on 959 5307 or via irishjill@southcote.net

Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club

Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club will be holding a practical session involving spheres and leaves on 8th April at 7.30pm at the Methodist Church Highmoor Road Caversham RG4 7BG. Entrance fee £5.50 for visitors. For more details please contact Shirley Sexton 0118 9412329

Caversham Allotment Association

The next meeting of the Caversham Allotment Association is on Tuesday 14th April at Church House, Caversham. The speaker will be David Kent who will be talking about 'Gardens of the National Trust', an ideal subject before planning those days out later in the year. Do please come along. Talk starts at 7.30 and there are refreshments and a raffle. Entrance is free. Contact Carol Wheeler on 0118 9475802 for further details. Don't forget that Church House now has a lift which will appeal to all those who were prevented from attending in the past due to the stairs.

Caversham WI

The speaker's title was *The Dismal Trade* which turned out to be anything but dismal. Mr Adam Miles gave an informative history of funerals from mediaeval times to the present day with slides and many anecdotes.

The competition, *My Favourite Music to be Played at my Funeral* proved very popular with 11 entries varying from classical music to pop tunes. The winner was Sue Taylor with runners up Monica McMasters and Claire Elliot.

News of forthcoming events was given and a reminder that the Annual Meeting with a bring and buy, will be our next meeting in March.

Chazey WI

On the 3rd February members were entertained by Chris Walton, our local jeweller in Caversham, talking about his life, doing an apprenticeship and then opening his shop in 1986. Snippets of information were heard, a gold bar weighs eleven and a half bags of sugar! We looked at various jewels that he had brought with him and he explained details about precious stones - we learnt how to care for and clean our rings and to check that they are secure in their settings. It was a very enjoyable talk and members were able to ask questions afterwards. A vote of thanks was given by Hilary Morrison followed by refreshments. Our raffle was won by a guest, Valerie Holden, and the competition was shared by Carol Briscoe and Tao Berry. Meetings take place on the first Tuesday in the month at the Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road, Caversham at 7.45pm and prospective members are always welcome.

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Rosehill WI

President Margaret Pyle gave the usual warm welcome to all present including four visitors who, we hope, will become members. The report of the January meeting was available for all to read. She then went on to say that the Centenary Baton would be handed over to Oxfordshire on Tuesday, 14th April and asked if anyone wished to attend a celebratory lunch on the same day. Margaret then spoke about the forthcoming Council Meeting at the Hexagon to be held on 20th April and again asked if any members wished to attend.

There were walks on the 10th and 24th February and scrabble sessions on the 11th and 25th February. Margaret Seal presented the birthday buttonholes. Treasurer Doris Goddard thanked everyone who had contributed to the fund for the emergency bags for RBH, was pleased to say that a total of 135 had been delivered to the hospital, and was hoping for further contributions in order that more could be sent. Pat Denney had been in touch with Buscot Ward at RBH and reported that they are still delighted to receive cardigans, hats and blankets made by members, but the design of the hats has been changed and a pattern will be provided by Pat.

The talk was given by Sally Botwright about the *Gardens of the City of London*. Sally is a Blue Badge Guide and she gave an excellent talk (with slides) about all the small gardens within the City of London Square Mile. Sally said that up to 7% of the area in the square mile is green, even if this only means a small pot with a plant in it! Many different livery companies have their own gardens which are open to the public. These gardens are very popular with office workers in the summer months for relaxation and exercise.

After the talk we had the usual cups of tea, biscuits, and a raffle.

We meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 2.00 pm in St Barnabas Church Hall – why not come along and see us? You would be made very welcome.

Caversham Horticultural Society

Gardeners are invited to the society's first talk of 2015 on Wednesday April 22nd when Paul Green of Greens Leaves, a specialist plant nursery, will discuss seasonal plants. Plants will be available for sale. This talk will be held at our usual venue, Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road starting at 7.45pm. The charge for non members is £3.00. As annual membership only costs £5.00 (£3.00 for over 60's). Why not join the society and recoup the admission fee?

Ten days later we will be holding our Spring Plant Sale on Saturday 2nd May which will be held at the Caversham Oakley Road allotments between 10.00 and 11.30am. Come and stock up from a wide range of donated plants at bargain prices.

Inner Wheel Club of Caversham

The Inner Wheel Club of Caversham will celebrate its thirtieth charter year with a special lunch at Caversham Heath Golf Club on the 16th of April. It was in April 1984 that fifteen wives of Caversham Rotarians met for the first time to form the club. In the early days, members met in each other's houses. However, as the club became established, and as the numbers grew, a room in the Methodist Church in Highmoor Road was booked for the monthly meetings. Later, the club moved to a room in Grace Church, Emmer Green where it still continues to meet. Of the original fifteen Caversham members, five are still actively involved in the club.

Inner Wheel began in Manchester in 1923 as a ladies' club to run along Rotary lines. It was the inspiration of Margaret Goulding, a trained nurse who served throughout the First World War. Inner Wheel's initial objects were twofold – to promote true friendship and to encourage the ideals of personal service for others. The movement expanded quickly, initially throughout Great Britain and Ireland and then throughout the world, so a third objective was added – to foster international understanding. These are still the three objectives which motivate the movement.

Since 1967, when Inner Wheel International was formed, it has spread to over 100 countries, with a membership in excess of 100,000 women. There are nearly 20,000 members in Great Britain and Ireland. It is one of the largest voluntary women's movements in the world and all its activities are carried out in the spirit of friendship and understanding. In some countries it is one of the few organisations where women can have an effective voice in society.

Members of the Caversham club meet on the first Thursday morning of each month and have a full and varied programme of talks, presentations and projects to help those, frequently from less privileged countries, who are in need of the basic, material necessities of life.

Caversham Inner Wheel Club is open to all women who are willing to share its three objectives and who would enjoy meeting other like-minded women in a relaxed, informal setting each month. If you would like to learn more about it before making a decision to join, please call Libby Lowry, the Caversham Club President, who will be very happy to tell you more about the club and about the Inner Wheel movement. Libby can be contacted on 0118 9481321 or, if you prefer, you can email her on libby_lowry@hotmail.co.uk for further information.

Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club

Following a recent request for help by Helen & Douglas House, the Lions Club of Goring, Woodcote & District has been pleased to make a donation of £250 towards the cost of music therapy sessions.

This gift will help provide specialist care for very sick children and young adults, as well as support for their families. Music therapy plays a very important part of the holistic care that is provided, offering children and their families a chance to communicate and express themselves through music.

Janet Carruzzo, Reading Community Fundraiser for Helen & Douglas House, said "We would like to thank Goring and Woodcote Lions for giving us this wonderful donation to help us support terminally ill children, young adults and their families through hospice care, providing medical, emotional and practical support. As a charity we rely almost entirely on donations to support our families and we cannot do this without the help of donations like this."

To enable this Lions Club to continue to help in fund raising activities like this we need new young members over the age of 18, from the Goring, Woodcote and surrounding area.

Just a couple of hours each month are all that is needed from anyone wishing to get involved.

The Lions invite you to come and meet them for a drink at one of their

informal meetings held from 8.00 pm on the second Monday each month at the Goring Social Club to find out who they are and what good things they do.

To make contact please telephone: 0845 833 9837

Email: info@lions-gwd.org.uk

Website: www.lions-gwd.org.uk



Photograph, taken outside the Helen & Douglas House shop in Caversham, shows the gift cheque being received by Janet Carruzzo on behalf of the hospice from (left to right) Derek Robinson, Jon Solman and Alan Wright representing the local Lions.

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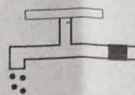
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