

NURSE VISITS ZAMBIA

Carol Moloney, who is a practice nurse and the distribution manager for the Caversham Bridge, recently returned from spending two weeks in Zambia at a Mission Hospital. Readers of the Caversham Bridge might be interested to hear her story and some might even be interested to go themselves.

Last summer I met a doctor at our surgery who had just visited Uganda through a company called Mission Direct (www.missiondirect.org) which enables people with or without qualifications, to go to various countries in need, to give a hand over a short period of time. As I am a nurse I decided to apply to go on a medical mission to Zambia and in March I met with the team. We were three nurses, a doctor and a water engineer – the others had all been before several times and were very excited about going again.

Suitcases appeared full of knitted baby clothes, medical equipment, reading glasses, bibles, balls, skipping ropes etc., all donated in readiness for the trip. One couple had even donated all their wedding present money! Friends, colleagues, my family and church members of St Peters kindly helped me prepare with similar donations and the initial challenge was to fit it all into my two cases, while not exceeding the 46K limit! I confess to having balls of wool in my pockets as I boarded the plane!

On arrival in Lusaka we stayed in a guest house run by the Evangelical Church in Zambia and while there we bought the supplies which had been requested by Luampa hospital, these included medication, an emergency generator, diesel, clothes, a solar geyser, food and water. With vans packed to the brim we then set out on an eight hour journey west into the African Bush.

After a long bumpy ride we arrived in the district of Luampa – which was just like the pictures I remembered from school geography books of round mud huts with grass roofs, tall palm trees plus wild boar, chickens and cattle roaming freely – to the house of Sanki who was the hospital manager, where we were to stay. The people of Luampa, despite facing great challenges, are very peaceful, warm and friendly and greetings are always with a lovely smile and handshake.

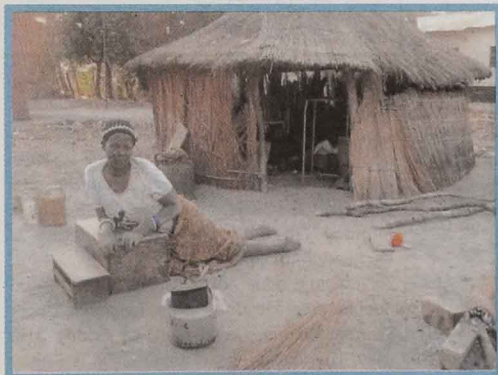
In Zambia about two thirds of the population live on less than \$1.25

a day, HIV infection rates are amongst the highest in the world and as a result there are many, many orphans. In our first week at the hospital food supplies for patients had run out so the patients did not eat unless family members brought some food in. Blood samples taken were regularly thrown away as there was no electricity to process them. A bed meant a very old iron bedstead with a crumbling hard foam mattress and a blanket if you were lucky – no sheets or pillows and candles for light at night. Malaria is a big problem and it can cause nerve damage resulting in balance and speech problems but there are no physiotherapists or speech therapists to aid recovery. Premature babies often don't survive because the electricity needed to power the incubator is not on. We bought a brazier, charcoal, kettle and hot water bottles for the maternity unit to try to resolve this problem.

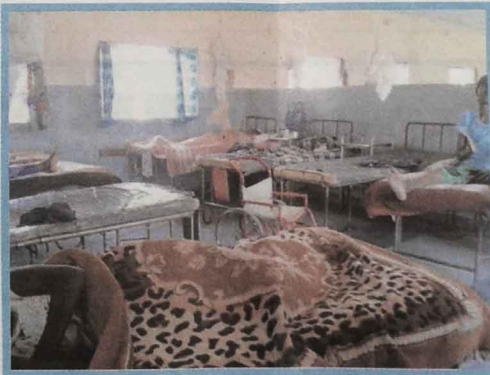
We visited several villages around the hospital and the people turned out to meet us. We were able to give milli meal to the sick to make nshima, a staple of their diet, clothes to the orphans, washing kits to the carers, sewing kits to the ladies and Easter balloons to the children. We were asked to give some words of encouragement which was not easy. We explained through the interpreter that these gifts were from people in England who cared that their lives were so difficult and wanted to help.

We asked them what other help we could give and discovered that seven villages had no water pumps – they used the river, and many people developed the potentially fatal disease of Bilharzia caused by parasitic worms in the water. The villages needed to pay a deposit of 1,500 kwacha (£150) to have a waterhole bored, an impossible sum for them to raise – and then the total cost of 35,000 kwacha (£3,500) would be funded by big charities such as Wateraid and World Vision. With the money we had been given we were able to fund deposits for all these villages to have waterpumps plus two more that needed pumps repaired!! We also funded a contract for food to be delivered monthly to the hospital, five bicycles for village carers, five full hut replacements in the outpatient village, seeds, tools and more. A big thank you to everyone who supported the trip. It was amazing and humbling – we are so very fortunate.

Carol Moloney



Leprosy sufferer unable to walk.



Female hospital ward.



Mud build village church.

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Caversham Clergy

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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
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Revd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

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

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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
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The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the
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TALKING POINT

by Revd Jonathan Edwards

What does your Christian faith mean to you? That's a very simple question, but Christians have a terrible history of making the faith sound so complicated that people are driven away in a state of utter confusion and boredom.

Over the past few weeks at Caversham Baptist Church we have found a simple and effective way of sharing our faith, and we have been really excited by the results. We have challenged one another to summarize our personal faith in 300 words. The blessing of 300 words is that it is relatively brief and means that you don't have to be a public speaker to have a go. Everyone has a unique and important story to tell and the whole church has been encouraged as we have heard people's personal stories.

It is a blessing in all of our churches to receive the ministry of people who have received a formal theological education. But where it goes wrong is when those of us who are, if you like, professional Christians crowd out other people's voices. The apostle Paul spoke about the church being the body of Christ. Every part of the body is crucial to the whole, and so every voice needs to be heard if the body is to be healthy and effective. The 300 words idea encourages everyone to get involved, and over the past couple of months we have heard poignant personal stories of faith from people who have never shared their story in public before.

The beauty of the 300 words idea is that it is simple and that is true to the spirit of Jesus, who encouraged childlike faith. In Jesus' society children had no security in law. They had no status or importance. But Jesus saw them completely differently and not only welcomed them but asserted that the only way to enter his kingdom was by becoming like a child. The church has always struggled to live that out in practice. It has so often been arrogant and self-sufficient and has been adept at making everything sound gruesomely complicated. We desperately need to recover Jesus' way of simplicity.

Two thousand years ago Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations and that command has never been withdrawn. In our multi-religious society we must always speak with grace and with sensitivity – but we must speak. To fall silent would be to deny our Christian faith. I believe that there is a huge interest in Christianity these days and that people are looking for one key characteristic – authenticity. People are looking at our lives to see that our words and our message match up. When they don't, the church gets a bad name, and people turn away with disappointment. I believe that the simple 300 words idea is one way of helping us to think through our stories of faith and an effective way of encouraging us to share them with others. I hope that more and more churches will have a go!

The Revd Jonathan Edwards is the Transitional Minister of Caversham Baptist Church. Jonathan lives in Newbury and was previously the General Secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (2006-13)

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

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

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

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

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

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

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

RIVERSIDE CHURCH (READING)

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

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Meeting at Caversham Park School

11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)
Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)
All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH South Street

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

GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

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

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

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

Gosbrook Road

10.30am

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

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

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

Church Street, Reading

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

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Church Street, Caversham

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

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the September 2015 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 3rd August**. The date for the October 2015 issue is **Monday 7th September**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk
Advertising copy for the September issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 31st July**. The late for the October issue is **Friday 4th September**.

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Optimism at Priors Avenue Surgery

The Priors Avenue Surgery is now being run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, as an Interim Provider. The contract to provide primary care services runs to the end of May next year. BHFT have announced that they will in due course bid to be the long term provider. All the permanent staff are staying.

There is a shortage of GP doctors in England and the previous provider was just unable to attract and retain them. BHFT are in a much better position. They are local, well connected, and employ over 4000 staff in West Berkshire. It is relevant to note that amongst many other activities they run the emergency out of hours service, WestCall, as well as the Walk In Centre in Slough (not to be confused with the Walk In Centre in Reading). In addition they are the interim provider for the Circuit Lane surgery in Southcote. They have appointed Dr Rod Smith, who recently retired as a senior partner at the nearby Balmore Park surgery, as the clinical lead. He is also a Care Quality Commission inspector. New male and female doctors are being interviewed. As chairman of the Patients Group, I am optimistic that the recruitment process will be successful and that in a few months' time we will have a full complement of doctors and no longer be in the CQC's Special Measures category.

The concern that is most often mentioned in the

ongoing surveys is to do with continuity of care.

Patients who have to attend frequently want to see the same doctor on most occasions. Until more new permanent doctors are appointed, BHFT have arranged longer term contracts with three of the locum doctors who have been working at the surgery for the past few months.

About six percent of patients have moved to other local practices. The impact is much greater than this small number suggests. Many of these patients have to see the doctor or nurse many times a year. Balmore Park surgery has been given permission to close their list for the time being.

Most surgeries have a Patients Group, usually called a Patient Participation Group or PPG. To find out more, see your surgery notice boards or website. Priors Avenue patients can contact their PPG by emailing priorsaveneuePPG@gmail.com or by leaving a message at reception.

The Patients Group are not pressing for the resumption of seven day working 8am to 8pm. It did not work out well. Working more hours spread the doctors too thinly through the week and reduced the resilience to unexpected events. We are pressing though for the reintroduction of Saturday morning and some evening sessions, as permanent doctors are successfully recruited.

Francis Brown



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Concerts in Caversham

Midsummer Serenade, 20 June 2015

Concerts in Caversham is now in its fifth year delivering a fully professional concert series of the highest calibre. Musicians from some of this country's top London and regional orchestras – The Royal Philharmonic, The Orchestra of the Covent Garden, The Britten Sinfonia, The Oxford Philomusica and The Halle Orchestra – come together to perform a wide range of music for small chamber ensembles and a chamber orchestra.

On 20th June, St Andrew's Church in Albert Road, Caversham, hosted the Caversham Ensemble Chamber Orchestra for an evening of sublime music, performed with great skill and sensitivity and directed from the violin by Tamas Andras – co-leader of the Royal Philharmonic. The concert started with Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, where his four sonnets, written to complement the work, were read by Lyndsay Sanderson whose strong and descriptive voice told us of Vivaldi's poetic thinking behind the music. Solo violinist Tamas Andras' performance had us spellbound by his energy and masterful interpretation of the music. Throughout the performance, I could see a smile on his face. He was clearly enjoying every minute of it.

After a short interval with prosecco and strawberries, we were treated to Vaughan Williams' *Concerto in A minor for Oboe and Strings*. Again, sublime music in the

English tradition, wistful, yet tuneful, reminding me of the countryside, and with, I thought, a nod to the *The Lark Ascending*. Timothy Watts' playing of the oboe was the perfect centrepiece of this music, calm, smooth, with a dreamlike quality that you wished would go on and on.....

The music from the film *Ladies in Lavender* was our next delight. A luscious, yet emotional piece which brought back memories of the film and its themes. This piece gave the orchestra every chance to show us their romantic side, which of course they did to perfection.

Mozart's *Divertimento in D Major* was the last piece of the concert. It had an Italian feel, encompassing grace and charm which the orchestra played perfectly and was a fitting ending to a marvellous concert. Sitting next to me in the audience was a Scottish gentleman. At the end of the concert, he expressed his great surprise that such a high quality musical event could be taking place in our quiet area of Caversham. What I loved about it was that every member of the orchestra put their hearts and soul into giving us a wonderful evening of music. Roll on the next one!

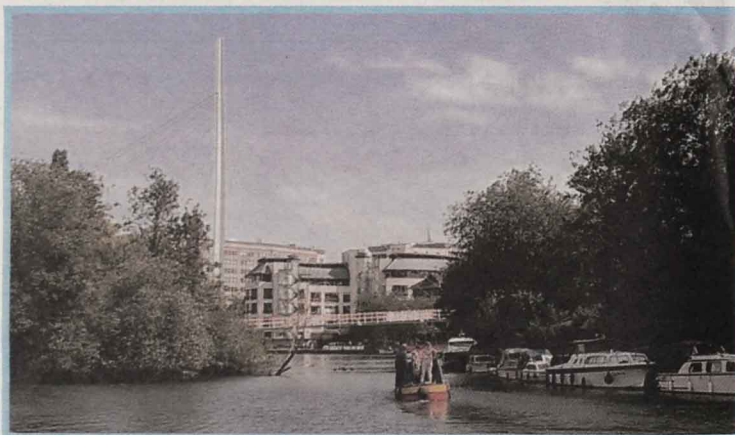
Andrea White (regular concert-goer)

See www.concertsincaversham.co.uk for more information.



Midsummer Serenade musicians.

Welcome to Caversham's newest landmark



The mast holding up the new pedestrian bridge from Caversham to Reading is now in place and is visible from Caversham and Reading Bridges and across Christchurch Meadows after contractors erected it during June.

The mast which holds the superstructure of the suspension bridge was put into place with passers-by watching the unusual scene as work reached a crucial stage on the first new bridge over the Thames at Caversham in nearly 100 years.

Councillor Tony Page, Reading Borough's lead member for transport, said: "I spent some time watching the mast being put up, it truly was an impressive feat of engineering. This was an historic moment for me and those involved. It was good to see the project coming to fruition as I have been working with contractors, residents and local councillors on the plans to build the bridge for several years."

Caversham councillor, Richard Davies, said: "I'm proud to have been able to help deliver this project. The bridge will lead to real improvements for Caversham, helping local people have a safer and more direct route into Reading, making it much easier to walk and cycle into Reading and helping commuters cut their journey times to the station."

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Rock'n'Ale Festival



Four rockers raise a glass

The third Rock'n'Ale Festival took place in June on the field of St Anne's School. The festival was first held in 2013 to raise funds for the Motor Neurone Disease Association in memory of Angela Fung who died from the disease. The event is sponsored by the parish of Our Lady and St Anne and is organised by Angela's friends. All involved give their time free of charge.

This year the bands playing were The Beaver Band, Electric Sheep, Rigsby and Dino's with the accompaniment of thunder and lightning for the second band. Traditional ales and cider from local brewers were on sale as well as a hog roast.

Music played was from the 60's to present day and the dance area filled when

Rigsby, who have played in all three years, started to play their set of rock and blues covers. Dino's played classic rock from the 70's through to today and featured a very special drummer, Mike Ryan, who first started the event in 2013 and is still its main organiser.

The early downpours of rain cleared and people were able to sit out on the field for the rest of the evening. A fire juggler entertained and activities for children were laid out. The evening ended with a firework display.

Essentially intended as a community event which was enjoyed by parishioners and by visitors from further afield, the amount raised for the Motor Neurone disease and other charities was an additional bonus.

Pupil at The Hill Primary School is National Table Tennis Champion Twice Over

A year six pupil from The Hill Primary School is a two-time table tennis champion after winning at the English National finals in Sheffield.

Jamie Liu, 11, from Caversham, put in an exhilarating performance at the competition on 6th and 7th June and came away with both the England Under 11's and Under 12's titles.

The Hill headteacher Mrs Dawn Cox said: "Well Done Jamie, we are all very proud of you and look forward to hearing about your continued success when you move onto secondary school at the end of the year. I'd like to thank the dedicated team of staff and parents at The Hill who support our table tennis players and all our pupils in their sporting achievements."

Artist wins Ready Bike competition



Caroline Streatfield-Chalk, an artist from Emmer Green, is one of the winners of the Ready Bike competition alongside Haleh Reza, of Caversham.

The artwork has been displayed on the back wheel guards of 12 Ready Bikes which are wheeling their way round the town. Caroline took the inspiration for her design (above) from a friend's garden in the summer last year.

"I choose the design for the Ready Bikes as the art work conjures up summer days and blue skies which you are likely to see if you hire a Ready Bike and take it into Reading's countryside", she said.

Caroline participates in the Caversham Arts trail and Reading Arts week.

To see more of her work go to: www.carolinestreatfieldchalk.co.uk

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

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An Appeal from the Resources Manager

I am continually amazed by the generosity of the many kind donors to CCA. We are blessed every day with furniture donations, and it's my job to make sure that CCA manages these donations in the best possible way. Our support centres are seeing ever more clients, and the problem we have is always having the right furniture for our clients' needs.

By analysing the data from our scheduling database we have been able to confirm that we are only offered about two thirds of the number of beds and chests of drawers that we need to meet monthly demand. This means that in order to fulfil client needs we have to buy some new items to pass on to our clients.

We also supply bedding and kitchen packs for clients, and demand for these has never been higher. The change in regulations regarding occupied bedrooms in council properties (bedroom tax), and the lack of single-bedroom council accommodation in Reading has meant a lot of our clients are now being housed in private accommodation. This is often furnished, but our clients still have the need for bedding, towels etc.

Whilst our furniture outlet in Silver Street has never been busier, we are still short of the funding required to buy all the new items we need for our client orders, so I'm making an appeal to you today for your help in obtaining these items. Your donation could mean... £5 can buy 2 pillows; £6 a single duvet; £8 a double duvet; £11 a saucepan set; £26.40 a child's single mattress; £36 an adult single mattress; £39 a large chest of drawers; £48 a double mattress;

£75 a double bed with mattress; £112.80 a set of bunks with mattresses.

I thank you so much for the support that you already bless us with, but if you would be able to consider contributing to any of the above, I can assure you that our clients will directly benefit from your generous good will.

God Bless you.

Atan Waters, Resources Manager www.ccam.org.uk

Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group

The people of Mapledurham, Caversham Heights and surrounding areas are fighting back.

More than 100 supporters of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group (MPFAG) crowded into the crumbling Playing Fields Pavilion on June 22 and pledged to increased and sustained pressure to oppose the irrevocable loss of green space should the Education Funding Agency (EFA) decide to build a Free School on the fields.

Ever since the attempt to site a school on the fields in 2006, the local community has sought to support and protect the playing fields for future generations, through its own efforts.

We all know the pavilion has been neglected for very many years and as a result, much effort has gone into raising funds with the pavilion in mind. A sum in excess of £100,000 has been raised by extremely hard-working volunteers from a multitude of local individuals as well as high-profile corporate supporters.

A contribution from Section 106 funds (infrastructure improvement funds contributed as a result of local property development) means that the sum at the disposal for regeneration of the Pavilion is now above £200,000. Yet everything is on hold while Reading Borough Council instead offers the playing fields to the EFA as a site for a Free School.

MPFAG is determined to resist this completely unnecessary disposal of the charity's land. Given the cross party support for the EFA to be able to choose anywhere it wants; the only course of action has been to seek legal advice and prepare to make the most robust case we can to the Charity

Commission, who will have to approve any sale.

We have been building up a substantial Fighting Fund which has allowed us to brief a barrister from a leading London chambers in preparation for the battle.

RBC has been twice advised by our barrister, the first letter comprising five dense pages of legal arguments against the suitability of the Playing Fields as a site for a school. RBC chose not to seek their own legal opinion, not to disclose the letter's existence at the public meeting and even chose not to ask a lawyer to be present.

The EFA has received a letter of their own from our barrister. In addition to providing them with a reminder of important points of charity law, which mitigate against siting a school on the charity land, the barrister also gave the EFA the benefit of his opinion regarding the quality of the public consultation, undertaken at such great expense to the public purse.

We hope this will be enough for the EFA to rethink any intention they may have to site a school on the charity land. To reinforce the point, we now have a large number of supporters who plan to write to the EFA to express their outrage that the playing fields are still under threat.

MPFAG are determined to fight against this completely unlawful threat to MPF and will continue to campaign until the site is safeguarded against any future threat of development and a new pavilion has been built for the benefit of the local community to enjoy.

Martin Brommell

Chairman, Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group

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CHURCHES

Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Caversham



The St James, Reading Foundation of the Union of Catholic Mothers made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Caversham on

28 May. With many thanks to parish priest and shrine custodian Father Paul Martin for our successful pilgrimage.

The shrine has been in Caversham for nearly 1000 years with miracles occurring there.

Father Paul welcomes pilgrims. Please telephone the parish office on 0118 9471787 or online by email at stanne@fmartin.plus.com.

The parish are currently fundraising to restore the shrine and church. More information is available from the parish office if you wish to donate.

Confirmation and First Holy Communion at Our Lady and St Anne's followed by Corpus Christi Mass at Mapledurham

Bishop William Kenney CP, the area bishop, came to the parish of Our Lady and St Anne this June to celebrate mass and confirm 14 young people. The candidates had been prepared for confirmation by Helen Fletcher who had continued her work with them despite having moved away from Caversham.

The music group and the choir together arranged music to enhance the liturgy of the mass. After mass the bishop posed with the newly confirmed and then joined the congregation in the Cenacle for refreshments. He cut the Confirmation cake, made by Helen, to be shared by all.

A few weeks later Bishop Robert Byrne came to Mapledurham to celebrate Corpus Christi mass at Mapledurham House. Two Papal Knights and Father Paul and Deacon Hugh from Our Lady and St Anne's church were in attendance.

The weather was kind and the congregation was able to sit out in the sun. Children from St Anne's, Caversham, and St Paul's, Tilehurst, who had made their First Holy Communion a few weeks earlier, came dressed in their special outfits and the girls' dresses made a splash of white at the front.

After mass, Bishop Robert carried the Blessed Sacrament in the procession round the big lawn in front of the house, under a canopy carried by four pupils of Blessed Hugh Faringdon school. Back at the altar, the familiar tunes and prayers of the service of Benediction brought the service to an end. Cathy Carr and others from St Anne's school led the singing during mass and the procession.

Bishop Robert still had two duties to perform. He presented souvenir medals to all the First Communicants and then posed for photographs with the clergy, the two papal knights, the altar servers and all the children, in front of the impressive front door of Mapledurham House.

The children then were able to run around after all their sitting still and had picnics on the grass with parents, other relatives and friends.



Communicants in front of congregation.

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Hurst Singers at St John's

St John's church was the venue for a lovely summer's evening of music, performed by the Hurst Singers, conducted by Len David.

The choir and soloists Helen, Mari and Derek sang music in a wide range of styles. The opening number was 'New York, New York' and the programme included 'Habanera' from Bizet's opera 'Carmen', 'Look what happened to Mabel' from the musical 'Mack and Mabel' and a medley from 'Les Miserables'.

The evening raised £286, shared between the choir and St John's.

GOSBROOK GARDEN GROWERS

Gosbrook Garden Growers (the 3 G's) is an exciting partnership between St John's Church in Lower Caversham and the Reading based charity Food 4 Families. It was set up on a pilot basis last year following a successful grant application to the Church Urban Fund. With the monies received, it was possible to establish a community garden at the rear of St John's and to employ a part-time tutor from Food 4 Families, Sandra Gough, to give weekly tuition sessions to members of the church and its uniformed organisations to help them grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Following the successful pilot, it was decided to open up the project to all residents who live in the local area and the 3 G's are currently seeking further funding for this year's growing programme. Already planted are potatoes (courtesy of the St John's brownie group), lettuces, cabbages, spring onions, cauliflowers, strawberries and sweet peas to name just some of the many different foods being grown in the garden.

The Rev. Jeremy Tear, community priest at St John's, said, "It has been a pleasure to work with Food 4 Families in establishing the community garden. We would now like to extend an open invitation to anyone who lives in the locality to come along and get growing fruit and vegetables with us."

The weekly sessions run at the church on a Friday afternoon between 4.30 and 5.30 p.m. No prior experience is needed. Please contact Sandra Gough, the Food 4 Families tutor, on 07534 716177 for further details.

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TWO DONKEYS

If you are in a family setting, how many generations have you known well? As an older person, I can account for six. Some might manage seven.

The world has changed so much in the last 150 years, so what links us all together? One answer could be books. They are still bought and given as presents, borrowed from libraries, and above all, read by people of all ages. I have been able to locate six books to link our generations.

The oldest is also the smallest, and dates from 1853. It probably belonged to my paternal grandparents. Titled *The Language of Flowers: an Alphabet of Floral Emblems* the print is very small, but I have deciphered two entries. The bud of a red rose says, "You are young and beautiful," and the snowball tree says: "You are aged." Say no more!

My mother enjoyed English literature, and her 1919 copy of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Travels with a Donkey* was a great favourite. It is a lovely story of the author's holiday in the French Cevennes. The sorrow at the end is the separation of Modestine, the donkey, and the author. "She had a sort of affection for me, which I was soon to betray."

My book choice, from the 1940s, is an absolute treasure. I realise it influenced my teenage years considerably. Called *The Junior Weekend Book*, it was full of good things – adventure stories, poems, songs, essential information, and puzzles. These last two sections interested me most, and included star charts, architecture, natural history, party games, youth hostelling, and home-made sweets!

There is another donkey in my daughter's 1960s choice. *The Little Grey Donkey* is basically the story of Jesus' ride into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. From birth, the little grey donkey did just what he wanted, but his kind mother led him to a group standing with Jesus. The book says: 'On looking at Jesus' face, the little grey donkey softened, and said he would like to do something for him. It was the first time he had ever wanted to do something for anyone.'

My grandson's choice, from his primary school years of the 1990s, was a nature book, 'The Barn Owl'. It contains lovely pictures, from *Just Hatched* to *On the Wing*.

Finally, my great grand-daughter's choice in 2013 was *Pass the Parcel*. It is based on the old party game, turned into book form. The pages open to display different-shaped parcels. Very attractive – until the pages get forced open and torn! Different animals open different-shaped parcels, telling children about squares, triangles, circles, rectangles, etc.

Six books, each representing a series of different interests. Your family's



selection would probably be quite different. Where do the donkeys come into this? Perhaps you have noticed the dark hairs on their backs. They form the shape of a cross.

Peg Leg

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Bible Friends

Planting and growing

This is a story Jesus told.

There was once a farmer. He grew plants to make into food.

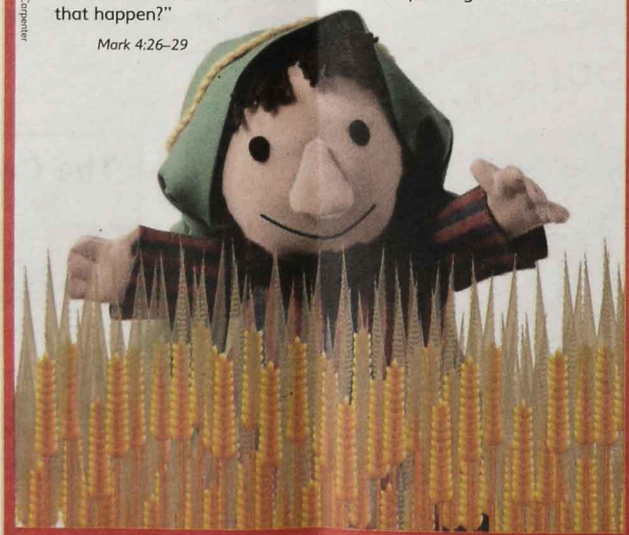
One day, he sowed some wheat seed in a field. That night, and every night, he went to bed and slept well. The next day, and every day, he got up and worked again.

In the field he had planted, the soil was good and soon tiny green shoots began to grow. Sometimes it rained, and sometimes the sun shone. The plants grew bigger and bigger. They changed from green to a lovely golden-brown colour.

The farmer went to see how the plants were growing. "Now it's time for harvest," said the farmer. He cut down all the wheat so that he could make it into flour.

"Isn't it wonderful?" said the busy farmer. "I sowed the seed and I harvested the wheat, but I didn't make the plants grow. How did that happen?"

Mark 4:26-29



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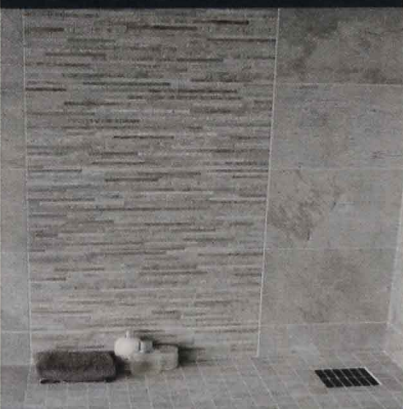


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ENVIRONMENT

THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL

"... in summer, and especially in the month of August, at what time the husbandmen, having occasion to go to their harvest work, will first behold the flower of the pimpernel, whereby they know the weather that will follow the next day after; as, for example, if the flower be close shut up, it betokeneth rain and foul weather; contrariwise, if they be opened abroad, fine weather."

So wrote John Gerarde, in his herbal volume, first published in 1597. This colourful and familiar plant has been used both to predict the weather, and to tell the time. Writers seem to agree that in fine weather, the flowers open around 8am, but disagree about the time the flowers close. Even on sunny days, they close at some time between mid-day and three in the afternoon, probably depending on when the writer made the observation, the time of year, and whether it was before or after British Summer Time came into force.

The old names of the plant reflect the two uses: twelve o'clock, John-go-to-bed-at noon, shepherd's clock, shepherd's dial, and shepherd's watch; and change-of-weather, shepherd's warning, weather-teller, grandfather's weather-glass, shepherd's weather glass, and poor man's weather-glass.

The Oxford English Dictionary picks up the last of these names for the first time in 1827, but weather-glasses were in use long before that. They were invented in the Netherlands in the 16th century, and the English term 'weather glass' was first recorded in 1626. It wasn't the same thing as a barometer, but worked on the same principle. A weather-glass looked like a glass bottle with a very tall thin spout, partly filled with coloured water. The water in the spout moved up or down when there was a change in the atmospheric pressure. The mercury barometer came along a little later.

Most people living in towns, like me, tend to forget the importance of the weather to farmers and seamen – occasionally being reminded if we're up early or late, and hear the weather and shipping forecasts on Radio 4.

The brightness of the tiny flowers of this low-growing plant is always surprisingly intense on a sunny day – an unmistakable vermilion. There is a sub-species with blue flowers, and it was once thought that the vermilion and blue kinds had opposite properties when they were used in medicine. Infusions of the plant have been used against all kinds of troubles, among them sore eyes, toothache, insect stings, snake bites, and the bites of rabid dogs. They were even said to give you "second sight", and the ability to understand the "speech" of animals and birds.

I took this photograph by the edge of a Reading car park, where the tarmac had crumbled away. The plant likes dryish conditions and disturbed ground. You often see it on the edges of arable fields.

In my musings about this plant, I have also been reminded of the creation of Baroness Orczy, whose play, 'The Scarlet Pimpernel', took London by storm in 1905. In fact the play had opened in Nottingham two years earlier, where it had been a flop. The London success was followed by the novel. The hero is an English nobleman in disguise, in France, at the time of the Revolution. He rescues prisoners from execution by guillotine, and as a defiant gesture, leaves behind a visiting card, which bears the picture of... a scarlet pimpernel.

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At our meeting in June we had an interesting talk on Trooper Potts of The Berkshire Yeomanry who fought at Gallipoli in the First World War. He was a Reading man and was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery in rescuing an injured colleague, while sustaining an injury himself.

The speakers were from the Berkshire Yeomanry Museum in Windsor and the Chairman of Trooper Potts VC Memorial Trust in Reading. We were also lucky to have Trooper Potts' grand-daughter with us.

Following a fund-raising campaign over some years, a statue of Trooper Potts, who dragged his colleague on a shovel to safety will be unveiled in October near Forbury Gardens in Reading to commemorate our local hero. The group also give talks to local schools to pass on the history to the next generation. It was fascinating to hear about Gallipoli, complete with gunfire sound effects! All members and guests were kept entertained throughout. The vote of thanks was given by the President, Hilary Morrison, followed by the refreshment break.

Our summer outing in August will be a boat trip from Wallingford to Caversham, followed by a meal. A trip to the *Magna Flora* flower festival in Salisbury Cathedral in September is being arranged. Members were requested to bring items for a sales table to the July meeting. The Lunch in June was at The Red Lion in Woodcote. We meet at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm, (not August as we will have the summer outing). New members and visitors are always most welcome.

Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

The highlight for Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild this July was a fashion show. Some members of the Guild were given the opportunity to 'strut their stuff' in stylish outfits supplied by Bonmarche the Friar Street fashion store.

Following such excitement, the social studies group closed down for July and August, but is back in September.

The ambling group, scrabble group and luncheon club continue through the summer, as does the main club.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 20th August at 7.30pm in the Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall. We will be having salad and a chat and a bring and buy. Any ladies wishing to visit us will be very welcome.

Caversham WI

Members instantly felt better after hearing Mrs Cannon talk about herbs for summer health. She is a local medical herbalist and introduced several samples of herbs with their healing properties – most of them seem to be what we consider weeds and try and eradicate! Many questions and mini consultations followed.

The competition, *A Simple Rose*, produced 12 entries with Romagne Flight picked as winner and Jill Wright and Monica McMaster as runners up.

Dates for all the summer garden parties were agreed. We were especially pleased to welcome a visiting member from a Lincoln WI to an interesting evening.

Rosehill WI

President Margaret Pyle welcomed everyone to our 52nd Birthday Meeting, mentioning our special guests, Sara Staker (BFWI Chairman) and Jean Sheppard (WI Adviser), plus members from local WIs and our new members. Margaret said that she was pleased to see Sara and Jean as they had a very busy week attending the Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace on the 2nd June in the company of the Duchess of Cornwall and the Countess of Wessex, then on 4th June the Centenary Annual Meeting at the Royal Albert Hall.

Margaret also said that the record for the May meeting was available for all to see. Our attention was then drawn to the forthcoming events advertised in the Berkshire News and organised by BFWI. There are also accounts of the events held during Berkshire Federation – Centenary Baton Week. Another item which was drawn to our attention is that a letter had been received from a ward clerk saying A BIG THANK YOU to all who had contributed towards the RBH Courtesy Packs – they are much appreciated so well done to all who donated.

Next we had the talk given by Mrs Jean Turton on 'Chinese Brush Painting'. It was very interesting and entertaining hearing about the origins of Chinese painting. Jean then painted four pictures (depicting the four seasons) on Suan (paper made from crushed bamboo) using brushes (made from different animal hair including cow, squirrel, weasel, wolf and even hen feathers). After the talk we were invited to ask questions.

Everyone enjoyed a cup of tea and cakes made by members. A big 'thank you' goes to Yvonne Wright for displaying so beautifully all the cakes she and other members made. Finally, the raffle; with the first number to be called was our visiting Chairman!!!

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 2.00 pm at St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green, so come along and see us – you will be very welcome.

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Caversham Allotment Association

The association is holding its 114th Annual Show on Saturday 5th September at Caversham Hall, St John's Road, Caversham. The show begins at 2.15pm.

Entrance is free and so come and support our efforts and see prize exhibits of flowers, vegetables and fruit. None better for miles around.

Enjoy a cup of tea and a chat. There will be a raffle and you can even buy some of the produce at the end.

Enquires to Carol Wheeler 0118 947 5802

Caversham Heights Society

Forty years ago this autumn the Caversham Heights Society was founded to provide a series of lectures on topics of interest to people living in Caversham and

Emmer Green in particular, though the area from which our members now come has widened beyond Caversham. The name was chosen because the society always holds its meetings in the hall attached to Caversham Heights Methodist Church and many of the founding members belonged to the church. The society has grown in number to a membership of just over 200. Besides lectures the annual programme also offers several day outings to places of interest, a theatre visit around Christmas time, a trip to the Proms and a mini-holiday in May – all for a membership fee of £15!

The new season begins on Wednesday 16th September when Ed Simons, film producer and chairman of the Kenton Theatre in Henley, will regale us with stories of working with various superstars. Two weeks later as term begins at the oldest university in the English speaking world, Oxford, Alastair Lack will talk about the history of Oxford Colleges. Then on 21st October Jeff Rozelaar, author of *Bacon and Bagels: The Post War East End* will talk about his life growing up in a poor Jewish family in London's East End.

These are just a few of next season's talks and are designed to whet readers' appetites. For further details and information about the society please contact the chairman, Jill Hodges, either on [0118] 959 5307 or irishjill@southcote.net New members are always welcome.

Caversham Library Board Games for Adults Club

Caversham Library holds a board games club for adults every Friday morning from 10.30 onwards. We have a large selection of games, including Scrabble, Monopoly, Backgammon, Othello, Chess and many more. You are also welcome to bring your own games along. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Probus

At the June meeting of the Reading and District Probus Club members were invited to bring their wives or other guests. This is one of only two meetings during the year to which non-members are invited. The speaker at the meeting was Peter Bates, whose subject was *Can't pay – won't pay*.

After studying maths at Cambridge, Peter had worked for charities and in operational research before joining the Southern Electricity Board, based in Brighton, where he worked in the debt collection department, being head of it for much of the time. He is now retired. In this job he encountered many examples of people who could not or would not pay. Debt collectors had the power to disconnect the supply to people who defaulted on their debts. Brighton was one of two particular problem areas. If a warrant was issued to enter premises in the pursuit of non-payers, the police always attended.

Peter told of many sad cases of people who were unable to pay, and some hilarious tales of people who attempted to tamper with their meter, or stop it recording. Some people even managed to connect their electricity supply to the public network to bypass the meter. One man managed to alter his meter, but unfortunately wound it forward instead of back, thus increasing his recorded usage!

Peter mentioned a charity which had £20000 to give to

people who were in need to help pay off their debts.

This was a fascinating talk which included a number of human interest stories.

Probus is a club for retired men, who enjoy a meal once a month in the congenial company of like-minded men. Lunch is followed by a talk, which may be on a variety of interesting subjects. The club meets at the Caversham Heath Golf Club. For further information visit the club's website www.probusclub-reading.org.uk If you are interested in joining, then contact the secretary David Laird on 0118 9470709.

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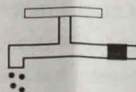
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