

SCHOOL SITE: EFA OPTS FOR PLAYING FIELDS

The decision on the permanent site for the Caversham Heights Free School was announced as this issue of the *Caversham Bridge* went to press. It is Mapledurham playing fields.

After months of speculation and controversy over the five possible sites, the

Show how you value the library



How much do you value and appreciate Caversham library? It provides a wide range of valuable services, not just the lending of books, and is used by people of all ages from the elderly to school children and pre-school children.

The library stands at the very centre of our community, both literally and

culturally: it is directly opposite the shopping precinct, soon to be updated and improved. It is also one of the few distinguished or outstanding buildings in the centre of Caversham.

The reason for asking the question of how much it is valued is that, in line with the age of austerity in which we live, Reading Borough Council is undertaking a budget consultation process this autumn to find out how it can save £39 million over the next three years. At a time when demand for council services is increasing, the town's grant funding has been cut by 40 per cent.

So a wide range of council services are under the microscope to see where saving can be made. One of these areas is libraries and library services right across Reading. Changes could include providing some services digitally – not surprising in a time when the digital revolution seems to gather pace every day. Others could include getting volunteers to help run libraries, reducing opening hours or even closing some branches.

The council's budget process is complex but a full explanation is provided in 'From the Lookout Post' on page four of this issue. More importantly there are details of how you can take part in the consultation process.

This is your opportunity to let the council know how vital the library is to the people of Caversham and how much we value the services it provides. Just as one example, this writer has used the library since coming to Caversham 38 years ago. That amounts to hundreds of books borrowed and read.

If you care about the future of the library you should respond to all the consultations, a process which continues until 16th October. This can be done online, by email or by writing to the Civic Offices – details on page four. You should also encourage other people to respond, continue to support and use the library, and consider how you could support it as a volunteer.

Remember, the library we have in the future may very well depend on what you do today.

verdict was announced by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) in a letter to Reading East MP Rob Wilson in August. But it did not reveal on which part of the 27-acre playing fields it is proposing the 360-pupil primary school should be built.

The plan is expected to meet strong opposition from sporting and recreational groups as well as the Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group who are campaigning to protect the status of the charity land.

The EFA states in its letter that the school opened in 2014 in temporary accommodation and a permanent site is needed to ensure enough primary school places remain available in Caversham. It asked Reading Borough Council in November 2014 to lead on identifying a community backed site solution for the school. It ran a consultation that closed in May 2015, which sought views on the five sites.

It added: "We are very grateful to Reading Borough Council and to everyone who took the time to express their views on which site they would prefer. We would also like to thank the various local groups who contributed to the information pack."

A total of 4,376 people responded to the consultation. Results were broken down into various groups based on respondent addresses and self-declared information. The results are accessible at <http://beta.reading.gov.uk/schoolsite>.

It continues: "Overall, and for every sub group, development on the Mapledurham Playing Fields was the first choice for the majority of people and had the least opposition to it. We have therefore decided to pursue this site for the school and will commence the work necessary to put forward a proposal to the site's trustees. "We are aware that the playing fields are a valuable resource used by a variety of people for organised sport and other less formal activities. We remain keen to engage with local people while we develop our plans and hope the final plans will address any concerns to ensure that the development is welcomed."

Local people will also have the opportunity to offer views on the plans, once fully developed, via Reading Borough Council.

Your Bridge to cost more

The cost of Caversham Bridge, your church and community newspaper, will be going up in January. It is the first increase for many years and readers often express surprise at the low price when they renew their subscriptions.

The board of Caversham Christian News, the organisation which runs the monthly newspaper, has taken the decision to increase the annual subscription for 12 copies from £3 to £4 and the cost of individual copies from 25p to 40p. These may seem large rises in percentage terms but are probably only equal to inflation since the last increase.

The figures have been kept to round numbers to make life easier for both readers and the deliverers who collect the subscriptions. The board believes the newspaper represents exceptional value for money. A large number of volunteers are responsible for producing and distributing the Caversham Bridge.

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Caversham Clergy

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www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

St Andrews

Revd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,

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www.standrewscaversham.org

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

Revd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Road,

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rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Revd Marion Pyke

26 Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7RZ

Tel: 947 5834

Revd John Dudley Tel: 9470265

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Email: robg.beardsley@sky.com

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

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Secretary: Dr Alison Johnston

Tel: 0118 947 5152

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Revd Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.

Tel: 947 2223

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Transitional Ministers Revd Jonathan Edwards

Church office tel 954 5353

Email Secretary: sue.cantwell@cavershambaptist

church.org.uk

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(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

Revd H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

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

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

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

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TALKING POINT

by Jeremy Tear

This month, my family and I are leaving Caversham to start a new chapter of our lives as I take up the post of pioneer team vicar in the West Warrington church (a team ministry with four churches and five congregations – one congregation meets in people's homes). It's an exciting but also an uncertain time as we face getting to know a new home and a new area, with new people, new schools, and new churches.

At my farewell service at St John's on 26th July, I spoke after the service had ended of three things which I felt it were important for the people present to remember, and these are perhaps things which we can all take on board (whether we go to church or not). Firstly, I spoke about exploring the faith. I made the point that whoever we are, at whatever age or stage of life we are at, we are all on a journey of faith. Some of us may perhaps not even realise that fact but I think we are all on a journey of discovering about God, whether we feel we are moving closer or further away from Him.

There is never a time on this earth when we stop learning about God (otherwise we would be divine, and not human). So, whether we profess to have a Christian faith or not, may I encourage you to learn more about it – perhaps by attending an Alpha course or some other course that enables you to explore what it is all about.

Secondly, I spoke about keeping the faith. The previous day I had been to the Emirates Stadium to watch my team, Arsenal, play the French club Lyon. Opposite me, at the clock end of the ground (for those of you who know it), there is a banner which reads, 'Be Faithful Forever'. In other words, keep supporting Arsenal. When we have explored the Christian faith, and perhaps made some form of commitment to Jesus Christ (whether through being baptised or confirmed, for example) the challenge is then to keep the faith; to keep meeting with other Christians, to keep praying and to keep reading the bible (and not just when we feel like it!).

Thirdly, I spoke about sharing the faith. If the faith to which we have committed ourselves is really good news for us, then the most natural thing in the world is to share it with other people. Often, however, we are very reticent to share our faith with others. We think they won't be interested, or may ridicule us, perhaps. We become fearful and the less we talk about our faith, the harder it becomes. So if you have a Christian faith, why not pray for an opportunity to share it with someone else – a friend, work colleague, family member perhaps? In my experience, God never fails to provide such opportunities, sometimes in the most unexpected places, like football grounds, nightclubs, or gyms. But then if God is present everywhere, why shouldn't we expect to encounter Him in such places?

So, may I encourage you to explore the faith, to keep the faith and to share the faith. And who knows what might happen to the churches here in Caversham and Mapledurham if people continue to do that?!

The Revd Jeremy Tear has worked as community priest for the Parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham for the last five and a half years.



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SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am

Matins 1st and 3rd Sundays

Holy Communion 2nd and 4th Sundays

Holy Communion 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays

Morning Worship 4th Sunday

Evensong

9.30am

6.30pm

St John's, Gosbrook Road

10.00am

Holy Communion 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

10.00am

All Age Worship 2nd Sunday

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.15am

Morning Worship 1st Sunday

Holy Communion 2nd, 3rd and 4th Sundays

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am

The Eucharist

10.00am

Parish Eucharist (Sung)

First Sunday, Family Eucharist

11.30am

The Eucharist first and third Sundays only, first Sunday BCP

Evening Prayer (as announced)

6.30pm

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)

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

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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

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the October 2015 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 31st August**. The date for the November 2015 issue is **Monday 5th October**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the October issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 28th August**. The date for the November issue is **Friday 2nd October**.

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

St Peter, St Margaret, St John Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 12.00noon Tel: 947 1703 email: secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

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Farewell to Jeremy and family

After five years as community priest in the Parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham, based at St John's Church, the Revd Jeremy Tear has left to take up a new post at the West Warrington team ministry in the Diocese of Liverpool.

St John's churchwarden Richard Purkis said: "Jeremy's initiatives have helped St John's, St Peter's and St Margaret's to be more outward looking and mission minded. During his time with us the Lower Caversham Community Partnership has established the popular 3Cs café, open every Tuesday in St John's Church. He has revitalised the church's ministry to Micklands School and New Bridge Nursery: Micklands School carol service has become established in the church's calendar and New Bridge have their nativity play in St John's Church.

"Fresh expressions of church have been developed in the form of the Amersham Road Cooking Club and the Gosbrook Garden Growers. St John's has a non-eucharistic all age service on the second Sunday of each month and the Sunday Club is flourishing. These are considerable achievements, which have been built on the sure foundation of faith in Jesus Christ: they will stand the test of time."

A farewell service and lunch was held in St John's Church on Sunday 26th July, attended by people from across the parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham, to thank Jeremy, Emma, Elizabeth and Josie for their many achievements during their time with us.

Richard Purkis, presented Elizabeth and Josie with St Christopher necklaces to wish them safe and well for their journeys and new lives in Warrington. Emma received a

basket of flowers and a gift token to use at what is probably the largest Marks and Spencer in the world. The St John's Sunday Club would not have become the success that it is without her.

Jeremy was given a framed photomontage of the organisations that he was involved with in the parish and the fresh expressions initiatives, together with a cheque from people within our churches and the local community. Jeremy's last service in Caversham was at St Margaret's on Sunday 16th August.

We hope that Jeremy finds fulfillment in his new post in West Warrington where he will be licensed on Saturday 26th September at 4.00pm. A coach is being arranged to take people from here and seats can be booked through the parish office.



Jeremy and Emma cut one of the two cakes made for the occasion



Richard Purkis and the Revd Mike Smith present the photo montage

Church times changing

Service times in the parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham are changing from 6th September. They will be:

St Peter

8am 1st & 3rd Sundays Matins (BCP)
2nd & 4th Sundays Holy Communion (BCP)

9.45am MOVES TO 9.30am
1st, 2nd & 3rd Sundays Holy Communion
(Common Worship)
4th Sunday Morning Worship
(Common Worship)

6.30pm Evensong (this does not change)

St John

10am MOVES TO 9.30am
1st, 3rd & 4th Sundays Holy Communion
(Common Worship)
2nd Sunday All Age Worship (Common Worship)

St Margaret

11am MOVES TO 11.15am
1st Sunday Morning Worship (Common Worship)
2nd, 3rd & 4th Sundays Holy Communion
(Common Worship)

On any 5th Sunday there will be just one service across the parish held in one of the three churches during the morning. The location and timing will be advertised at the time.

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From the Lookout Post

Library services, including those at Caversham library, form part of the budget consultation process currently being carried out by Reading Borough Council.

The council estimates it needs to save a further £39million over the next three years to 2019. The town's grant funding has been reduced by 40% at a time when demand for local services in Reading is increasing. Over the next three years the Council will be making a series of budget proposals to make the savings needed.

The latest package of savings, efficiencies and income proposals, were agreed for consultation at a meeting of the council's policy committee in July. www.reading.gov.uk/budget gives links to more information and how you can comment up to 5pm on Friday 16 October.

Hard copies of the full proposals are also available to view at libraries, leisure centres and the Civic Offices. You can respond on line, email budget@reading.gov.uk or write to: Budget Consultation, Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU. Please ensure the budget proposals you are referring to are clearly identified. Feedback will be considered in advance of final decisions through the autumn and winter.

It is hard to do justice here to a long list of proposals. These affect almost all services and the council makes clear that it will mean delivering some services differently and from different places, reducing some services and, in some cases, stopping them altogether.

One of the services listed is libraries. It is proposed that the whole library service be reviewed and transformed on the basis of objective criteria with the aim of saving in the region of £600,000 by 2017/18. There is reference to a "Neighbourhood Library Offer" where the location, nature and opening hours of the service points will be informed by a full analysis of needs, performance and costs. Where appropriate libraries would be co-located with other services in community hubs.

The report explains that changes could include:

- Providing services digitally
- Delivering back-office efficiencies
- Co-locating library services with other local services
- Using library services to deliver other service outcomes and priorities
- Volunteer-run libraries, co-delivering services with community groups, and increasing the use of volunteers
- Making better use of self-service technologies
- Sharing services
- Reducing opening hours
- Closing branch libraries.

If you value your local service, you should express your views through the consultation.

Caversham library provides a range of highly valued inclusive services and is a hub at the heart of the local community — exceptionally well used by all ages. In addition to the usual library services, it is a central point for all sorts of information and runs popular sessions for adults, school children and pre-school children. It is a hive of activity over the school holidays and after school and a vital resource for those not able to access a computer or the internet at home.

What happens next? Writing this at the beginning of August, there are still more questions than answers but a timetable has been set out:

July to September— Desk-based needs analysis

September 2015 — Policy Committee approval for phase one consultation programme and documentation.

October to November — Six-week initial public consultation

November to December — Analysis of consultation responses and development of strategic vision and options.

January to March 2016 — Twelve-week programme of consultation on vision and options with staff, service users and partner organisations to inform final proposals.

What can we do?

1. Respond to each stage of the consultations
2. Encourage others to do so
3. Support and use the library
4. Consider how you could support the library as a volunteer

These proposals are by no means unique to Reading and libraries are under threat all over the UK. Several groups have set up websites with more information.

<http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/>

<http://speakupforlibraries.org/>

<http://www.voicesforthelibrary.org.uk/>

The history of Caversham library

Our response should focus on current and future needs but it may also be interesting to share some history on the library building. The land, where the library now stands, had been the playground of Caversham House Academy, a school for boys. Church Street separated the playground from the main school buildings in Caversham House and a tunnel was constructed for the boys to cross safely.

After the school closed, the large Georgian house gradually decayed and was demolished in the 1960s to make way for the precinct. You can see the house and the playground in a painting. Further right are the Working Men's club and Caversham Baptist Church. The church was built in 1877 which gives us a clue to the date of the painting.

The land for the library was donated by Mr Bullivant Williams and most of the construction costs were funded by the Carnegie Trust. The Scottish-American businessman and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, supported the building of public and university libraries across the world. His motto, 'Let there be light' was sometimes shown above the door. The award-winning design in 1906 was by the architect William George Hooper Lewton (1856-1914). A student at the Reading School of Art and local to Caversham, Lewton worked and trained with the well-known local architect William Ravenscroft.

The style has been referred to as 'Free Renaissance' and has a very quirky mix of different elements. The tower is topped by the swan weather vane. As you will see from the picture taken shortly after the library opened, the present clock with the figure of Old Father Time did not feature in the original design. These were added at the request of the Caversham Urban District Council which disbanded in 1911 as part of the boundary change.

It is a fine building which has stood the test of time. It deserves a fine future.



The library in its early days

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The beauties of Caversham

By Trevor Keable

I offered to write an article for Caversham Bridge and my pitch was easy. There are so many hidden treasures in Caversham – the cemetery in Hemdean Road jumps to mind – and some of the local churches have some fascinating art. Other ideas bubbled. Each road appears to have a superb front garden so we could talk to their keepers. There are many “secret” collectors around Caversham and it would be brilliant to highlight their collections. Some really good local photographers have pictures that are quirky and different. They are all linked in my mind by the word beauty.

So, being free on a Saturday, I took my camera and started to wander around Caversham looking for beauty in churches. But many are locked such as Caversham Baptist Church, the New Testament Church of God, and St John's Church. Others had weddings such as the Catholic Church of our Lady and St Anne (is Caversham really in the Archdiocese of Birmingham? If so, why – and why Arch in the diocese? I'll be keeping my eye on the letters page for clarification).

There was a wedding at St Peter's which had also taken over Caversham Court Gardens where a very nice lady in a white apron asked me if I was a guest, and told me it was a private party. Finally at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church there was also a party in the hall with lots of balloons but the church was locked. The very nice hostess said, “I could call David if you wish?” but we agreed it wasn't an emergency.

As I repassed St John's another very nice lady asked “Can I help?” I explained my mission and she said, “If only you'd come this morning we were cleaning the church.” However outside was a small sculpture which said

‘Until The Day’ on it. It's very simple, no more than three feet high, but a little gem that deserves a wider audience. It is of a pelican caring for her chicks or as the web-site says “... a stone statue of the pelican in her piety.”

I'd seen it as a sculpture of a bird, not understanding that this is a heraldic device that spans seven centuries. The bird plucks at her own breast to save her young with her own blood – an allegorical depiction of Jesus Christ in both His sacrificial love and subsequent resurrection. Suddenly the piece takes on a greater significance and the fact that it centres the Garden of Remembrance is fitting beyond words. This is indeed true beauty.

Now to my final beauty, the glorious front garden in my photograph which is strategically sited opposite a bus stop. The owner said: “I love to cheer up the people waiting for the bus”

His garden is a beautiful oasis of colour in a drab street. He's modest in his achievement for he surely works long hours on it and every time I walk past I marvel at its magnificence. Words are not important, the feast for the eyes is surely all the sustenance we need.

If you know of anything beautiful in Caversham and wish to share it, be it a collection, a piece of art, or a front garden, please contact carl.claude@hotmail.com and we'll try and include it in our next column. Thank you.

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

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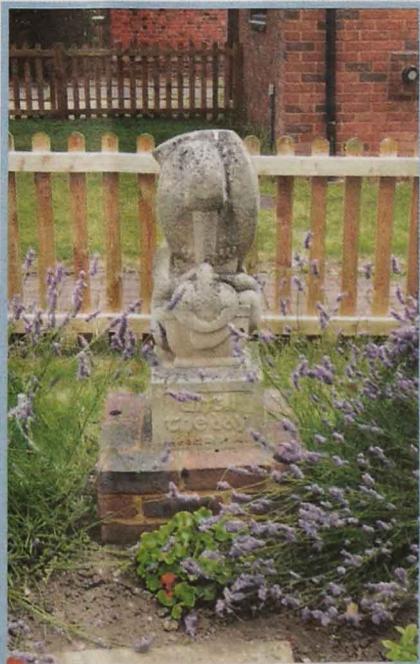
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The pelican statue at St John's

Open day at St Michael's, Sonning Common

St Michael's Catholic Church, Sonning Common, invites you to a special open day which will form part of the annual parish weekend celebrations to mark the feast day of our patron, St Michael.

On Saturday 26th September St Michael's will open its doors and everyone is welcome to come inside and find out more about us and the projects we run in the community.

This is an opportunity to meet some of our parishioners, find out about the work that we do in the wider community, find out what actually goes on inside the church and perhaps see if there is something that we do that would appeal to you

During the day there will be guided tours of the church, lively, informal talks by our parish priest, Fr Paul, who will be explaining what the Catholic faith is about in today's society and debunking some of the myths. There will also be an opportunity for private meditation and prayer, and of course free refreshments throughout the day. As a finale we have a performance by the popular Pangbourne Silver Band.

St Michael's is situated on the Peppard Road in Sonning Common, next door to the petrol station. The parish of St Michael's includes not just Sonning Common, but Emmer Green, Caversham Park Village and some Oxfordshire villages such as Kidmore End, Rotherfield Peppard, Stoke Row and Checkendon.

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Fun and Joseph at holiday club

Most of us are probably familiar with the story of Joseph, and the musical Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat has helped make it a favourite of many children. This year the Pyramid Rock holiday club hosted by Churches Together in Caversham took 150 primary aged children back to Egypt to the days of Joseph.

Volunteers from a number of Caversham churches worked together to provide another successful holiday club held at Caversham Primary School. We are extremely fortunate to have a team of dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers. At a cost of only £4 per day the holiday club is great value and receives positive reviews from parents, with one parent saying, "It gets better each year".

The children are at Pyramid Rock from 10am to 3pm each day. During the morning we follow a programme that includes singing, a mega game, a drama, a bible story, craft and a time of reflection and refreshment. In the afternoon the children are given a choice of activities including football, basketball, cricket, playground games, dancing, drama, community craft, and science.

This year we introduced some new activities. These included an animal roadshow, fencing, archery, and cheerleading. Thanks in particular to Premier Sport and Quarks Animal Roadshow. Each year one of the highlights of the week is Wet Wednesday and this year was no exception. The children had fun getting wet with

a variety of games.

The week finished with the family fun afternoon on Friday when the children's families are invited to come along to see what the children have been doing. We had bouncy castles, face painting, a hieroglyphics treasure trail and the best hot dogs in Reading.

A great week was had by all. Thank you to CTC and the volunteers from the churches in Caversham who make it all possible. We look forward to holiday club 2016!



Fencing was one of the playground games



Making the most of Wet Wednesday

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am very surprised to see your August publication featuring a letter from the chairman of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Action Group stating that "the people of Mapledurham, Caversham Heights and surrounding areas are fighting back..." It is clear after a fair and democratic vote that the vast majority of people in the area are in favour of this site for the proposed school.

However, of more concern in my opinion, is that your publication should not be used by ANY local action groups to promote their cause particularly on a page headed Christian Community Action!

We have other local publications that cater for this style of diatribe.

Paul Winslow

Editor's note: We welcome letters for publication and are happy to have our pages used for discussion on local issues, whether important or trivial. This does not mean we support or oppose any of the views expressed.

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Caversham clergy retreat from the heat

During the hot summer days at the end of June and early July, eight clergy from the Caversham churches went on an ecumenical retreat for 48 hours to Alton Abbey in Hampshire. The Reverends Derek Chandler, Jenny Dowding, Nigel Jones, Jonathan Edwards, Margaret Dimmick, David Little, Mike Smith, and David Jenkins formed the group and were led by retreat conductor, Reverend Canon Norman Boakes.

It has been 10 years since the Caversham clergy went on retreat together and this venture was an opportunity to explore common issues in Christian ministry, leadership, and considering the 'Church of the future'. The experience proved extremely encouraging and affirming for all involved and no doubt will have a positive influence on the future relationship and vision of Churches Together in Caversham.

Lighter moments included a visit to the

picturesque town of Alresford and the Winchester Diocesan centre of Old Alresford Place (historic home of Mary Sumner, founder of the Mother's Union), a tour of Winchester Cathedral, and some extra-curricular activity in the real ale pubs of Alton in the evenings! The reminiscences of Derek Chandler, who was born in Winchester, grew up in Alton, and was ordained in Winchester Cathedral, accompanied all of this. The Caversham clergy have summed it up in their own words:

"As a newcomer to Caversham it was wonderful to be able to have two full days together with my clergy colleagues. I believe passionately in churches working together but experience shows that that only happens when clergy work together. Rightly, we need to set the example. It was great to be able to eat, drink, discuss, worship and walk together amidst a great deal of laughter!" (Jonathan Edwards)

"Although there are differences in our experiences of church leadership and our understanding of ordained ministry, we share the same hopes, joys, frustrations and struggles as we each seek to work out our calling to serve Christ and the Kingdom. There was a significant degree of sharing and trust amongst us, and, yes - much laughter." (Jenny Dowding)

"It was so helpful to spend time with other ministers, to get to know each other better, to pray and worship together, and to share in each other's joys and sorrows in ministry. As we ministers have met together residentially, I hope other Christians in Caversham will be encouraged to meet and pray with their brothers and sisters in Christ". (Mike Smith)

"The retreat was well planned, powerfully renewing, deepened a sense of respect and belonging among us and offered some possible areas in which we might work fruitfully



The clergy pose in the pulpit at Winchester Cathedral

together. The sessions in which we shared were facilitated by Canon Boakes and were of great value. The weather, the surroundings and the places we visited all helped considerably. We are very grateful for the support of our churches and to Derek Chandler who organised the whole event." (David Jenkins)

"It was good to have much more time together as the ministers of Caversham than is usually possible. Despite coming from different churches we all want to work together. One theme emerged from our talks - that we now are in a time of great change, which could be a time of opportunity, if we can accept that the future of the church may look very different from the past." (Nigel Jones)

"Flash! Bang! Wallop what a picture - the retreat was of a common purpose, a shared desire, to see Jesus made known to the people of Caversham." (David Little)

"This was a new opportunity to meet and support colleagues in ministry, which I thoroughly enjoyed and left me spiritually encouraged. It was a good time to get to know one another better and a good foundation for working and praying together. Many thanks everyone!" (Margaret Dimmick)

"For me the retreat was much more than a 'remembrance of things past'. This became clear when we visited Winchester Cathedral and while we there some ordination candidates were rehearsing their ministerial vows in front of the Bishop of Winchester ready for the ordination service. This, and the whole experience, was a kind of renewal." (Derek Chandler)

Article compiled by Revd Derek Chandler

Photograph by Revd David Little

Find out more about the churches in Caversham online at www.cavershamchurch.org.uk

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What's going on at Balmore Park surgery?

My name is John Atwill and I am the current chairman of the Patient Participation Group at Balmore Park surgery in Caversham. After 40 years of working in the diagnostic and therapy fields of healthcare, I want to give something back.

I want our patient population to become real partners with our carers rather than passively accepting how they are managed. Below is what we at Balmore Park surgery are aiming to achieve over the coming weeks and months – we need more patients to become members of our PPG and get more involved in their care.

NHS organisations have a duty to involve patients and the public generally, this includes GP surgeries that are being actively encouraged to set up and support patient participation groups. Balmore Park surgery has an active PPG and would welcome interest and further involvement from their patients.

The PPG will be holding information sessions at the surgery on the 16th and 17th September from 10.30 am to 12.30pm and 2.30pm to 4.30 pm. The aim is to provide patients with the opportunities to find out more about the role of the PPG and about patients' new opportunities to influence the way services are delivered not only in the practice but also the area covered by the North and West Clinical Commissioning Group.

What is a PPG? The groups exist in GP surgeries as a way for patients to express their views and work with clinical and administrative staff to improve local services and the quality of care that is given. They generally have their own terms of reference and should act as representatives of the wider practice population.

Why join a PPG? Patients have an important role to play in having a say in the way in which the services are delivered to best meet their needs and the needs of the wider local community; one way to do this by joining your PPG. By sharing experiences and providing feedback, patients can influence how services are delivered locally.

How does a PPG work? While there's no hard and fast rule how a PPG is made up, they generally consist of volunteer patients, the practice manager, and one or two general practitioners. They also may have some administrative help from the practice. Most groups tend to have regular meetings at the surgery, in the case of Balmore Park it is bi-monthly. Some GP practices only run a virtual group linking by social media etc or some will even run a mix of the two.

What does a PPG do? They can work with practices in a number of ways, working to seek and understand the views of the wider patient population and offer feedback from the patient's perspective on changes that may be required by the practice, for example opening hours or weekend working.

The PPG may help with communication between practice and the local population, especially members who are active in their local communities and are involved in neighbourhood groups, for example. PPGs may also offer practical support to the surgery with organising health promotion days or supporting annual flu jab clinics.

The organisation Healthwatch has been working with PPGs in GP surgeries across Reading to encourage members of the community in having an active voice in shaping local health and social care services and to explore ways to network groups and work more closely with Healthwatch.

Patients' voices have already secured significant improvements to the health services, which directly affect us all.

For example, from this month it has been agreed that hospitals must ensure both the GP and the patient receive a letter explaining the results following

consultations, tests and in-patient stays within 10 days. This target will be reduced even further to one week from 2016.

Additionally a pilot scheme (which, if successful, will be rolled out to all practices in the area) is being introduced to provide a specialist health visitor for the elderly (over 65) to provide support for people who need it.

If you are registered at Balmore Park surgery why don't you come along and find out more?

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ENVIRONMENT

CAVERSHAM FIRE STATION

Mary Kift's book, *Life in Old Caversham*, has a photograph of the Caversham Fire Brigade with the fire engine in the fire station yard in Gosbrook Street (now Gosbrook Road). The other month, while looking for something completely different, I came across this newspaper photograph, taken on the afternoon of Sunday, June 26th, 1910, which shows the archway leading into that yard, and a lamp on the corner with the word Fire on it.

It may not be brilliant as a photograph – I've copied it from the Reading Standard newspaper – but it shows just what was where.

All the buildings you can see are still standing – though the archway has gone. If you stand in Gosbrook Road today, you can still see where the canopy was, above the brickwork of No 47, to the left, and you can just about see the words Sussex Place painted on the brickwork of the houses on the other side of the arch – Nos 41, 43 and 45.

In the photograph, not only can you see the fire station, but in front of the banner you can see the firemen, in their blue uniforms and highly polished helmets, riding on the horse-drawn fire engine, under their leader, Captain Gale.

I know the colour of the uniforms because it says they were blue in the description of the procession in the Standard. The event was Hospital Sunday. The people in the procession were so numerous that it was divided into two, with the two processions taking different routes through the streets of Caversham.

Between them they involved no fewer than seven bands – the Caversham Brass Band, Reading Mechanics' Band, Sonning Brass Band, Caversham Salvation Army Band, Peppard Brass Band, Pangbourne Brass Band, and the drums and bugles of the 4th Battalion, the Royal Berkshire Regiment. I expect that the St. Peter's Boys' Brigade also played their drums and bugles as well. Many friendly societies were also represented in the processions.

Interestingly, 'one of the chief collectors of the day was Mr Beal's dog, Bruce, which is well-known in Reading and district for the work it has done in this connection.'

After the demise of Caversham Urban District Council, in 1911, the fire brigade remained at the yard for around 10 years, and after that it was used by Reading Corporation as a highways and buildings maintenance depot.

From around 1960 onwards, a variety of companies used the yard – Precision Reinforced Fibres Ltd, who made fibreglass-reinforced plastic mouldings, and then came Sportworks Ltd, sports ground contractors. By 1972, Grundon's, the waste disposal people, had it, and also Mini-Tipper Hire Ltd, which may have been a Grundon subsidiary. Between about 1976 and 1981, Tiga Racing used the yard, building and painting Formula 1 and 2 racing cars. As is the case with many of these back-yards, it's surprising when you go back through the old directories and see what they were used for.

As for the Caversham Hospital Sunday, 1910, the local paper said that this was the best-organised procession in the history of the event, but it raised £1 less than it did in 1909. All that organisation, all of those people, and the amount raised for the Royal Berkshire Hospital was only £45 and four shillings!



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Concerts in Caversham

The series of chamber music concerts entitled Concerts in Caversham continues to establish a reputation for intimate music-making in a warm and relaxed style in the wonderful acoustic of St Andrew's Church. Now in its fifth year, the series was established to promote a high quality and professional concert series using some of this country's finest musicians.

To date the performances have showcased three BBC Young Musician of the Year finalists, along with principal players from leading orchestras and ensembles.

The summer concert featured the brilliant violinist Tamas Andras, co-leader of the Royal Philharmonic, and the superb oboist Timothy Watts, also from the Royal Philharmonic, as soloists with the Caversham Ensemble Chamber Orchestra.

For the autumn concert on 10th October, the brilliant young pianist Yuko Sano will play a delightful programme to demonstrate her virtuosity and musicianship. Yuko studied at the Liszt Music Academy in Budapest, before being awarded a full post-graduate scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music where she won the Maud Hornsby Award at the end of her first year. She also won the highest prize at the Burckhardt International Piano Competition and the first prize and Grand Prix in all categories at the PIARA Piano Competition.

She has performed piano concertos with the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra and made her London debut for the festival *The Rest is Noise* at the Southbank Centre. She has given recitals throughout the UK and in Europe and is a Young Concert Artist for Steinway Pianos. Yuko's programme will include works by Liszt, Chopin, Haydn and the thought provoking composer, Takemitsu.

Try your hand at bowling

Rivermead Indoor Bowling Club are holding two open days for people to come and have a go. Located at the Rivermead Leisure Centre in Richfield Avenue, the club welcomes potential players with or without any bowling experience. There will be coaches on hand to get you started, bowls and shoes are provided, although it would be helpful if you brought some flat soled shoes of your own.

The dates for the open days are: Saturday 3rd October, 10.00am – 2.30pm, and Sunday 11th October, 1.00pm – 5.00pm. For more information contact Joan Strong 9425269 or visit www.rivermeadindoorbowlingclub.co.uk

Evening of dance

The MillsTones dance band was welcomed back to St John's church on Saturday 18th July.

The church was transformed, tables and chairs set out and a dance floor created for the evening. About 70 people came along to enjoy the big band sound. The MillsTones, with vocalist Tricia, played music from the 1920s to the '60s. Numbers included some written by George Gershwin, Glenn Miller and Hoagy Carmichael.

Dancers from two local groups joined the audience, taking to the floor to swing dance and waltz. A dancing competition, quiz and a raffle completed the evening.

A great time was had by all and more than £300 was raised for church funds.

Bible Friends

Jeremiah sees a potter

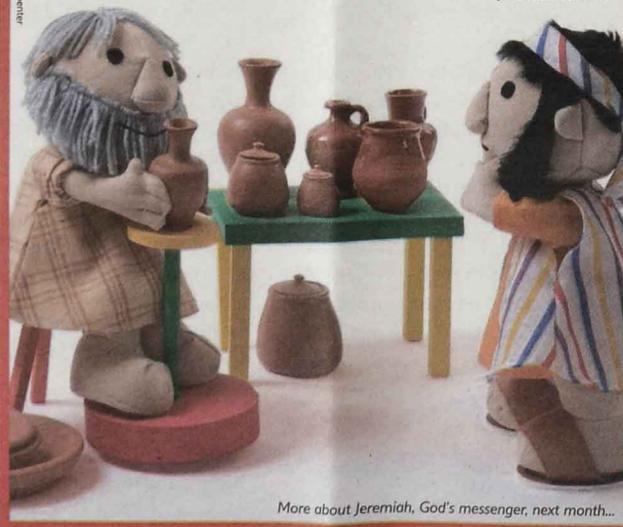
God told Jeremiah to go down to the pottery shop. The shop did not just sell pottery. Jeremiah could go and watch the potter making pots and jars from clay.

The potter shaped the clay with his wet hands. He pulled the clay with his fingers and thumbs, making the shape taller, smoother and rounder or sometimes – whoops! – wobbly and wonky! When that happened, or if the potter did not like the shape of the pot he had made, he squashed the clay together and started again.

The potter wanted his pots to be the very best he could make. He worked and worked until each and every pot was perfect.

God told Jeremiah to tell the people that he wanted them to be the very best people they could be. And God would work and work to make them his perfect people, just like the potter worked to make his pots perfect.

Jeremiah 18:1-12



More about Jeremiah, God's messenger, next month...

Caversham Church Fete

The annual church fete, organised by St Peter's Caversham and St Margaret's Mapledurham, took place in Caversham Court Gardens on 11th July in glorious sunshine. The fete began with a spectacular flypast by two Spitfires of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight, and the fun continued throughout the afternoon.

Crowds of people from Caversham and surrounding areas attended to enjoy all the traditional stalls, including books, plants, toys, tombola, and bric-a-brac and the various sideshows kept the children in particular amused. Cream teas proved very popular, as did the Pimms tent, an innovation at last year's fete.

Entertainment was provided by the Berkshire Maestros, the Arnold Band, the Wright School of Dance, and Ilana and Richard.

Thanks are due in particular to the members of the fete committee for their hard work over many months in organising the event, and also to the sponsors, AB Walker Funeral Directors and Walmsley Estate Agents, to all the volunteers and to the many members of the public who turned up.

A large sum of money was raised to support the work of the church at home and abroad.

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Chazey WI

Crop circles are an unexplained mystery to most of us and despite few news reports they continue to occur randomly around the world. Andy Thomas, our July speaker, presented a well researched investigation into their history. Interestingly it appears that England is at the epicentre of this global phenomenon. The vast and intricate patterns depicted in his slide presentation were made even more curious by the fact that these circles can sometimes appear in minutes.

Afterwards we had an opportunity to look through some of Andy's books, notably *The Truth Agenda* and also *Conspiracies*.

Chazey WI meet on the first Tuesday of every month at Caversham Heights Methodist church hall, 7.30 for 7.45pm. There is something for everyone and visitors are always welcome.

Caversham Horticultural Society

The Autumn Show is being held on Saturday 12th September in Emmer Green Primary School hall between 2.00 and 5.00pm. Everyone is welcome to visit this free event.

In addition of exhibits of flower arrangements, ornamental plants, fruit and vegetables there are classes in photography and crafts, domestic and

handicraft categories plus several classes specifically for children. Refreshments will be on sale throughout the show.

Please note that the entrance to the hall is via a drive in St Barnabas Road and not the main school entrance in Grove Road.

Caversham WI

History on the doorstep was evident when Helen Lambert from the Caversham and District Residents' Association brought slides to illustrate the exhibition on Caversham Heritage that was part of the 2011 celebrations. Large boards also helped to show the wealth of material that came forward.

The competition – a Caversham person or place – was won by Romagne Flight with Sue Taylor and Sylvia Myszor as runners-up. August was the month of garden parties so we were hoping for good weather. Our next meeting is 17th September when we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the WI

Probus

The speaker at the July meeting of the Reading Probus Club was Stefan White, whose subject was *Skulduggery in the Shrubbery*. Stefan recounted the fascinating tale of John Tradescant, who was born in 1570, during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, a time of great change in England.

John Tradescant was a pioneering gardener and a noted collector of plants, and many other things besides. He was the keeper of the botanical gardens, and was the founder of Britain's first museum, known as the Ark, which was kept in his house in Lambeth. He was employed by Lord Robert Cecil at Hatfield House, where the garden had features such as fountains, flower beds, fruit trees, and many varieties of trees. He oversaw the planting of huge quantities of trees. He was sent on buying expeditions by Lord Cecil, and visited Clusius, professor of botany at Leiden University, where he saw galleries displaying plants with many varieties.

After Lord Cecil died in 1612, Tradescant worked for Edward Lord Wootton at St Augustine's Abbey near Canterbury. In 1618 he visited Russia, bringing back many cuttings and plants, including the famous rose *Rosa Muscovita*. He led an expedition to Virginia, returning after a year with many new specimens. He later worked for the Duke of Buckingham, and collected many plants new to Great Britain on a visit to the Low Countries. After this he started his own collection, and moved to Lambeth; new plants arrived from Europe, the Mediterranean and North America. After the Duke's death, Tradescant was appointed Keeper of the Royal Gardens, and in 1637 became head gardener at the Oxford Physic Garden, attached to the university.

He died in 1638, and was succeeded by his son, John junior. In 1650 he was visited by Elias Ashmole, who helped him to catalogue the Ark, which had many articles on display. Ashmole and his wife, Lady Mainwaring, were house guests in 1652, one night Tradescant was in a drunken stupor, and signed a deed giving the Ark to Ashmole, to take effect on the death of Tradescant's wife Hester. In 1678, Hester was found drowned in a pond, whether by suicide, murder or accident was never discovered.

Oxford University planned a new museum to house the artefacts from the Ark, to be known as the Ashmolean. Ashmole died in 1692 at the age of 75, and is buried in St Mary's, Lambeth. The Ashmolean did not have room for everything, and the surplus was divided between the O U Museum of Natural History, the Bodleian library and the Pitt Rivers Museum. St Mary's Lambeth went into decline, but was restored in 1972, and is now the home of the Garden Museum.

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

Rosehill WI

As our president, Margaret Pyle, was recuperating from an operation, vice-president Margaret Seal welcomed everyone to the July meeting.

The speaker was Jennipher Marshall-Jenkinson whose subject was *Taking the Healthy Option*, not only a talk but a demonstration of microwave cooking. She explained that all food cooked in a microwave is healthier than traditional methods in that the food retains more vitamins. She then went on to cook two main courses and two desserts: the first main course was chicken in apricot sauce with rice and vegetables, the second was salmon with rice and vegetables. The two desserts were chocolate cake with a black cherry filling and chocolate sauce, plus small chocolate cakes. We were then invited to taste what had been cooked and it was all very delicious.

Our attention was drawn to two items of correspondence, the Stella Austin Cup competition *A Card for a Special Occasion*, closing date 17th November,

and a flyer for the Chilterns Craft and Design Show on 28-31 August at Stonor Park. Treasurer Doris Goddard reported that she had completed 167 emergency packs for RBH and had sent a letter of thanks to the dentists at Sonning Common for their donation of four sample boxes of toothpaste.

We meet on the first Wednesday in the month at St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green, at 2.00 pm and are pleased to receive visitors.

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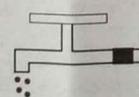
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