

# FOSTER CARER HONoured

**W**e are pleased to report the award of an MBE in the Queen's Millennium Honours List to Caversham Foster Carer Mrs Sheila E.M. Bowcock for services to fostering over the past 32 years, the last 28 of which have been in Reading. From an interest and skills developed in her youth helping to look after young cousins, work in a day nursery and subsequently as a primary school teacher with deprived children in her care, she has fostered 70 children, including some very difficult cases.



— O. Jewiss

Mrs Sheila Bowcock MBE was photographed at her home, the base for a long history in fostering.

## 32 years of fostering

Sheila and her husband, Philip, a well known local church organist, were approved as foster carers by Hertfordshire Social Services Department as long ago as 1968, a role in which she continued after their move to Reading in 1972, first for Berkshire Social Services and latterly for the Reading Unitary Authority. It has been a life of service and devotion carried out alongside that of a mother to four children, three chosen sons and grandmother to twelve grandchildren.

## Skill, patience, love and care

Sheila is that rare person able to deal with and cope with the unexpected, whilst remaining calm: foster children may arrive

from Social Services or the Police with anything from a few hours to minutes notice. Some may require very special care, such as tube feeding, or operations to repair a cleft palate, severe heart or respiratory conditions and the associated need to accompany and stay with the child while in hospital. Whatever the handicap, Sheila has maintained the highest standards of physical care, while encouraging the children to develop emotionally and intellectually. Such tasks require much skill and patience, some of which come from her earlier training as a teacher, but others reflect that very special type of person that Sheila is: one who is prepared to give time and love to help the children feel no different from those from a normal home.

## Help with young mothers and adoptive parents

In addition to fostering young children, Sheila has also worked with the young mothers of many of the babies and has sometimes enabled them to stay in

her own house, while giving them the support and encouragement they require. In the case of subsequent adoptions, the adopting parents have been encouraged to stay with her family to ensure a smooth transition of care for the baby. Throughout, Sheila always puts the interests of the baby and the adopting family before any feelings she may have for the child she has fostered.

## Help with MENCAP

In the past Sheila Bowcock has been able to pass on her knowledge in this field as a part-time lecturer at Chiltern College. However, this was a task she gave up so that she could run Reading MENCAP Society's Mother and Under-5 Bubble Club. She has also spoken to local schools and organisations about foster care and about children with special needs, topics which have commanded the attention of the children. Support and encouragement have also been offered to the parents of Down's Syndrome babies, who have been helped to keep their children, while pointing out the rewards such children can bring.

From the record of what Sheila has done and her life and service, it is clear that this honour is richly deserved and Caversham Bridge, on behalf of its readers, congratulates Sheila Bowcock on her award of an MBE.

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# TALKING POINT

By ERIC CHAPPELL

(A Member of the Editorial Team)

## WHAT NEXT?

The partying is now over; the fireworks have gone off (and weren't they stupendous!); our prayers have been said; the millennium bugs didn't do their worst. Things are back to normal: there are still wars and conflicts in the world; there is still hunger and poverty; there is still homelessness; there is still illness and mortality.

We have celebrated the end of the second millennium, which was a period both of material progress and regression in man's inhumanity to man. Our spiritual beliefs have changed in so many ways. Holy Scripture has continually been re-interpreted. The Christian faith has left its mark indelibly on the cultural life of the western world and has been the inspiration of much that is good in the social life of the universe (one has only to think of the caring for the sick and needy, the abolition of slavery and latterly the demand for cancellation of the Third World debt through Jubilee 2000).

The church has been effective as a bulwark against tyrannical political regimes but has been less so when political freedom was gained and people became more prosperous materially.

We have celebrated the arrival of the third millennium with a future we cannot foretell. Of immediate impact is the influence of the 'electronic age' and Information Technology. It is possible that we could see the end of society as we know it as we huddle over our screens immersed in the Internet. Will each individual develop his own concept of life and morality, ignoring the attitudes and values of others? Will the authorities be unable to control the activities of people or will they become the feared 'Big Brother'?

Over the centuries we have lived in an agrarian society so that our life-patterns have followed the ways of nature. We have worked during daylight, we have slept during the dark hours; we have followed the seasons in our work and leisure. Religion has reflected these patterns in its worship and in its interpretation of life.

Today we live in a society which bases its pattern of life on money and economics. We work, shop and enjoy ourselves throughout the twenty four-hour period. The food we now eat is more or less the same all year round. Agriculture has become an industry. There is pollution everywhere and the environment is at risk. Society no longer recognises the place the seasons have in the pattern of life. What effect will this have on our human existence? One can also foresee that, as we lose our touch with nature, the pattern of religious seasons and worship could have a diminishing influence on the life of the community.

Research is beginning to show that the effect of TV and computer games is to shorten the attention span of young people. Fresh ways will have to be found to make religious truths known and understood to the coming generations.

Our society is rapidly becoming multiracial and multifait. Will there still be conflict of race and ideology or will the church still be able to advocate peace and reconciliation to all men? Can one see any end to struggles for power and mastery over others?

What will be the churches' role in our future? Will they become like Noah's Ark and sail away from the problems of the world; will they seek to involve themselves with people, showing loving care for each individual?

This column is called 'Talking Point'. I do not seek to provide an uplifting message but want to challenge each of us to think out our role in the future of the church, the community and the world. What do you think? Write and let us know - make it a talking point!

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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All contributions for March issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday February 2.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs S. Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham by Tuesday February 1.

The dates for April will be Tuesday February 1 and Wednesday March 8.

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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## CAVERSHAM CLERGY

### ANGLICAN

Canon Richard Kingsbury, Caversham Rectory, Church Road.  
Tel: 947 9130.  
(Parish Office: Tuesday-Thursday 9.30-12.30  
Tel: 947 1703)  
Rev Cathy Pynn, 21 Ridge Hall Close. Tel: 947 6065  
Rev John Dudley, 26 Russet Glade, Emmer Green.  
Tel: 954 6664  
Rev Andrew Evans, 6 Scholars Close. Tel: 9483396

### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT

Rev. Philip Abrey, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village. Tel: 947 5152.

### METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev Rosemary Fletcher, 72 Highmoor Rd.  
Tel: 947 2223  
Deacon Vic Downs, 9 Woodlands Grove.  
Tel: 948 2530

### BAPTIST

Rev Peter Edwards, 14 Tredegar Road, Emmer Green.  
Tel: 947 7697

### UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Colin Ferguson. Tel: 948 2557

### CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL

Crispin Fairbairn, Eric Bird Tel: 947 4529

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

Rev Anthony Jones, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue.  
Tel: 947 1787  
Rev John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common  
Tel: 972 3418

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev. H. R. Gayle Tel: 945 3849 (contact)

## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ANGLICAN

#### St Peter's

8.00am Holy Communion  
9.15am Parish Communion  
11.15am Matins  
6.30pm Evensong

#### St John's

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School  
6.30pm Evensong (1st Sunday)  
6.30pm Informal Worship (3rd Sunday)

#### St Andrew's

8.00am The Eucharist  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)  
First Sunday, Family Eucharist  
11.30am The Eucharist  
6.30pm Evening Prayer

An up to date list of weekday Services will be found on the Church notice boards.

#### St Barnabas'

8.00am Holy Communion  
9.30am Family Communion (apart from 2nd Sunday)  
9.30am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

#### St Margaret's, Mapledurham

8.00am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)  
11.00am Parish Communion

### CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (Caversham Park Primary School)

11.00am Family Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)  
Morning Worship (2nd Sunday)  
Triple F Family Service (4th Sunday)  
6.30pm Evening Worship (1st Sunday)  
8.00pm Worship and Wonder (2nd Sunday)

### CAVERSHAM BAPTIST FREE CHURCH

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10.30am

### THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

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Highmoor Road  
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Woodcote Parish Church  
9.45am (second Sunday)

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

#### Our Lady and St Anne's

Saturday 5.30pm,  
Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm  
St Martin's School 9.00am Mass  
Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

### UNITED REFORMED CHURCH,

#### York Road

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#### Church Street, Reading

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

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

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



## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 3rd March 2000 will see women throughout the world celebrating the Women's World Day of Prayer. This year the order of service has been prepared by the women of Indonesia. Recently experiencing much civil unrest, the people strive for greater democracy. Women have always been treated as inferior to men, and have been taught to keep silent – but they have not lost faith. In this service they challenge the young people of the world to carry out faith through the story of Jairus' daughter.

The service in Caversham will be held on Friday 3rd March at 8.00pm at Caversham (Gosbrook Road) Methodist Church. The speaker will be Revd Sheila Nunn.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors

Please may I use your columns to send a big thank you to two Good Samaritans, who on Tuesday 7th December on Priest Hill, picked up me and my bicycle, and took me home.

It was a lady from Haldane Road and a gentleman from Kidmore Road.

Yours gratefully  
Hanne Baldwin (Mrs)

It is with great sadness that we have heard of the death on 17 January of Betty Sark, for many years the Postal Subscription Manager of the Caversham Bridge. Our sincere sympathy goes to her sister, Peggy Maule. There will be a tribute to Betty in next month's issue.

THE Board of The Caversham Christian News Ltd are pleased to welcome Mrs. Kathy Munns and Mrs. Val Orpwood as new members of the Editorial board of the Caversham Bridge.

## CHANGE AT WOMEN'S CENTRE

It is now over seven years since a pilot project for women, originally known as the 'Women's Skills Exchange', started at Reading's Wesley Methodist Church. Within months the Centre, which clearly meets a need in the town, was formally opened. It has since gone from strength to strength.

### Aims and objectives

Based on a vision of Constance Gooding, and backed by other women, the centre was established to provide a safe haven for women to spend time in a friendly, informal and non-pressurising environment, to enable them to release their skills and talents, often hidden as a result of crushing experiences, low esteem or feeling alone. Constance Gooding had earlier been the moving force behind the idea of the Churches-in-Reading Drop-in-Centre. Within the space of five years the Churches in Reading Women's Centre, as it is now known, had become a properly constituted body with charitable status, a constitution and a management committee. It continues to meet in Wesley Methodist Church Hall and in the adjacent Manse.

### Activities and growth

Open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays each week and for lunch on Thursdays, it teaches women a range of skills, including budgeting, cooking, dressmaking, woolwork, painting, typing, word processing and other IT skills. Over the years the number of helpers has risen from the original 10 to the present 19 regular and 12 occasional helpers; also the number of women attending regularly (known as partners) has doubled to 40 and now up to 24 children may also be in attendance during school holidays. Correspondingly the number of lunches served has increased to around 40 on a normal day. Over 280 women have attended the centre since it first opened. Through care, love and prayer there is now a succession of stories of women being successfully helped into a more fulfilled life and back into the community.

### Retirement of manager announced

Throughout this period, almost from its inception, playing a major leadership role, has been Emmer Green resident Mrs Sheila Goldsmith. She was the chair of the first Management Committee and subsequently became the Centre



— O. Jewiss

Mrs Sheila Goldsmith, Manager of the Churches in Reading Women's Centre, was photographed at the Centre during the Christmas period.

Coordinator, whose role has now changed to that of Manager. Initially all the work was voluntary, but latterly the role of manager has received a modest salary, a deliberate move to ensure that when Sheila retired the Centre would be able to employ a suitable person, rather than rely on a volunteer to come forward. Now after almost seven years Sheila has decided that it is time for her to retire and, although she will be a hard act to follow, an advertisement for a replacement appears in this issue.

### Financial support

During the formative years of the Centre it has been maintained by charitable gifts, grants from various charities, including the Church Urban Fund, and grants from Reading Borough Council. During the past year there have been three paid staff: the play group leader, the manager and her assistant. As a consequence expenditure has increased but this has so far been matched by increased grants. These will need to be maintained and further giving by the churches encouraged. At present, giving by the members of today's church, excluding donations from church trust funds, amounts to about 13% of the total income needed; the Centre is mainly reliant on grants from other resources.

### Resource needs

The excellence of the work done by the Centre and its helpers is acknowledged by the fact that the Centre continues to receive several generous grants. Nevertheless, in common with the other church-based care agencies in the town, the Centre needs continuing and greater financial support from the churches, as well as a ready willingness for more people to volunteer to assist with this very rewarding work. Until her retirement at the end of May, Sheila Goldsmith will be very happy to tell others more about the work of the Centre and how individuals may help.

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Interviews: Week commencing 13th March 2000

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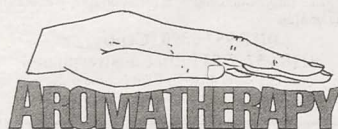
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# BY BOAT TO CAVERSHAM, TO WATCH READING F.C. PLAY

by Bryan Horsnell

It's now just over 18 months since Reading Football Club left Elm Park (their home from 1896 to 1998) to move to their magnificent new Madejski Stadium, but I wonder how many Caversham residents realise that the 'Biscuitmen' (now the 'Royals') used to play their matches in Caversham?

When the Reading Football Club was formed in 1871, they played at the Reading Cricket Ground at Kings Meadows, then moved to Coley Park in 1882 and on to Christchurch Meadows, Caversham in 1889, where they remained until 1896.

Reading's matches were played on the part of Christchurch Meadows opposite the Gosbrook Road flats and one of the most important games played there was an F.A. Amateur Cup-tie against the Old Carthusians on 17 February 1894.

Reading was an amateur club in those days and their opponents, the Old Carthusians, were one of the most formidable amateur teams in the country who could boast four full England internationals in their side.

About 40 years ago, I obtained a Match Card (forerunner of today's 'programme') from this game and a notice on the back of the card, advised supporters 'THE MOST DIRECT WAY to the Ground is to Ferry the Thames from ADAM'S AND GYNGELL'S BOATHOUSE - Fare 1d. Return'.

The local newspapers of the time recorded that Reading lost the match 4-1 in front of a crowd of more than 1,000 and I have since discovered that the Old Carthusians went on to become the first-ever winners of the F.A. Amateur Cup, when they beat the Casuals 2-1 in the 1894 Final played at Richmond.

It is interesting to note that Reading's 18 year old outside right on that historic day in February 1894, Bertie Oswald Corbett, went on to play for England against Wales in 1901.

This match card is the only existing record of any of the matches played by Reading F.C. at Christchurch Meadows.

I wonder if there are any relatives of local Caversham residents who attended the game or, indeed, any of the other matches played by the Club in Caversham? If so, I would be only too pleased to hear from them.

I am a member of the recently formed Reading F.C. Society of Collectors and Historians. We are trying to track down any other old Reading F.C. relics, to preserve them for posterity.

If any readers have any pre-1959 Match Cards, programmes, handbooks, fixture cards, tickets, postcards, photos, badges and so on . . . , connected with Reading F.C. - the older the better - I would be pleased to hear from them.

Please contact me direct at 275 Overdown Road, Tilehurst, Reading RG31 6NX. Telephone or Fax (0118) 942 4448.



# ENVIRONMENT

## NEWS FROM GLOBE BY Øß

In December members from all Reading's Globe groups met for a TREGA (the Reading Globe alliance) get-together. These happen quarterly and enable everyone to exchange news of achievements and problems still to be solved. At present there are groups in Caversham, Caversham Park Village, Newtown, the University, Katesgrove, Battle (the Oxford Road area), Tilehurst and Southcote. They have the opportunity to tackle a wide range of environmental issues affecting these neighbourhoods, but inevitably must concentrate their efforts on those which reflect the interests of their current membership.

A common theme did, however, arise at our December meeting - that of consultation. Reading Borough Council are increasingly consulting Globe groups, residents' associations, and the population at large on issues affecting the borough as a whole or particular areas. In addition, the ghost of Berkshire lives on for planning purposes and the unitary authorities must co-operate to produce a new county structure plan. At the regional level the counties in the south-east worked together on a plan for the future development of this relatively successful part of Britain. New housing was a key issue here: the local authorities wish to moderate the requirements which are being urged at a national level.

At our TREGA meeting, we had an initial discussion of the subject and agreed to pursue it further (we have the option of feeding our conclusions into the council's formal machinery via the Agenda 21 forum). Since their adoption of a 'cabinet' style of operation, the council have issued a promising discussion paper on consultation and set up area consultative committees to co-ordinate feedback from interested groups and individuals. However, there would appear to be much work to do before a consistent, thorough and fair system of consultation exists.

Everyone must judge for themselves whether they are satisfied with the system as it stands, but be aware that it is in a state of transition. If you can spare the time from the requirements of everyday life, take the authorities at their word when they seek the views of local residents on the consultation process and engage in improving the system, whether as an individual or through groups and associations. For more information on Caversham Globe, our meetings and practical activities, please contact our secretary, Paul Raman, on 948 3389.

## NOTE

### re-WATCHDOG

The Editors are sorry to hear the news that Watchdog is indisposed. Regular readers of her articles will, we are sure, join the editorial team in wishing Watchdog a speedy recovery so that they will have the pleasure of enjoying her column and she will not miss the early advent of the spring flowers.

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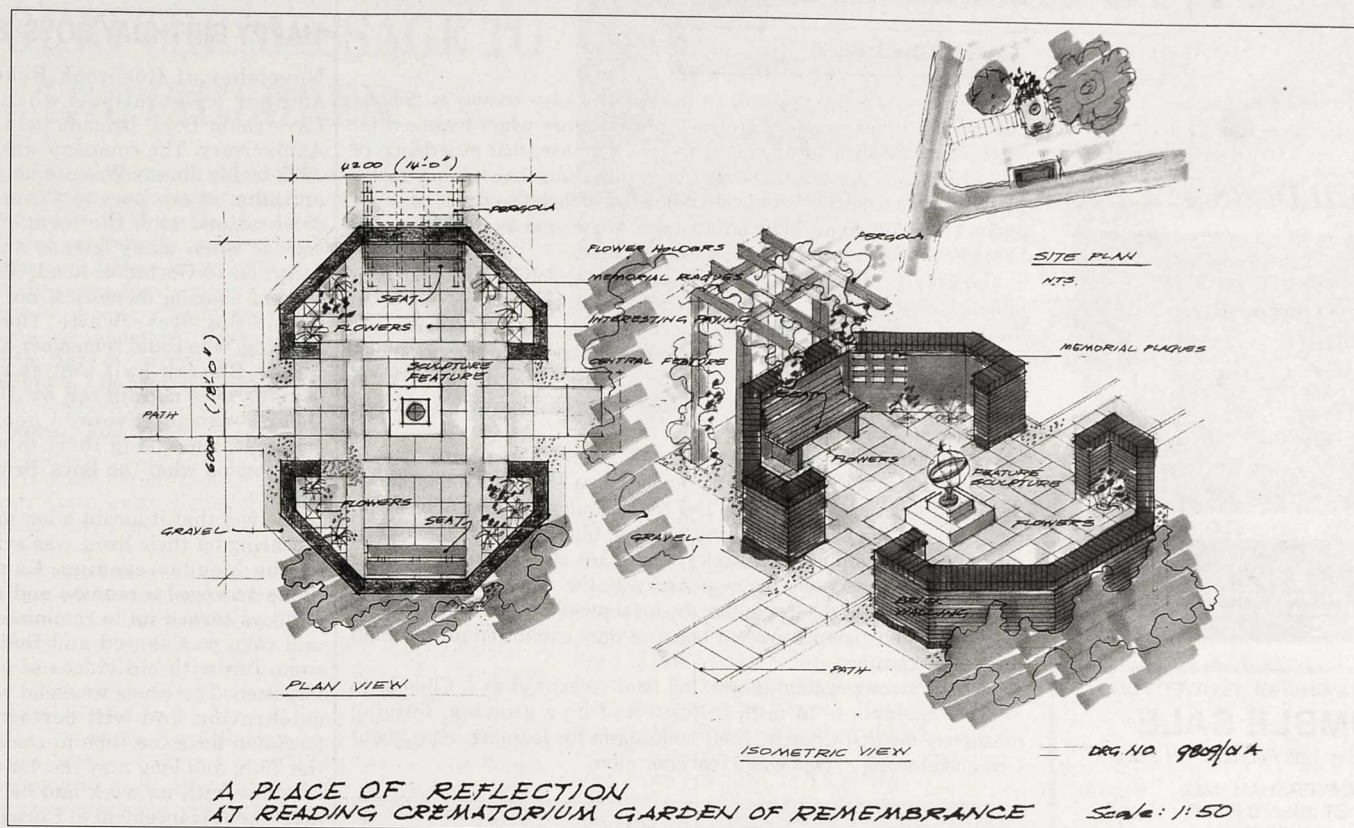
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# A Place of Reflection



A place of reflection is to be constructed within the Reading Crematorium Garden of Remembrance, specifically designed for the use and benefit of parents and relations who have suffered the loss of a child, either at birth or soon after, and where the child has been cremated. It is being arranged and funded by the Rotary Club of Caversham as a project to mark the Year 2000.

Two midwives were consulted about the idea. One said, 'parents who have lost a child, before or after birth, need space to think, grieve, and meditate. A quiet site would be a marvellous benefit to parents, especially where there is no grave to visit.' The second said, 'My committee is very enthusiastic. They have wanted something like this for ages. It is not thinking back in a negative way. It is remembering, and just as relevant as the Remembrance services each November.'

There is already an area in the cemetery for the benefit of families when a baby has been buried and the Cemetery Manager, Bruce Thomas, would like something similar in the Crematorium Garden of Remembrance. It has been designed as a secluded sitting area, around a central sculptural feature, and includes memorial plaques, flower vases, and a pergola with climbing plants which have been specially selected to be attractive to butterflies.

The Reverend Canon Richard Kingsbury, Rector of St Peter's Caversham, who first identified the need for this facility, said 'I am very much in favour of this project. I sometimes make my own garden available for parents who want a place of quiet and solitude.'

Construction commenced in November 1999 and a formal opening is planned for Spring 2000.



Rotary President Chris Smallbone, Bruce Thomas - Superintendent and registrar of Reading Crematorium, Rotarian Barrie Mann - Project Manager. Ceremony on the 4th November lifting out the first piece of turf.

The 'PLACE OF REFLECTION' will cost in the region of £9,000 and will be officially opened in April of this year. On completion the AREA will be handed over to Reading Borough Council and will be maintained by the Crematorium.

Councillor Jonny Morris, Reading Council Lead member for environment & consumer affairs says, 'The Council finds it difficult to find money for capital projects and this is an area which hasn't had a lot of provision. The Council is highly delighted with this project and thanks the Caversham Rotary Club for its very generous gesture'.

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## AROUND THE CHURCHES

# SWAPPING WITH CALIFORNIANS

by Andrew Evans

When we first applied for the swap I thought it would be a marvellous way to see the Church overseas for myself and get some experience of how life in California was really lived. I had been to San Jose and San Francisco several



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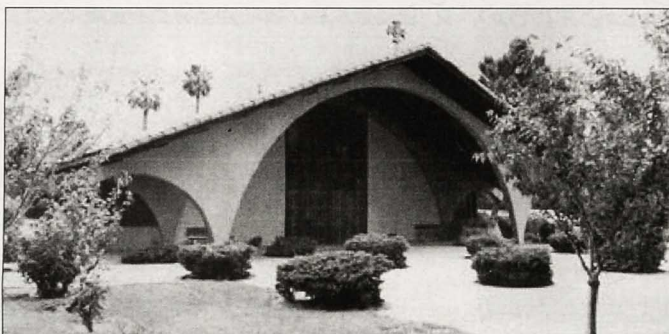
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times before, because this area of the world is also known as 'Silicon Valley' and I had therefore visited it several times when I worked for Intel who have their headquarters there. Of course, that experience of the valley and the bay area was very different, involving a lot of meetings, office blocks, international hotels and flights to catch back out again. I therefore looked forward to going to the area in a different way to see how people really lived and worked there.

The Church was very different in some ways, and terribly similar in others. The services had a definite Anglican feel, same words, but since they have a different prayer book they were often in a different order! This can be confusing, but was an interesting experience. For example, the Eucharistic prayers differ slightly and the US order allows the congregation to join in the prayer where they offer themselves back to God in thanks for what he gives.

The people of the Church were actually largely local people; people who remembered the valley as an orchard area - for this is the part of the world that gave birth to the Del Monte fruit company! For them, there is a certain sadness that the blossom filled orchards have been overtaken by computer companies. There are also, naturally, a large number of incomers who have arrived with the new work and house prices have risen to the extent that the local people have often to live in the house their parents' owned because they cannot afford the high price of purchasing!

St Mark's congregation is working hard to expand as a Church, to attract new people to faith in Jesus and be a growing, thriving missionary-minded Church. Their enthusiasm for learning more about God and growing in Him was a real education.



### A Personal account of the exchange - Allyson Evans

I'm used to scouring the classifieds for bargains, but when we saw the ad for a church/house swap in the Church Times, I never, never imagined it would be our family travelling to the USA last summer!

Internet conversation helped to establish that we had a 'good match' for the exchange and plans went ahead. However, the whole thing still seemed quite unreal to me until we left the Hess family safely installed in our Caversham house on 11th July and made the trip to their place in San Jose, California.

We arrived in a heatwave (101 F) and I wondered how we were going to cope with the climate, but after a couple of days it cooled and we had a comfortable, dry summer - actually averaging several degrees lower than London - we were checking the paper!

The children took well to life 'stateside' and enjoyed caring for the Hess Dalmatian dog, three cats and parakeet! Cats in California are generally kept indoors, and we had some games trying to get screen doors shut when people went out and the cats wanted to join them in the garden or on the balcony.

Our summer included some beautiful trips, to Yosemite, the coastline, and the Napa Valley, as well as several visits to San Francisco itself, about 45 miles away. Even Joshua, aged 22 months, had fun sampling the huge range of cuisine on offer in California, including Japanese sashimi, wonderful salads and Mexican tacos - not to mention the inevitable burgers and pizza.

St Mark's Church members were most welcoming and the whole family will always remember the lovely folk we were fortunate to get to know just a little during our stay. Each of us would have a different highlight if asked. For Ben, aged 9, his seat at the opening pre-season game of the San Francisco 49ers football team! Rebekah loved the scariest rides at the Theme Parks, especially the old wooden rollercoaster at the boardwalk in Santa Cruz. Nathan enjoyed having cats to love again as we lost the last of our three in January last year. Joshua overcame his dislike of swimming pools to become an enthusiastic waterbaby.

All in all, a terrific opportunity and one I'd highly recommend - enhanced by the knowledge that Ray & Deborah had a good experience over here too. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and the members of the congregation of St Mark's.

## CAVERSHAM (Gosbrook Road) METHODIST CHURCH NEWS

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY BOYS' BRIGADE

November at Gosbrook Road saw yet another celebration, when the 1st Caversham Boys' Brigade held their 60th Anniversary. The company was formed in 1939 by Mr Jimmy West, to help cope with an influx of evacuees to Caversham. The celebrations took the form of a special service when many friends and old boys returned to Gosbrook Road. There was a time of sharing memories, not least from Councillor Steve Waite, the Mayor of Reading, who could remember happy times in the Church hall and at camp. The service was conducted by Deacon Vic Downs who interviewed people in the congregation asking them to share their thoughts on what the Boys' Brigade meant to them.

The fact that it meant a lot, and had had a bearing on their lives, was evident when on the Monday evening, Captain Doug Stone arranged a reunion and many more old boys turned up to reminisce. A supper and cake was shared and Doug provided some fun with old videos of events long forgotten. The whole weekend was a lovely celebration and will certainly not be forgotten for some time to come. Here's to the 75th, and long may the 1st Caversham continue with its work and be true to the aim 'The Advancement of Christ's Kingdom Among Boys'.

### CONGRATULATIONS

To Lilian and Tony Champion on the birth of two grandchildren. Baby Emma Jane was born to David and Mandy Champion in October, and on Christmas Eve a son was born to Paul and Elizabeth Champion.

To Danielle Val Woodcraft on her baptism on November 28th. Danielle is the daughter of Boys' Brigade officer Nigel Woodcraft and his wife Anne-Marie.



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## AROUND THE CHURCHES

## THE MILLENNIUM - BRINGING THE MESSAGE TO THE CHILDREN

Readers may remember an article in the 'Bridge' at the end of the last summer holidays, about the success of the 'Y Now Holiday Club' held at the Amersham Road Community Centre. Following on from the interest it gained, it was decided to hold a reunion on 12 December 1999 at the same venue. Once again, representatives from several of the Caversham churches helped to organise the event and were on hand on the day to make sure everything ran smoothly. Due to illness, the former leader of the event, Chris Ham of Caversham Baptist church, was unable to join in on the day but he contributed his ideas and was able to help 'backstage' beforehand. As you read this it is hoped Chris will have made a full recovery and be back to his old self again.

In Chris's absence, the reins were ably held, during the afternoon, by Howard Ballard, of Gosbrook Road Methodist, with ample support from John Broadie and the rest of the team, including Chris' wife Jan, who was team leader for the eldest group.

The afternoon started with a kind of 'Christmas General Knowledge' quiz which concluded with the children being asked "Is the Millennium, (a) the Dome, (b) a computer virus, (c) a pop song by Robbie Williams or (d) something to do with Jesus Christ?" It was encouraging that the vast number plumped for (d)! The group then split into their three age groups, 5-6 year olds, 7-8 year olds and 9-11 year olds and took turns to play games, make and decorate sweets (this was a favourite activity, I wonder why??), and perform various 'messy' craft activities using paint, salt dough, wrapping paper and glue. Some very artistic creations were produced and everyone appeared to be having a lot of fun. "Fun" was certainly the word that popped up most when the children were asked for their comments on the day.

Some favourite carols were sung with much gusto and then a few parents accepted the invitation to join the group for mince pies, tea



Craftwork. Gareth Sweeting helping Jade Brean and Joshua Ballard.

- E. M. Allies

and coffee while the youngsters enjoyed crisps and lemonade. The evening concluded with a reminder of the very special birthday that was approaching and members of the Methodist drama group, "Revelation", entertained the group with a "hip" version of the story of the three wise men. One of the wise men was bored because he thought he knew everything that was going to happen. However! One day a new star appeared in the sky and it wasn't forecast in the 'Old Bore's Almanac' they were reading. "If a new star appeared I'll eat my hat", says one of them. He leaves the stage, chewing! "Duck"! shout another, "It's coming this way!". The sensible one of the trio decides they will follow it. The rest is indeed His Story.

Judy Ruck

### MILLENNIUM GOSPELS, CANDLES AND SIGNS

The forthcoming arrival of the Millennium was marked by Churches Together in Caversham with the distribution to every householder in Caversham, Emmer Green and Mapledurham of a copy of St Luke's Gospel. This Gospel was given to remind of the happenings surrounding the birth of Christ 2,000 years ago and what followed during his life, death and resurrection. Caversham Park Church distributed the Millennium Candle and resolution to the houses in their area; Gospels will be available for those who want them later in the year. Several of the Caversham churches now carry a sign reminding passers by the "The Millennium is Christ's 2000th birthday. Worship him here - now" and an illuminated cross. To mark the Millennium the Oxford Diocese is encouraging Christians to identify with their faith by wearing a cross and to this end has produced a distinctive cross encircled with the Diocesan logo.

## MILLENNIUM CRIB

There was much hype and razzmatazz over the preparations for the celebration of the arrival of the new Millennium and a danger that the real significance of the date would be overlooked. Many within the churches have been anxious to highlight the Christian significance of the occasion and it was to this end that Mr Jack Eyston of Mapledurham House suggested the erection of a Christmas Crib. In the absence of an ideal available site in the centre of Caversham land was made available on rising ground on the outskirts of Caversham by the Mapledurham turning and, with the cooperation of St Martin's and English Martyr's Primary Schools and the encouragement of Churches Together in Caversham, a large crib, with life size figures of Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus, was erected close to the roadside. A large star reflected the sun during the day and was illuminated at night and together with the crib, made an imposing witness to the real meaning of the Millennium to anyone driving out of Caversham on the Woodcote Road.

In a small ecumenical service conducted by Revd Father Tony Jones, Chairman of Churches Together in Caversham, assisted by the Revd Rosemary Fletcher and Canon Richard Kingsbury, the Crib was blessed on the Monday before Christmas. It was St. Francis of Assisi who first started the idea of erecting a Christmas Crib as a reminder of the birth of Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Perhaps the Millennium Crib will be the start of a new tradition in Caversham as a witness to the Christian faith.



O. Jewiss

Our pictures of the Millennium Crib was taken on the day it was blessed and show the overall scene and the figures within the crib. Mary was made by English Martyr's Primary School and Joseph by St Martin's Primary School.



Eunice Cooper

Mary (Miriam Ballard) and Jesus (Shaunna Sheridan).

### NATIVITY PLAY AT CAVERSHAM (Gosbrook Road) METHODIST CHURCH

The Toy Service and Nativity Play are a special time for all the Church family and this Christmas was no exception. All the youth departments took part in the service, from the toddlers right through to the Christian Dance Group. The dancers were an added extra this year and gave a special magic at the end of the play, when they danced to "Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here". Dressed as rather modern angels they danced to flute music played by Lana Broady, and to the voice of Lisa Barnes who sang so beautifully. Miriam Ballard portrayed Mary, and Shaunna Sheridan was just small enough to play the part of Jesus. Again, a modern Jesus, complete with dummy. The efforts of the children are always delightful, especially at Christmas, but these could not be achieved without the hard working adults who form a backup team for the whole event. Thanks must go especially to Kathleen Sweeting who works so endlessly in so many ways.

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# JUBILEE 2000 GROUP LAUNCHED IN READING

Reading Council Chamber was packed on 5 January when the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Steve Waite, chaired a meeting to launch the Reading Jubilee 2000 Group. The idea of a campaigning group to pressurise the countries forming the G7 Group to release Third World countries from unrepayable debt was formed in 1995. Although there has been much activity in Reading since then in raising awareness and collecting signatures, there has not hitherto been a local group.

A panel of speakers included Colin Cockshaw, representing Jubilee 2000, Professor Paul Starkey, Chair of the Reading-San Francisco Libre Link and advisor to development agencies, John Bakang, lecturer from the Kwame Nkrumah University in Ghana, and Caversham's John Madeley, journalist with specialist interest in Third World issues; they detailed the present position in regard to release of Third World Countries from their debt burden and the conditions in those countries. The meeting was also supported by Reading West MP Martin Salter, who also spoke; Jane Griffiths, Reading East MP, sent apologies and a message of support.

## Action so far

So far the campaign has, through the collection of 17 million signatures and lobbying at the G8 meetings in Birmingham in 1998 and Cologne in 1999, secured promises from the UK, USA and Canadian Governments that they would be prepared to release the debt burden on those Third World countries which were unable to service the debt on previous loans without hurting the poor in those countries. Japan, Germany, France and Italy have yet to be persuaded. Despite these promises, only four countries have so far had their debt relieved. Part of the problem in relation to multilateral debt is the slowness of both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to react.

## The next step

The campaign now asks for pressure to be applied to Japan before the next meeting of the G8 countries in Okinawa on 23 and 24 July this year. Those attending the launch meeting were urged to write to, or e-mail, the Japanese Prime Minister urging his Government to take action on dropping the debt.

## How the poor suffer

The meeting heard how, through Structural Adjustment Programmes, Third World countries had cut back on schools and hospitals, so that if you wanted to send your child to school or required medical treatment you had to pay. If you could not pay for medical treatment you simply died. There were also first hand stories of the difficult decisions Third World leaders had to make in

accepting loans or development projects which often had great disadvantages for local populations.

## Need for future monitoring

In future it is proposed that there will be greater transparency in the making of loans to ensure that money is spent on the right projects and that this is monitored. The current objective is to release all Third World Countries from unrepayable debt during this year. It is becoming increasingly obvious that when the Jubilee 2000 Campaign ends at the end of 2000 there will be a need for a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) to monitor future loans and the arrangements for their repayment.

## Over to us

Encouraged by the Reading Football slogan "Come on Reading" when the team were behind late in the day, the Reading Jubilee 2000 Group was launched in the last year of the Jubilee 2000 Campaign. This was a successful and informative meeting which rekindled the enthusiasm of those already involved and hopefully will encourage others to write to the leaders of Japan, Germany, France and Italy to urge their governments to release Third World Countries from unrepayable debt. These same countries, together with those who have already promised debt release, also control the World Bank and IMF, so their co-operation is critical. Debt relief is as important to the dignity of Third World citizens as the abolition of slavery was in the 19th century and this generation will earn a place in history if this can be achieved.

Further information about Jubilee 2000 is available through local churches or the Jubilee 2000 web site: [www.jubilee2000uk.org](http://www.jubilee2000uk.org)



— O. Jewiss

Our picture shows the panel of speakers with the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Steve Waite, and Reading West MP, Martin Salter, and organiser Hamish Preston.

## TATTY ANDY

On Sunday 19th December the Sunday Starters of Caversham Heights Methodist Church performed Tatty Andy during the Annual Toy Service. This was based on Love Russia's Tatty Anna – a musical telling the story of a Russian Toymaker (Georgia Pravda) making toys fit for a princess. The younger children were soldiers and cuddly toys and were well supported by the seniors as marionettes, the royal household and narrators. The well-worn Russian doll Tatty Andy (Robert Birks) revealed his inner secrets to win the heart of the princess, despite rejections by the other "oh so smart" toys. The King (Elizabeth Maul) reminded the toys that their maker knows what's inside each of them and that it is important to treat each other as being very special.

The many toys and gifts given by the congregation went to Children's Aid Direct and the special collection for Love Russia's orphanages raised £160.

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## TRIBUTE

### IVAN WILLIAM HOLLEY

1932-1999

The sudden passing of Ivan Holley, on Saturday morning 27th November 1999, came as a tremendous shock to all who knew him, particularly his wife Sheila, and two sons Trevor and Stephen, daughters-in-law Alison and Sarah, and grandson William.

Ivan and his brother Norman were the sons of Steve and Agnes Holley, who, being stalwarts of Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, ensured that the boys were brought up in that tradition. Throughout his life, the strength of Ivan's faith was a constant factor, ensuring a loving family home, and taking Christian values and ideals to the world of industry and commerce.

When he was a young boy Ivan's grandparents ran Holleys Stores in Westfield Road, which was directly opposite Falkland Road, and which gave its name to Holley Passage cutting from Westfield Road through to Short Street. His surname gave Ivan and his brother local status.

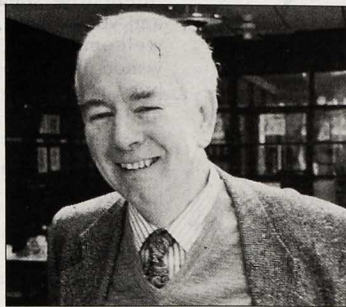
Ivan was educated at Hemdean Road Junior School, and Caversham Secondary School, where towards the end of his school days, the woodwork master, a Mr Towner, whose family by coincidence ran the General Stores on the corner of Falkland Road and Westfield Road opposite Holleys sweetshop, kindled in Ivan an abiding love of timber, and set him on track to a woodworking career.

Prior to leaving school and joining Samuel Elliott as an apprentice joiner, Ivan along with Norman was a member of the Scout Troop at Caversham Baptist Church. During this time they both played football for Reading Boys, and Ivan went on to play as Goalkeeper for other local teams, eventually signing and playing for Elliotts, until the completion of his apprenticeship in 1952, when he was called to do National Service.

Ivan served in the Medical Corps, and whilst the skills of his new trade were not required, his early upbringing, and compassion for others, stood him in good stead. These qualities, along with his medical training saw him in Egypt, just at the end of the Suez military crisis caring for the physically and mentally injured of that conflict.

Returning to Caversham, and to Elliotts to take up joinery as a qualified journeyman, his skills as a craftsman were much in demand. Prestigious contracts, including The Park Lane Hotel London, The Palace of Westminster, the liner "Queen Elizabeth", are but a few on which Ivan worked.

But the contract he wanted, and was soon to win, was the contract between him and a young lady in the



wages office, Sheila Green, and they were married on September 15th 1956.

Of course you do not have to go any further than the Methodist Chapel in Gosbrook Road to see items of Ivan's workmanship. The raised Communion area and Communion Rail, along with the pulpit, and separate reading lectern are his design and manufacture. There are also memorials to both Ivan's mother and father, for Agnes Holley was an accomplished church organist, who played the organ over many years at Gosbrook Road. Ivan's father Steve had a fine baritone voice, and it was the influence of his parents which gave Ivan a passion for music, particularly organ music.

Architectural Design Woodwork Ltd, was formed by Ivan Holley and Brian Styles, and it has traded most successfully for over thirty five years, at its works in High Wycombe, where it continues today to produce high quality purpose-made joinery.

Following his retirement, Ivan was able to put a lifetime of woodworking experience at the disposal of others. Not only did he help his sons Trevor and Stephen with their home projects, he was always willing to assist others with advice, which would almost certainly end up hands on.

Ivan was a family man, a good Church man, a fine tradesman, and a most competent businessman. For the last thirteen years he was an active Freemason, taking a prominent role in all aspects of the work of Freemasonry, which exists to support all who are in need, and those in distressed circumstances.

The love and esteem in which Ivan Holley was held was amply demonstrated at his funeral service held on Monday 16th December 1999. Deacon Vic Downs conducted the service. The church, filled to capacity with over two hundred and sixty people, listened to an address by the Reverend Brian Skinner, a former Methodist Minister of Caversham. Brian took us all down memory lane, recalling Ivan as a husband, a father, a grandfather, a church member, a business man, a Freemason, a friend.

Our prayers are for Sheila, and the Holley family at this time, and those of us who counted ourselves as his friends give thanks to God for that privilege.

## ENVIRONMENT



### To See An Ivory Gull Scops Owl

Our Team of Three left early on Wednesday, 23rd December, the venue being Aldeburgh near Ipswich. The car was parked and we stepped across the road on to a shingle beach. My friend made off to investigate a flock of gulls as I set up the telescope alongside a low, concrete wall. I believed that I was alone, but amazingly the Ivory Gull was standing beside me.

I could have stroked him. He listened like a dear pet as I softly chatted to him. He would have taken food from my hand but sadly there was none. It mattered not at all. The spell continued and Scooby would have been highly approving. In all our years of birding nothing had happened quite like this before.

Gradually the birders moved in, barely daring to realise what they were witnessing. This rare gull from the high Arctic is seldom seen south of the Shetlands and is known for its rapport with man. It is a first winter bird so has its whole life to go. The grey bill and legs with gorgeous, snow-white plumage and small, black wing-darts are fully diagnostic. It stayed around all day, just flying from roof to roof. He sat and watched us when we left – and I just had to wave to him. He will never be forgotten.

The area is the settlement of a few beach home-steaders, ropes and nets being strewn hither and yon, but whether by chance or artistry one knew not. We trust that birders will have extended sensitivity to these residents.

The Millennium is already upon us as a rare Ferruginous Duck has arrived at Burghfield Gravel Pit. There is already a very large number of mixed wildfowl.

At Theale main pit, six Goosander led by a Merganser majestically swim about. These are large 'saw-bill' sea-ducks. A Bittern is frequenting reed-beds at the Fox and Hounds pit and two Peregrines are still being seen on or near the pylons.

At Moatlands there must be in excess of five-hundred wildfowl. Three Red-crested Pochard have been there for several weeks. Wigeon, Shovelers, Gadwall and Goldeneye are well represented. No doubt the continued cold weather must have some effect upon retaining such large numbers. Food is plentiful and many birds are reluctant to fly unless weather improves.

Scops Owl



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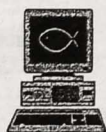
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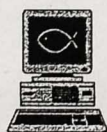


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## the CLUBS

### Caversham WI

Everyone was in tune with Christmas at the combined Christmas/birthday party. This was the title of the talk from Mr. John Brearley and made everyone relax and think about the real meaning of Christmas. There was a chance to join in with some unusual carols and this built up the appetite for a delicious bring-and-share supper.

The president had welcomed members and guests from other institutes and on leaving invited every one to take a present from the 'bran-tub'. After the raffle draw guests were wished a Happy Christmas and given a reminder of the Millennium evening in January.

### Caversham Afternoon TG

Mrs J Slatter presided over the December meeting. Arising from

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the minutes she reported the project 'Women through the Ages' had been a great success and said how much she had enjoyed the day.

The Christmas lunch had also been enjoyed by all.

The Federation report was given by Mrs D Smith. All members were invited to the March meeting when Dr Walker from the screening centre in Gun Street is to be present and the final cheque handed over. 'Challenge 99' was won by Birmingham TG. The next NCM is to take place in Blackpool.

A flower demonstration followed with ideas for Christmas decorations. As it was a celebration of Christmas and our birthday the rest of the meeting was taken up with a festive tea, the cake was made by Mrs A Deane. Several gifts were given out from a free raffle.

Meetings are the third Thursday at 2pm at Church House, Caversham. Do come and join us.

### Chiltern Edge Antiques Appreciation Society

If you are interested in antiques why not join the Chiltern Edge Antiques Appreciation Society? This year's first session begins with a talk on the 2nd February entitled 'The Story of Miniatures', given by Emma Rutherford from Phillips, the London auctioneers.

Meetings are held at Chiltern Edge School, Sonning Common, on the first Wednesday of the month and commence at 7.30pm.

Further talks include:

The life and times of Hogarth by Mr J T Brearley;

Glass Paperweights by Mr Roy Brown, Chairman of the Cambridge Paperweight Society;

The History of Greetings Cards by Mr Peter Jones;

Do come along. Our programme covers a variety of subjects with interesting speakers and you will be most welcome, as will visitors if you wish to bring a friend.

### Emmer Green TG

At the November meeting members were very happy to welcome back Mrs Audrey Saunders, after a period of ill-health.

The guild had held their annual birthday party in late October with a fish and chip supper and traditional 'entertain yourself' games. The evening was well attended and Mrs Barbara Jepson thanked the organisers on behalf of the guild. The correspondence report included letters of thanks from the Federation and from Caversham Heights Guild both of whom had sent guests to the party.

Further correspondence had come from the Chairman of the Federation concerning the Paddington rail crash. Any member in difficulties because of the disaster is invited to contact Pam Howard of the National Executive.

The Arts and Crafts group were continuing to work on costumes for 'Women through the ages' in November and Words and Music had a special concert planned for their meeting, with a mixed choice of music and readings. The Ramblers had fitted in two walks, one with the bonus of sweet chestnuts available along the route!

Under the title of 'Women of Faith' Miss Kathleen Prior recalled how in 1994 she had attended a conference at which 'the Durham quilt' was on display. This had been made in 1992 when local Durham areas had each contributed a section embroidered by both novice and skilled needlewomen together. The finished cloth hung for a time in Durham cathedral. The choice of women as subjects for the panels ranged worldwide and from nearly every century, up to most recent times.

On display in the hall that evening was a quilt of 25 panels based on the same theme. It had been made by 25 church circuits who were asked to create a design and name it for

a special woman. These women were chosen at random but there had been no duplication. All of them were 'everyday' people, many active and working now, in all parts of the world.

Kathleen commented that the common factor in both quilts was that every woman represented was a 'carer' in the widest sense of the word - the saints of today, a thought with which the audience warmly identified. Mrs Jean Dix gave the vote of thanks.

The guild meets at St Barnabas Church hall on the 2nd Tuesday each month at 7.30pm. Visitors are always very welcome.

### Caversham Ladies Club

A very festive scene greeted members when they arrived for their Christmas party

on Thursday, 9th December.

Chairman, Mrs Brenda Strong, extended a warm welcome to everyone and hoped they would have a happy afternoon.

Each member had brought a plate of sweet or savoury food for the Buffet table and Mrs Queenie Strong presented the Christmas cake to the Club. A small amount of business was attended to, which included the Chairman's comments on the Club's Christmas lunch, held at The Clifton Arms, Caversham, on the previous Friday. Once again, this was a great success. Everyone attending was most complimentary and would welcome the venue to be repeated next year.

continued on  
page 11

## METHODIST DIARY

February 4 visit of President of Conference (Rev Stuart Burgess)

CAVERSHAM (GOSBROOK ROAD) METHODIST CHURCH

February 6	10.30am	Holy Communion - Rev Rosemary Fletcher
	6.30pm	Rev Audrey Simpson
February 13	10.30am	Rev Rosemary Fletcher
	6.30pm	Deacon Vic Downs
February 20	10.30am	Mrs Marion Cruddas
	6.30pm	Holy Communion - Rev Derek Shaw
February 27	10.30am	All Age Worship and Parade Service - Deacon Vic Downs
	6.30pm	United Service at St John's

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS (WOODCOTE ROAD) METHODIST CHURCH

February 6	9.00am	Holy Communion - Rev Rosemary Fletcher
	10.30am	Rev Dr John Sumitra, Circuit Missioner
	6.30pm	Rev Valerie Fisher
February 13	10.30am	All Age Worship and Parade Service - Deacon Vic Downs
	6.30pm	Holy Communion - Rev Rosemary Fletcher
February 20	10.30am	Holy Communion - Rev George Simons
	6.30pm	Deacon Vic Downs
February 27	10.30am	HOME MISSION SUNDAY - Rev Gordon Wilson, Ecumenical Industrial Chaplain
	6.30pm	Rev Gordon Wilson

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February 13	9.45am	Rev Derek Shaw
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### Thursday Evening Services

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Caversham Heights Methodist Church: Contact Harry Taylor: 947 2051 or (Wesley Lounge) Judith Higgs: 947 4494.



# the CLUBS

## from page 10

Now it was party time. However, the Chairman suggested we should first sing a few Carols. This was a most pleasant way to start the festivities and was much enjoyed. The members were then invited to choose their food and whilst doing this, the committee made and served the tea. Appropriate background music was being played to add to the enjoyment. It was, as the Chairman hoped, a very happy afternoon and the time slipped by much too quickly.

Before leaving for home, the Chairman wished members a very Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year.

## Community Association

December began with a members' evening. Several people gave seasonal readings and then there was a lighthearted quiz on mixed-up words.

The following week was the carol evening. The Woodford Singers led the company in some popular carols as well as reciting amusing poems.

The month ended with the Christmas

Party. An icy evening and a few colds kept numbers down but everyone enjoyed the festive meal. The entertainment was provided by Mr Terry Elford who rendered Dean Martin and Bing Crosby numbers, including 'White Christmas'. After wine and Christmas cake everyone went home with a gift.

New members are always welcome. Meetings are every Monday 7.30pm at the Arthur Legge Centre.

## Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

The Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild enjoyed their usual round of parties in December, starting with the Committee's supper. This was followed by the Social Studies party, a very successful evening, thanks to Betty Smith and Dorothy Moore who supplied the food, drink and entertainment.

Many members from the Guild attended the Federation Carol Service held in Reading and the lunch preceding it.

The Drama Group enjoyed their own party at a local hostelry, which they

felt was well deserved after working so hard, they had entertained other groups twice that month and have more engagements in the New Year.

At the Guild's own party the beautifully decorated tables were set out in a horseshoe shape, different from other years, but the members, as usual, were still welcomed by a glass of Dorothy's punch. They were then entertained by Terry Elford from Tilehurst, who along with his guitar sang many songs from the shows, including of course 'White Christmas'. The meeting had a late ending as everyone enjoyed themselves so much they were loathe to leave.

Why not make a New Century Resolution and come along to try the friendly atmosphere of one of the meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30pm in St Andrew's Church Hall, Caversham Heights.

## Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild Berkshire Federation

There was a large turnout of members for the December meeting, all pleased to welcome the return of the Vice-Chairman after her recent illness. The Chairman thanked members and their families, who had been actively involved in the recent Federation day on the theme of 'Women Through the Ages'; also those who had

helped on the same day with the local cake stall, which raised £72.

Group activities had been focussed on Christmas. Arts and Crafts had made Christmas cards, Words and Music had concentrated on readings and music of the coming season, whilst the Ramblers had enjoyed two outings, together with a Christmas dinner at the "Pheasant". Gardeners will receive details of future activities at the January meeting.

After traditional refreshments, the group welcomed Mrs R. Cookson, who spoke on "The Life and Times of the Miller of Mapledurham". Using slides, models and tools, she brought to life the history and technical details of milling. By 1086 the mill was already a thriving business, owned by a Norman lord with the fields, mill and ell rights, valued as 12/- in the Domesday Book. The miller owned the river frontage and controlled the passage of barges through his waters, taking one toll of grain from each bag. It was no surprise to be told that, next to the Lord of the Manor, he was the second richest man in the area. Liaison with other millers allowed them to pool repair skills and keep the paid workforce small and seasonal.

The Plague (1665) brought increased opportunities to extend the mill and expand the business. Charles II, with many of his court, moved to

Abingdon, but, on their return to London, still required grain and bran. Miller's affluence continued.

Disaster came in 1900 with increased import of Canadian grain for white flour. Between 1937 and 1938 the mill gradually closed down but, in 1977, because of the interest of a film company, was restored to working order.

Mrs Cookson spoke with the voice of experience, having made milling her interest and career. With the Millennium approaching, it was fascinating to step so far into the past to what was once an essential part of everyday life in the Thames Valley.

Mrs Jean Dix proposed an appreciative Vote of Thanks.

## St Peter's Wives

The Wives' Christmas Party was held on Tuesday, 14 December in Church House. Each member brought a plate of food and the variety of tasty morsels contributed was mouth-watering. A delicious hot punch was offered to members on arrival, together with wine, or soft drinks for the drivers.

Later, the members enjoyed a 'Reindeer Drive', a seasonal variation on a beetle drive.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 15th February at Church House, starting at 8.00pm. The speaker will be Mrs Pauline Beck on the subject of "Buttons".

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## CAVERSHAM HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY 2000 PROGRAMME

The 2000 Caversham Horticultural Society programme begins with the opening of the Trading Shed located at the bottom of Oakley Road hill on Saturday, 5th February from 10.00 to 11.30am and thereafter on alternate Sunday and Saturday mornings through to Saturday 25th November.

We will have on offer seed potatoes, onion sets, shallots and a range of Marshalls' vegetable seeds together with composts, fertilisers, insecticides, fungicides, lawn care products and many other gardening requirements, all at competitive prices.

An interesting and varied Programme of talks has been arranged, starting with "Bulbs, Corms, Tubers and Rhizomes" by Brian Fisher which will be accompanied with slides and takes place at 7.30pm on Friday, February 25th at the Arthur Legge Centre, Wolsey Road, Caversham. As usual this will be free of charge and members are invited to bring their gardening friends with them.

Our A.G.M. will take place on 15th March and new appointments will be announced to replace retiring members from the Committee. A special "Questions and Answers" evening has been organised for Friday 28th April and the usual Plant Sale will be on Saturday 13th May outside the Shed. On Thursday 15th June a visit to Waddesdon Manor and Gardens will take place

followed by the Summer Show at the Mapledurham Pavilion on Saturday afternoon 17th June. The next talk will be given on Friday 28th July by our long time member, Les Cooper, titled "Favourite Hardy Perennials." The Autumn Show at Mapledurham Pavilion is on Saturday 9th September from 2-4pm and Dr Peter Brandham will speak at the Methodist Church Hall on the evening of Wednesday 27th September about a visit to the rain forest of Guyana in search of rare and exotic plants. His talk will be titled "The Lost World".

A second Plant Sale will take place on the morning of Saturday 14th October outside the Shed and will give members an opportunity to offer their surplus plants for sale before the onset of winter! The final talk by David Penney appropriately titled "Autumn in the Garden" will be given at the Methodist Church Hall on the afternoon of Wednesday 25th October, and the last morning the Shed will be open will be Saturday 25th November.

The Society continues to grow and membership now totals 725. New recruits are always welcome and the annual sub. is only £3 for a couple, reduced to £2 for Senior Citizens. Apply to the Membership Secretary on 0118 947 3441 or come to the Shed or any of our evening talks if you would like to join.

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