

ON PARADE AT EASTER

The tradition of Christians processing through the streets at Easter, much practised in Spain and Italy, is enjoying a revival in Caversham. For some years now St Andrew's church has held a procession featuring palm branches and a live donkey along Albert Road to the church before the Palm Sunday service.

For the first time this year Churches Together in Caversham organised a Walk of Witness through the centre of Caversham on Good Friday. The procession assembled at the Baptist church where a short service was held.

In blustery conditions and occasional drizzle it then proceeded to the shopping precinct where there was a bible reading and the hymn *There is a Green Hill Far Away* was sung. Headed by a large timber cross and a banner, the procession moved off along Church Street and Church Road to Caversham Court Gardens.

Here there was another bible reading and the hymn *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross* was sung. The event concluded with prayers. CTC stated on the service sheet: "Christians all over the world will be joining together to mark this very important day and here in Caversham we want to celebrate God's love for us all."

It is hoped this will become an annual event and many more people will join in next Easter.

A parishioner at St Andrew's writes:

A blustery, showery Palm Sunday did not dampen the spirits of those who set out in a procession along Albert Road towards St Andrew's Church, to commemorate



Gathering together for the final hymn and reading

the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. While controlling our tall palms in the wind and rain was a little tricky, controlling our donkey, Polly, proved much easier, thanks to her minder from the donkey sanctuary at Wallingford.

The procession varied in age from the very young to the very mature and we happily sang hymns as we walked along, guided by our vicar, the Revd Nigel Jones, who led the column, complete with his amazing black swirling cloak. We were warmly acknowledged by cyclists and motorists who passed by. This is becoming a popular annual event at St Andrew's and we would welcome anyone who would like to accompany us on future processions

A member of the Methodist church describes the Walk of Witness:

The walk was planned as a public witness to the significance of Good Friday, and Christ's death on the cross. It also demonstrated the unity of our different churches about this central truth of our faith.

We started at the Baptist church following a joint service there. Clergy and church members from at least seven Caversham churches followed a large cross being carried at the front, and a banner declaring "God is Love". Marshals ensured safe crossing of roads and we paused in the precinct for a gospel reading and a hymn accompanied on guitar and with a portable loudspeaker system. The walk continued to Caversham Court, where it concluded with another reading, a hymn and a prayer before everyone dispersed.

It was a simple act of witness, but there was clear enthusiasm for a bigger and better walk next year!



Children crowd round to pat the donkey at the end of the procession.



The procession winds past the Rectory and into Caversham Court

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Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN

St Barnabas

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

St Andrews

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

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

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

Rev'd Jeremy Tear

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

Rev'd Marion Pyke

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

Rev'd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

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Rev'd Rob Beardsley Tel: 07736 353233
Email: robg.beardsley@sky.com
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Tel: 0118 947 5152

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev'd Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.
Tel: 947 2223

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Transitional Ministers Rev'd Jonathan Edwards
Church office tel 954 5353
Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)
Crispin Fairbairn. Tel: 947 4529

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Fr Paul Martin, The Presbytery,
2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 947 1787.
Deacon: Hugh Anscombe
Fr Paul Rowan

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

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

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

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

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

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TALKING POINT

by Crispin Fairbairn

What's the Talking Point? Well there only seems to be one at the moment. Unless you have been on another planet for the last few months you will be well aware that we have a General Election on 7th May that will determine how our country is governed over the next five years. All the polls and commentators are suggesting that the election will be the closest for many years.

Nobody seems to know quite which way the election will go or who will end up at Number 10. Nor do they know whether they will be able to do much when they get there. Will anyone have a majority or will deals have to be made behind closed doors? We live in "interesting times"!

So what should a Christian position be on how we vote? Is faith a factor in choosing where we put our cross? Does the cross of Easter affect the cross of the ballot box?

Well I certainly wouldn't want to be seen to encourage you to vote in any particular political direction. I have two very good friends who are passionate Bible scholars with a lifetime of Christian service behind them. One is a staunch Socialist and the other a right-wing Tory! Make of that what you will.

However we decide to vote I believe that our decision should be influenced by the Christian ethic of "loving our neighbours as ourselves" which, Jesus said, was second only in importance to loving God with all our hearts souls and minds. It seems to me that this is in stark contrast to much campaigning which is designed to appeal primarily to the selfish motivation of voters. Politicians promise that individual policies will make us richer or poorer with the inference that it is this alone that should be the guiding factor in how we vote. We are not often encouraged to have a wider consideration of the good of society at large and the legacy we will leave for future generations.

Whichever way we vote, however, we should be mindful that our responsibility as Christians should not end at the ballot box. The apostle Paul, in the first of his New Testament letters to Timothy, instructs that of "first importance" we should pray, with thanksgiving, for those in governmental authority. Paul, of course, lived in very different times but he makes an important point about the power of prayer. Praying for our leaders, he teaches, will please God as well as having a positive influence on society.

The natural tendency in 21st century Britain is to find fault with our leaders and criticise them at every opportunity. While it is only right that politicians should be accountable for their actions those of faith should also be accountable for whether they have supported their "rulers" in prayer and thankfulness. So perhaps before we criticise our MPs we should ask ourselves whether we have been faithful in supporting them, in their highly pressured and difficult job, by continually thanking God and praying for them and their families.

Crispin is Pastor at the Grace Church, Caversham

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
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

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6.30pm Prayer Meeting

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

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Church Street, Caversham

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

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the June 2015 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 27th April**. The date for the July 2015 issue is **Monday 1st June**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the June issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 24th April**. The date for the July issue is **Friday 29th May**.

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Rhona Flower – a tribute



Rhona – always ready to help

It is with great sadness that we record the death of Rhona Flower, at the age of 67. She was a much loved member of the Church of Our Lady and St Anne and a member of the editorial team on the Caversham Bridge newspaper.

She died in the Royal Berkshire Hospital on 27th March and there was a packed church for her funeral on 7th April. She is mourned by her husband, Alan, three children and seven grandchildren.

Rhona was born in Brighton on 12 July, 1947, one of five children, and spent her childhood there. She met her future husband, Alan, in 1966 at a bowling alley.

They married in 1968 and six months later emigrated to Australia. They lived in Sydney and Brisbane and Alana, their first daughter, was born in 1973 but they came back to England when she was six months old.

They lived in Ascot at first but then moved to Reading, living first in Waldeck Street but then moving to Caversham where she spent the rest of her life with Alan and Alana, Rebecca and Steven.

When the children were old enough she took part-time work as a PA at Fuller Read's in Caversham. Later, she became librarian at Hugh Faringdon School (now Blessed Hugh Faringdon), again part-time to fit in with children at school, and she worked there for 12 years.

For 38 years she was an active member of the Union of Catholic Mothers, St James branch, twice serving as secretary and for two separate terms as president. She organized fund raising events, went on walks and generally helped the group and its individual members as much as she could.

When the position became vacant, she joined the editorial team of Caversham Bridge in 2007, representing Our Lady and St Anne's parish, and was also a member of the board. Even when no longer able to continue these duties, she carried on delivering the newspaper near her home.

Her interests were gardening, walking, charitable work, the LIFE charity and her family. She helped with all seven of her grandchildren and they were all very close to her throughout their lives.

Rhona was someone who was always ready to help anyone in difficulty. Just three examples: she did the shopping for a UCM member when she came out of hospital after a cancer operation, she looked after her elderly next-door neighbour for 25 years, and she also took part in the Race for Life for cancer victims.

If anyone asked for help she never refused and mostly she anticipated their need without being asked. She never had a bad word for anyone.

Her death was sudden, unexpected and took away someone who touched the lives of very many people. She was admitted to the RBH on Monday 23rd March and was found to have excess fluid in her lungs. Further tests were carried out and, on Wednesday, she was found to be suffering from advanced breast cancer.

A light went out that had made the world a brighter place.

Global Justice launched in Reading

A packed audience celebrated the launch of Global Justice Reading, formerly known as the World Development Movement, on 6th March. The Mayor of Reading, Councillor Tony Jones, said he was pleased to support the group as they were working on fundamental and far-reaching issues that affect people in the UK as well as across the world. Also, he was keen to hear the speaker, Guy Taylor, the trade campaigner from Global Justice Now.

Guy said: "Everyone should know that the EU and America are negotiating a trade deal in secret, a deal that would give American companies the right to sue the UK government if it makes a law which stops them making profit.

"This could mean that we will get chlorine-washed chicken and hormone-fed beef in our shops like they do in America; it could mean that instead of companies having to prove that their products are safe

before they can sell them, as is the case in the UK at present, they could sell them to us 'until they are proved to be dangerous', as is the case in America. This trade deal is called the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)."

Guy encouraged everyone to sign the e-petition to stop TTIP. Over one million people have already signed it but the aim is to get two million signatures.

Helen Palmer said: "It is one of the best meetings I have been to. Guy was a brilliant speaker and there were some very thought provoking questions from the floor."

The launch was concluded with refreshments.



The Mayor, Jackie Oversby and Guy Taylor with some other supporters

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From the Lookout Post

Swan Heights

A planning application to build three tall towers on the Coopers site by the Vastern Road roundabout has been submitted. This would provide 352 apartments in three blocks of 28, 26 and 24 floors. The Coopers site is at the edge of the Station Area Cluster which has been formally identified for tall buildings. The issues are therefore, how tall and what style would be most appropriate on that site.

There are already mixed views about the development but there is no doubt that the application will change the skyline from many areas of Caversham as well as from the river and the meadows. You will find a link to the full application from www.cadra.org as well as

direct links to the summary in the Design and Access Statement and to a document showing the views of the towers from different parts of Caversham.

The Heights School

The consultation on the permanent site for the school closed on 1st May. An information pack was prepared to give more background and the well attended public meeting at Rivermead was a civilised occasion. The Education Funding Agency will receive an analysis of the results of the consultation to support their decision, prior to any formal procedure required for the site chosen. After detailed design and planning, a planning application will follow. Additional EFA funding should enable an expansion of the facilities at the temporary site off Gosbrook Road.

Conservation Areas

Community groups in different areas in Reading have expressed concern about the care of a number of conservation areas. Following a formal report from council officers, we await news of a working party to address these concerns, which will include community groups. There are two conservation areas north of the river: St Peter's Conservation Area and Surley Row Conservation Area. Maps and further details of those areas can be found at beta.reading.gov.uk if you type 'Conservation areas' in the search box. If you would like to contribute to this work, please contact Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk

Arthur Clarke site, Albert Road

The developers A2Dominion held a public consultation on 1st April for their plans to provide extra care housing in partnership with the council on the site of the former Arthur Clarke Home and Albert Road Day Centre. The scheme provides 44 extra care apartments for people aged over 55, spread over four floors. Sixteen would be available for rent and the council will have the right to nominate tenants. Twenty eight would be for private sale. Communal facilities on the ground floor would serve residents and provide some facilities for non-residents by arrangement.

Although it is now too late to comment to A2Dominion on this pre-application stage, you can view the exhibition panels at www.cadra.org. The team are now developing detailed plans for the planning application.

Caversham Centre

After a series of changes over many months, the planning application for St Martins Centre was approved in February. We await news of a start date for a phased

building programme which will allow all businesses to remain open. The property company Hermes will contribute £430,048 towards local transport schemes and it was confirmed at a council planning committee that funds would be made available for transport related schemes in Caversham centre.

Following a CADRA presentation to the traffic management sub-committee in March, transport officers are considering the proposals outlined in the Sharing our Streets scheme and a local consultation is expected.

CADRA AGM and Adult Social Care

All are welcome at this event at 7.30pm Tuesday 12th May at the Baptist Centre. Services for Adult Social Care are of concern to us all and we look forward to hearing from Suzanne Westhead who heads the service in Reading.

Neighbourhood Working

Every two years, the Neighbourhood Action Groups undertake a survey to gather local opinion on a range of issues such as crime, traffic and parking, litter, graffiti, pot holes, anti-social behaviour and more. The purpose is to gather detailed information about local areas which can inform the work of the neighbourhood teams. The survey will run from 25th May to 5th July. Look out for information on where to collect and return paper copies or complete the survey on line.

Following a review of Neighbourhood Action Groups across Reading, it is proposed that there should be one group north of the river which would meet every six weeks, rotating between venues in different areas. Concerns around the Amersham Road estate will be addressed separately, linking with the developing Community Association for that area. Joanne Anderson, RBC neighbourhood initiatives officer, will continue to co-ordinate this work. She will work in conjunction with two neighbourhood officers (public realm), responsible for street care, EVAs, litter, graffiti, fly-tipping, grass cutting and maintenance of public spaces. Julia Naughton will cover Thames and Mapledurham wards. Bill Robertson will cover Caversham and Peppard wards.

Caversham Festival

The 2015 festival will be held at Christchurch Meadows from 12 noon on 11th July to 8pm on 12th July. The free festival includes live music and performances from local bands, comedians, poets and artists, family workshops, tasty food, the traditional festival parade and more.

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Road Watch

Sonning Bridge

A bid for government funding to raise the level of the B478 Sonning to Playhatch road, a main route between Oxfordshire and Berkshire, has been turned down.

The road was damaged when river levels rose in 2014, and was closed for several weeks, causing traffic chaos in the area. Although the road has been repaired, it appears that the only way to prevent a repeat of this damage when the river next floods is to raise the level of the road. Improving the road is seen as the top priority for Oxfordshire County Council, who are responsible for it. The council has received over £12 million in grants for other road projects in the county but the Sonning road remains without a long-term plan or funding to fix it.

Reading Bridge

Pedestrians and cyclists will be able to continue to cross Reading Bridge while it is closed to all vehicle traffic for two weeks this month for essential strengthening works to be carried out.

Reading Borough Council has held discussions with the contractor and structural engineers investigating whether a walking route can be maintained safely across the bridge. As a result, engineers have come up with a revised work programme which allows for a narrow route fenced-off for pedestrians, around which the essential strengthening work can continue.

The route will be narrow, but wide enough for passing pedestrians,

and with care for people pushing prams or using wheelchairs. Cyclists will also be able to use the route, but only by dismounting and pushing or carrying their bikes.

Starting on 18th May, the surface of the 92-year-old bridge will be stripped away for concrete repairs and specialist carbon fibre strengthening works to take place, followed by waterproofing and resurfacing.

Is it a pedestrian crossing?

On April 1st a new type of "pedestrian crossing" appeared in Church Street in Caversham, near the roundabout at the junction with Prospect Street. The crossing is painted on the road in a brick-like pattern, and there are no advance warning signs, or any indication of its function.

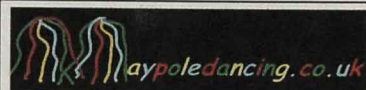
Having never seen nor heard of this type of crossing before, it was assumed to be some kind of April fool prank. But no, it is still there, and has since been complemented by a similar



The mysterious grey brick road crossing in Church Street

crossing in Prospect Street. The pieces of road or pavement (which are they?) near the roundabout have also been painted in a similar pattern.

As both drivers and pedestrians will be unsure of their purpose or who has the right of way, we hope there will be no accidents. Does anybody have any information about these crossings?



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Owen trail to be launched

The Dunsden Owen Association is launching a Wilfred Owen in Dunsden Smartphone app inspired by the work of the great World War One poet who lived in the village from 1911 to 1913.

The interactive app will engage visitors on a fascinating walk through some of the places and countryside Owen pictured so vividly in his letters. The trail will be officially launched at 12 noon on Sunday 17th May at Eye and Dunsden village hall and green. To celebrate there will be maypole dancing, live music, a picnic, fancy dress, games on the green, tea and cake, and further activities on the trail itself.

Award winning poet Martin Malone will open the trail at 2pm with readings, followed by the unveiling of a plaque dedicated to Owen's work. This inspiring community event has been generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and is free and open to all.

It is recommended that you download the Smartphone app beforehand via the DOA website www.Owenindunsden.org. A leaflet on the trail will also be available.

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CHURCHES

Easter services at Methodist churches

The Easter services at both Caversham Methodist churches were well attended with several visitors including, at Gosbrook Road, David Edwin's family from India. David has been very ill and it was a real joy to see him in church.

The Revd Jenny Dowding took the service at Caversham Heights and the Revd David Jenkins the one at Gosbrook Road.

Early morning communion was followed by an Easter breakfast prepared by church members. Fruit juice and cereals began the meal and the congregation at Gosbrook Road were treated to a full English breakfast of bacon, egg, sausage, tomatoes and mushrooms while the Caversham Heights congregation waded through bacon butties, scrambled eggs and baked beans. This was followed by either toast or hot cross buns and tea or coffee. In all more than 50 people sat down to eat.

At Gosbrook Road, the minister David Jenkins, an accomplished pianist and composer, played while the singing group sang *Jesus is alive* – a piece written by David from a collection of his songs entitled *Fishman Jazz*. They also sang *In the tomb so cold they laid Him* by Graham Kendrick.

Jenny in her sermon mentioned the interesting fact that in earlier versions of 1st John's gospel the story of the crucifixion ends with the empty tomb. The rest of the gospel is thought to have been added at a later date.

After the service at Caversham Heights, which contained both traditional and new hymns, the children enjoyed smashing the Easter eggs provide by Jenny, and then offering the pieces to the congregation

as they drank coffee. This was much enjoyed by both the children and congregation!

The message was the same at both churches – joy that Jesus had overcome death and had risen from the grave and the hope of resurrection.

Summer music at St John's

The Hurst Singers will be performing a programme of summer music at St John's Church, Gosbrook Road, Caversham, on Saturday 6th June at 7.30pm. The Hurst Singers are a mixed voice choir, whose repertoire of part songs ranges from jazz to madrigals, pop songs to secular music. Tickets are £8, children under 16 free, from 9475120 or on the door.

The church will be holding its May Fair on Saturday 30th May starting at 2pm. Stalls will include cakes, books, bric-a-brac, preserves, jewellery and a super raffle.

New service at St Barnabas

Earlier this year a new form of service was launched on the first Sunday of the month at St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green. The title COGS is an acronym and reflects fun filled faith for all ages. The format is very interactive and contains some aspects of Messy Church. It is proving to be extremely popular and it is good to see numbers increasing on a regular basis.

Towards the end of February the customary fish and chip supper was held. This was followed by a performance of the pantomime Jack and the Beanstalk. Over the years Richard Gash, a member of the congregation, has done sterling work in writing the annual piece. However this year's performance was Richard's swan song. A huge debt of gratitude is owed to him and the team work involved in this much loved annual event.

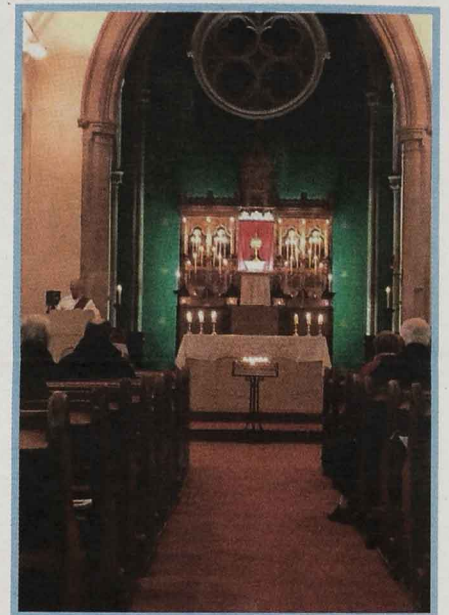
24-hour prayer vigil at St Anne's

The Parish of Our Lady and St Anne, Caversham, held a vigil of prayer before the

Blessed Sacrament in response to the call from Pope Francis for parishes around the world to pray before the Lord and to enable the faithful to come to confession under the title "God rich in mercy".

The vigil began on the evening of Friday 13th March, went on through the night and ended with the first mass of the 4th Sunday of Lent on Saturday evening. The vigil was in the presence of the Lord and a rich programme of Rosaries, Stations of the Cross, children's stations, meditations, confessions, mass, ecumenical prayers, benediction and the liturgies of the hours was kept by a good number of the parish and visitors too.

Fr Paul Martin was busy throughout the vigil hearing many people's confessions. This was a fantastic moment of prayer in the parish's Lenten journey, but also a great act of witness in Caversham and the archdiocese. The power of prayer brought people of all ages before Our Lord and God was indeed "rich in mercy".



The church and altar of exposition
Photo: Matthew White

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CHURCHES

New choir robes are rodent resistant

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single church mouse in possession of a good appetite must be in want of something to eat. Sir John Betjeman's church mouse, you may remember, was forced to nibble through old service books, sawdust mixed with straw and polish from the floor, while awaiting the



Mary Westley and members of the newly formed St Margaret's choir

bounty of Harvest Festival. Then he could indulge his taste for ears of corn, loaves of bread and a vegetable marrow hanging from the pulpit.

It was only recently, when the church choir at St Margaret's, Mapledurham, was revived by Mary Westley, that it was discovered that its resident church mouse had been surviving for some time on a diet of ancient, royal blue choir cassocks, courtesy of Ede and Ravenscroft. Thankfully, a generous grant from the Church House parish fund has allowed the choir to replace the rodent's monotonous larder.

The first of the new robes of Mary blue were aired on Easter Sunday when the choir sang the anthem Ave Maria by Caccini during the service. The good news is they are rodent resistant, as members of the choir will be taking them home in future and not storing them in the bell tower wardrobe where the church mouse could get at them.

There are four men's choir robes waiting to be filled by two additional tenors and two new basses at St Margaret's. The choir sings at the Sunday morning Eucharist on the second Sunday of the month and on a number of other special services during the year. If you think you could fit into one of these men's robes, why not give Ian Lowry a call on 0118 9481321 and he will be pleased to answer your questions?

Mary Westley will be presenting an evening of anthems and readings by her school choir at St. Margaret's on Friday 5th June, starting at 7.00pm when there will also be an opportunity for members of the audience to add their voices to those of the choir. Tickets, priced at £6.00, will be on sale from the middle of May

and will include a glass of chilled white wine or a glass of Pimms at the end of the evening. Tickets can be obtained from Monday 18th May by calling Ian Lowry on 0118 9481321.

Tenebrae service in Caversham

The Rev Jenny Dowding conducted a Tenebrae service at Gosbrook Road Methodist church on Maunday Thursday. The service was attended by about 30 members of both Methodist churches.

We were asked to read the following before the service began: "The word tenebrae means darkness or shadows. During the service we commemorate the Last Supper, share bread and wine and then nine candles will be extinguished one by one, as we hear again the story of Jesus' last hours before crucifixion.

"The gradual extinguishing of the light is symbolic of the advancing darkness that came over Jesus with the flight of the disciples, the bitter hatred of his enemies and the looming shadow of the cross. The moment of total darkness which follows recalls the time when he was in the tomb.

"The relighting of the central candle is a prophecy of the Easter soon to dawn."

After the welcome and call to worship a hymn was sung and then Holy Communion took place.

The candles were then lit and the readings, all from Mark's gospel, were spoken beginning with the Shadow of Betrayal. This was followed by the Shadow of Warning and the Shadow of Sleep. After each reading a candle was extinguished and there was a moment of silence.

Another hymn was sung and there were three further readings – The Shadow of Desertion, the Shadow of Trial and the Shadow of Denial. Again a candle was blown out after each reading. Another hymn was sung and the last three readings – The Shadow of Rejection, the Shadow of Agony and the Shadow of Death – were given.

The church was now in total darkness and utter silence. Music played softly in the background. The central candle was then relit speaking of the hope of the Resurrection to come. The congregation then left in complete silence.

This was a very moving service and brought home to all who took part the real meaning of Easter.

Christian Aid Week

This year Christian Aid Week will be from Sunday 10th May to Saturday 16th May. The annual Christian Aid service will be at St Andrew's church, Caversham, on Sunday 10th May at 10.0am. The speaker will be Siobhan Grimes from CA's Oxford office.

The Christian Aid walk is on Saturday 16th May over the usual five, 10 and 15 mile courses starting from Bix village at 8.30am. These are very pleasant walks suitable for all ages. Full details and application forms are available from Keith Stephen-Evans on 0118 9473619.

Collectors are always needed to cover the allocated roads and if you feel you could help please see your church CA representative. Last year almost £9000 was collected in Caversham and Emmer Green and this would certainly be exceeded if more collectors took part.

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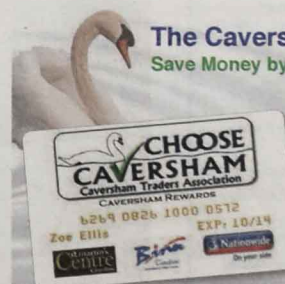
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Why is there a shortage of GPs?

By Francis Brown

There are more doctors qualifying and there are more doctors working for the National Health Service. So why is there a shortage of GPs in England? As chairman of the Priory Avenue Patient Participation Group I have a particular interest in the question.

There are many factors and a liberal dose of unintended consequences. Seventy per cent of medical students are female. After a few years many choose to work part time. In many cases this is to allow time for a young family. But some women and a few men choose to work part time because the job is stressful and they want to stay in the profession but need to pace themselves.

Pay is good, so part time working is a realistic option. Over the last 10 years medical school output has risen but so has part time working. Job sharing now requires two students to go through medical school rather than one.

The number of consultants has increased by over 40% in the last 10 years. For some young doctors, this is a more tempting career path than general practice. About 40% of medical students choose GP training: the target is 50%.

Years ago the path for a young GP would have been to work initially as a salaried employee of a practice partnership with the expectation of being invited to join as a partner, usually buying out a senior partner who wanted to retire. Medical students' courses are long and nowadays much more costly. The partnership model is not working as well as it used to decades ago. In terms of remuneration, hospitals offer a more attractive career path.

The loss of doctors trained in the UK by emigration to Australia, New Zealand and Canada is small when compared to gains from other countries. Just over a quarter of doctors working in NHS hospitals are non-British. The number of unfilled GP posts in England is estimated to be about eight per cent.

The recruitment and retention of doctors has been a challenge for our surgery. We need three and a half full time doctors and have one and a half, the balance being made up by part time locums. Not great for continuity of care. On the other hand, the Quality Outcomes Framework results for the surgery for the period ending in March 2015 were excellent. The recruitment and retention processes are ongoing.

Email prioryavenuePPG@gmail.com if you would like details of the sources used to prepare this article.

Bible Friends

Jesus meets his friends

Jesus' friends were talking. They thought Jesus had died. But now they had heard that he was alive again. Suddenly, he appeared!

"Hello," Jesus said.

His friends were very frightened. "It's a ghost!" they yelled.

"No, it's really me," Jesus told them. "Look at my hands and feet. Touch them. You couldn't do that if I were a ghost."

The friends were amazed. "Jesus, it is you!" they shouted.

They were so pleased to know Jesus was alive again.

"I'm hungry," said Jesus. "Have you any food I could eat, please?"

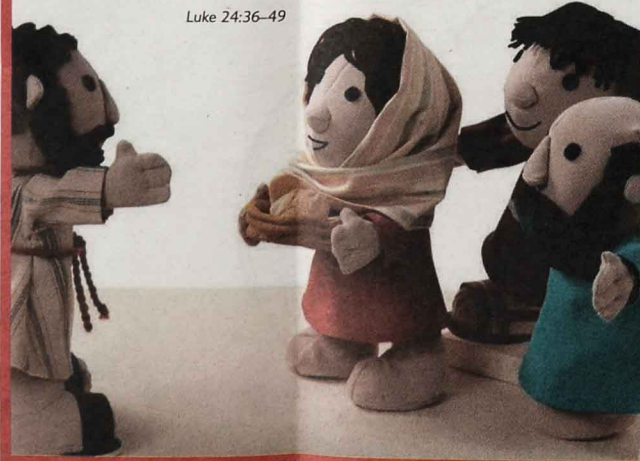
So, his friends cooked some fish and watched as Jesus ate it. "Jesus must be real," they said to each other. "He can eat food."

"Listen carefully," said Jesus. "There is something I want you to do. I want you to tell everyone what has happened. I want everyone in the world to know that I am alive."

His friends did exactly what Jesus told them.

And that's why we know that Jesus is alive today!

Luke 24:36-49



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THE REGAL

Following on from my article in March about the Glendale, I thought that for this month I'd write something about Caversham's other cinema across the road, the Regal.

Whereas the Glendale evokes lots of memories for people who have lived in Caversham for a long time, this does not seem to be the case with the Regal. People remember it being bigger, posher, and dearer. It was certainly bigger – 857 seats as opposed to the Glendale's 500. And the prices of admission were higher – from 6d to 1s 6d at the Regal, as opposed to 4d to 1s 3d at the Glendale, in 1939. The town centre cinemas were dearer still, at 9d for the cheapest seats, and 2s 6d for the dearest.

The Regal ran from 1938 to 1958 – a mere 20 years, as opposed to the Glendale's 66 years, from 1911 to 1977.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that the era of single-screen cinemas lasted for about 90 years. In fact, The Regal was the last of these cinemas to be built in Reading. Who could have guessed, in 1938, the effect that television would have on the cinema industry?

At the time, Reading had nine cinemas – the Caversham Electric (later Glendale), the Central, the Granby, the Odeon, the Pavilion, the Regal, the Rex, the Savoy, and the Vaudeville. Between them, they had 10,762 seats. Since Reading Borough Council did not allow cinemas to open on Sundays, that was 64,572 seats available per week, or if there were two shows a day, that was 129,144 seats. The whole population of Reading wasn't much more than that!

I had not realised, before researching the Reading cinemas, that four of them were built by Reading's own cinema chain, the Regal included. Walter Simmons owned the Palace Theatre in Cheapside, and he, his wife and his brother formed the Granby Cinema Company to build the Granby Cinema at Cemetery Junction in 1935. Mrs. Simmons managed the Granby, and Edgar Simmons, brother of Walter, was the architect who designed it.

By March 1936, when they opened their Savoy Cinema in Basingstoke Road, the company had changed its name to Simmons Theatres Ltd. The architect this time was Eric Norman Bailey. He went on to design the Rex Cinema, Oxford Road, for them in 1937, and the Regal, Caversham, in 1938.

The Simmons empire was short-lived: they sold the Savoy to the ABC chain (Associated British Picture Corporation) only a year after it opened. The Granby was sold to Mayfair Cinemas, who were in turn swallowed up by ABC in 1943, and Simmons sold the Rex and the Regal to ABC in the same year, leaving them with just the Palace Theatre, which closed in 1960.

The Regal building spent more time as offices than it ever did as a cinema. I have been told that at one time it was the place where Reading people went to exchange their Green Shield trading stamps for gifts. I have so far failed to find a decent photograph of it when it was still a cinema, so here is one showing the building as offices, up for sale. It was demolished about 1984, and the Waitrose supermarket was built on the site. Only time will tell whether we shall ever see the small cinema planned as part of the St. Martin's Precinct redevelopment – very near the site of the old Regal!

Happy Wanderer



The Regal building when it was offices

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First concert with new conductor

Rivarate, the Caversham community choir, performed its first concert of the year in March to a full house under the baton of its new musical director, Sarah Scotchmer. She took over the choir only in January after the previous musical director, Alison Golby, moved with her family to Devon.

The evening at Caversham Heights Methodist Church was a harmonious blend of choral pieces, vocal solos and an instrumental solo. Pam Asbury, the choir's regular accompanist was assisted by Sophie Baylis on flute, Will Norman on bass guitar and Will Morley on drums.



Soloist Hannah Asbury

The concert opened with a rousing rendering of *Let the River Run* by Carly Simon, followed by Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*. A small group of lady singers within the choir followed with the popular, catchy number, *I Say a Little Prayer*.

It has always been the policy of Rivarate to showcase the talents of youngsters in full time, musical education. Hannah Asbury, a student member for three years, showed just how her voice had matured with a solo performance of the popular but demanding *Vilia* from *The Merry Widow*. She reached for the high B with casual ease.

The choir was accompanied on flute by Sophie for *You Raise Me Up* and *Rock the Boat* and she followed this with a thrilling, solo performance of Georges Enesco's *Cantabile*. Robert Foster, a regular soloist from within the choir, sang one of his own compositions and the full choir, with soloists Fiona Corby, Sue Hennell and Robert, again, rounded off the first half with *True Colours* and *Stand by Me*.

The second half began on a more classical theme with choral pieces by Bach and Caccini and a vocal solo by Sarah Lunn who gave a powerful rendering of Dvorak's *Song to the Moon*. The choir then sang one of their popular, signature pieces, *Fields of Gold*, followed by another vocal solo by Carol Murphy who sang *Evergreen* from *A Star is Born*. Sarah and Carol are both regular members of the choir as well as soloists. A small men's group within the choir, on this occasion billed as *Beach Boys Revived*, gave a spirited and animated performance of *I Get Around*.

The evening continued with Alastair Muirhead's eerie performance of the late, great Jake Thackray's hilarious tale of *Leopold Alcock*. It was eerie because Alastair captured, exactly, the accent and the timbre of the voice of that great, West Riding performer, whose own talented life ended so tragically. Finally, the choir sang *Skyfall*, with the backing of drums and bass guitar, and Sarah's own arrangement of Jeff Lynne's memorable hit, *Mr Blue Sky*.

Rivarate dedicates its concerts to local Caversham and Reading charities, often associated with children. This concert was dedicated to BIBS, Babies in Buscot Support, a charity that assists babies and their families in the special care baby unit at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. Over £400 has already been pledged and the full amount will be posted on the choir's website.

Rivarate's next performance will be at the same venue on Saturday 17th October. Tickets will be available by telephone from the first day of that month from Libby Lowry, chairman, on 9481321.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In April's edition of the Bridge, Peg Leg wrote about the bygone days of well attended Sunday Schools. She stated that Holiday Clubs and Messy Church were known to be the modern-day way of reaching large numbers of children. "This is a really deep cry from the heart" wrote Peg Leg.

A cry for what, though? Any readers sympathetic to this cry from the heart surely need to know that Caversham Baptist Church and St Andrew's Church each run monthly Messy Churches. And that Churches Together in Caversham runs a Holiday Club each year – this year at Caversham Primary School on July 27th-31st.

These activities reach a couple of hundred children, many of whom would otherwise have no contact with the church or the Christian faith. I expected the "deep cry from the heart" to be that we support these projects, and was surprised that they were not even mentioned! Today's children need more than our nostalgia.

We can help them to have a positive experience of the Christian faith. Please contact one of us, and we can talk about how YOU can help.

The Revd Nigel Jones – contact details on p2

WHY NOT HAVE A GO AT BOWLS?

Caversham Bowling Club is a mixed club, which offers the opportunity to take part in a sport which can be enjoyed by both men and women of all-ages. The club has members of all standards, from beginners to county players.

There are vacancies for both men and women, and this summer, as in previous years, the club is offering the opportunity to anyone who is interested to come along and try the game.

The sport provides gentle exercise and the opportunity to make new friends. You do not need to have played competitive sport in the past; the game does not require great physical fitness or athleticism, but relies rather on control, accuracy and consistency, which in some ways can be more demanding.

Throughout the summer, starting on May 8th, each Friday evening from 6.0pm, the club will be open to anyone who would like to try the game. The only requirements are flat-soled shoes and enthusiasm: bowls and other equipment will be provided. Our members look forward to welcoming you and will be on hand to offer advice and instruction. It does not take long to learn the basics of the game, and you could soon be taking part in club matches.

The club has a friendly atmosphere with a licensed bar, and organises social events throughout the year. Why not come along on a Friday evening and try it, you may be pleasantly surprised? Light refreshments will be available for a nominal sum.

Experienced bowlers are also welcome to join and should contact the secretary as below. The club is located in the Recreation Ground in Albert Road and free parking is available next to the green. The number 22 bus stops outside the park at the St Andrew's Church bus stop.

Further information can be obtained from the secretary on 947 8887, or visit the website www.cavershambowlsclub.org.uk.

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Caversham Horticultural Society

The society will be holding its popular annual plant sale on Saturday 2nd May from 10am to 11.30 at the Oakley Road allotments, Caversham.

The next talk will be given by Becca Flintham, an expert on water gardening. Her subject will be ponds, wetland features and water-wise gardening.

This talk will be held at the usual venue Caversham Primary School on Wednesday 20th May starting at 7.45pm. Entry fee for non-members is £3.00. Refreshments will be served after the talk.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

The club will present Arnaud Metaire who will demonstrate floral arrangements with the theme *A Box of Delights* on 13th May at 7.30pm at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church. Entrance fee is £5.50 for visitors. For more details, contact Shirley Sexton on 9412329

Caversham WI

Members met for the annual meeting and heard a report of the previous year's activities and adopted the financial report. Everyone was commended on taking part in the competitions and Sylvia Myszor and Claire Elliot were named as joint winners of the cup. The committee were willing to serve again and Margaret Cameron was re-elected as President.

Details of future events were given including the centenary baton relay, Spring Council meeting at the Hexagon and the summer boat trip. After refreshments, a bring and buy followed raising funds for the institute. The evening ended with the raffle. The April meeting was a talk on diamonds by Mr Walton, a local jeweller.

Chazey WI

Community matters were at the heart of Rob Wilson's talk to the members at the March meeting.

On transport, he said a very smart upgraded Reading Station with trains in the future running direct to Heathrow and Crossrail will take us into the City of London and on to the South East. Investment in the M4 motorway would help to keep traffic flowing and more discussions were taking place with all the councils concerned involved in a third bridge!

On the NHS, there were problems with a huge deficit at the Royal Berks hospital, but it had the best Cardiac Unit in the country! A vote of thanks was given by the president, Ann Knee-Robinson.

A ballot was held to choose one of the members to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace. The lucky winner was Hazel Blackburn. Voting was held for a new president and Hilary Morrison was elected. Margaret Green, secretary, thanked the outgoing president for all her hard work and the new president presented Ann with flowers. The raffle was won by Mary Robinson, visiting teller.

Our competition winner for the year was Margaret Green who took home a glass vase trophy, to be competed for each year and an Easter egg.

Chazey WI meet on the first Tuesday in the month at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church at 7.45pm and welcome new members.

Reading Probus

The speaker at the March meeting of Reading and District Probus Club was Neil Sadler, whose subject was *A policeman's lot ... is quite an interesting one*. Neil joined the police force in Bognor in 1978, retiring in 2008

He spoke about a number of well-known cases of missing persons, some of whom have turned up, and some have not. He started with 'kayak man', who went missing at sea one night, and managed to disappear completely. Eventually he was joined by his wife in Mexico and bought a property after she had claimed the insurance. He was only caught because he allowed an estate agent to show his picture on the internet.

The next case was Lord Lucan, who disappeared after his children's nanny was murdered and his wife attacked. He has never been seen since, and his fate remains a mystery.

Madeleine McCann was a three year old abducted while on a family holiday in Portugal. Despite world-wide media attention, she has never been seen since. She would be 15 now.

He spoke about Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman, two schoolgirls who disappeared in Soham, and were found dead. Ian Huntley, a school caretaker, was found guilty of their murder.

Dr David Kelly was a weapons inspector who went missing after giving evidence to a foreign affairs committee. He was later found dead, and controversy over the cause of his death has never been resolved.

His last case was of Elizabeth Peck, a two-year-old who went missing in woods while playing hide and seek with her sisters on the edge of Arundel Forest. She was found two days later barely alive, having crawled over two miles through woodland. She made a good recovery.

These examples show what different outcomes arise from missing persons cases. Many people are reported missing – over 3000 in Sussex alone in 2010. Most turn up fairly quickly but these examples demonstrate that not all situations have happy outcomes.

Probus is a club for retired men, who enjoy a meal once a month in congenial company. Lunch is followed by a talk. The club meets at the Caversham Heath Golf Club. For further information visit the website www.probusclub-reading.org.uk

Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

In March the guild made their annual visit to The Mill at Sonning for dinner and a play. This year's production was *Educating Rita*, which was performed by only two actors -- a miracle of word learning, and also very funny.

Our annual general meeting was held the following week, followed by a ploughman's supper. *Dogs for the disabled* by Sandy Mathieson was the subject of our April meeting.

The social studies group visited *Normandy Past and Present* with Richard Snailham in March, and the Peak District and Sussex in April, with Alan Copeland.

Secretary Mrs Margaret Miles held a coffee morning with hot cross buns, which was much enjoyed.

The ambling club, scrabble group, and luncheon club continue to enjoy their various activities.

The next meeting is on 21st May at 7.30pm and the topic will be "Georgian cookery", by Catherine Sampson. We meet at Caversham Heights Methodist Church hall. Any new members wishing to join will be very welcome.

Caversham Heights Society

March was a busy month for the society with two visits and two lectures. On the 3rd March members enjoyed a fascinating day in London visiting the Imperial War Museum in the morning and the Royal Courts of Justice in the afternoon. Because of traffic delays the time spent in the museum was curtailed but members were able to appreciate the horrors of the First World War in the specially developed exhibition commemorating that conflict as well as other conflicts. The clarity and sensitivity which has been used to explain different facets of war were fully appreciated.

The tour round the Royal Courts of Justice was both informative and fascinating. Few of us had appreciated how many courts there were, the range of cases that might be heard at any one time, and the splendour of the buildings. Only civil cases are heard in the Royal Courts; criminal cases such as murder trials are heard in the Old Bailey.

The following evening we were challenged to think about the causes of, and the implications of, population growth when Len Mann gave a talk on population matters. According to David Attenborough this is the biggest challenge facing the world today because it affects the climate, pollution, water supplies, species loss, health, and pressures on housing. While 100 people die every minute 250 are born every minute leading to a growth in global population of about 205,000 every day! On current predictions the global population will reach 9.5 billion by 2050 and 10.1 billion by 2100.

Since the early 1960s, with economic development and improvement in sanitation, health and education certain regions of the world, such as Europe, the USA and parts of Asia have seen a notable decline in the birth rate. Even so the top 22 countries have 70% of the world's

population. The pressures on water usage and land for food as well as on energy use and fossil fuels are going to become unsustainable unless the world's population is curtailed drastically. Many experts believe that the sustainable global population is about 5.2 billion. This can only be achieved by limiting the birth rate through taxation, contraception and education or through wars, that is unless new sources of energy, water and food can be found. A sobering thought!

Our next lecture was equally fascinating but in a very different way. Alan Copeland, a keen member of the Royal Photographic Society, took us on a superb photographic tour of the Cotswolds, focussing less on the scenery but more on curiosities. These ranged from unusual inn signs and war memorials, through topiary, road signs and drinking fountains to stocks and unusual buildings. Alan kept his audience enthralled with his historical knowledge, his enthusiasm and his excellent photographs.

The final event for March was a trip to the Royal Albert Hall to hear a Classical Spectacular on 19th of the month. The performance was excellent, the repertoire varied, the soloists brilliant and, after the Last Night of the Proms extravaganza, Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with the guns and muskets of the Moscow Militia was truly spectacular.

New members are always welcome and inquiries should be addressed to the chairman, Jill Hodges, on 959 5307 or irishjill@southcote.net

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