

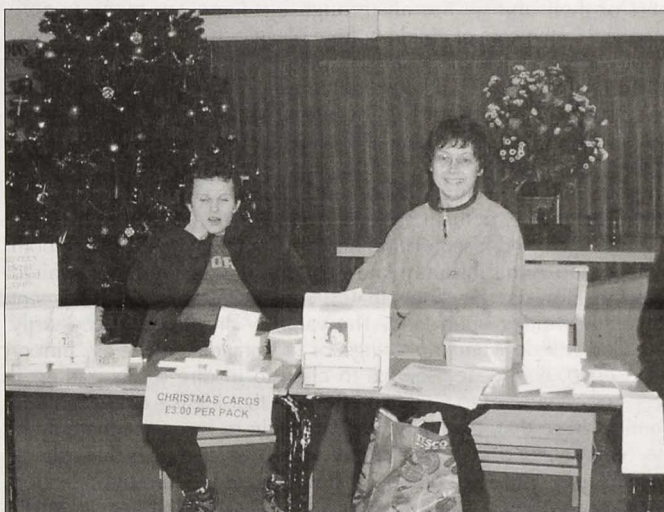
# THE CHILTERN CENTRE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

The Chiltern Centre for Disabled Children was delighted with the £2,300 donated from the Caversham Heights Methodist Church Christmas Fayre on December 4th.

## About the Centre

The Chiltern Centre is a one storey building on the outskirts of Henley with a play room, dining area, soft-playroom, garden, and three individual bedrooms for overnight respite care. It provides a safe, loving, stimulating and sociable environment for children living within a ten mile radius of Henley who have learning disabilities, as well as, in some cases, physical disabilities, medical needs, communication problems or challenging behaviour. Here, parents and siblings can have a break of anything from a couple of hours after school once a fortnight to an overnight stay once a week in the knowledge that their child is happy. This is achieved by having carefully chosen and trained staff who know each child's specific needs, likes and dislikes. It is small enough to be like a normal family home rather than an institution and is near the children's homes.

determined that this vital facility should re-open and be developed to its full potential. By February 2004 the Centre was registered as a not-for-profit company and charity, had passed the legal inspections, recruited a manager and staff, and welcomed its first intake of children. Now the Centre is used by some 75 families for anything from a few hours after school, through clubs or a half day in the holidays, to overnight care and even multi-day breaks. The age range is from 5-25 and the Centre has plans to work with the under 5s and to be open every day and night.



Matthew Sunman, who attends the Chiltern Centre, with his mother Jan, a member of Caversham Heights Methodist Church, at the Church Fayre in December.

## Why does the Centre need money?

Despite some grants and donations and a plethora of fundraising activities, the fact is that only a small proportion of the children have their care costs paid for them by the local authority. Money is still needed to purchase the building, cover running costs and provide equipment. The Chiltern Centre can make the difference between a family's breaking up or staying together; between a child's staying at home or going into permanent care; between a parent's suffering a physical or

mental breakdown or being able to keep going. The children who go to the Centre know it to be a special and happy place.

More information about giving financial support (gift aided if possible) or voluntary help can be obtained from the Centre on 01491 575575 or from Lesley Boardley, a trustee of the Centre, on 0118 947 3394.

## Why is this necessary?

This provision is necessary because many families with disabled children have never had a break in caring for their children; many do not get a complete night's sleep. Some have to keep a constant watch on a child who can reach or climb higher than a toddler, while several children are still in nappies into their teens. A few make noises that disturb other people, leading to the family's becoming isolated. Marriage break-up is much more common where there is a disabled child so, very often, there is a single parent looking after the child, as well as other siblings. But all the parents love each and every child of theirs and want to look after them. However, they desperately need support, a regular break and somewhere to turn to in an emergency.

This particular Centre is desperately needed. Oxfordshire County Council previously ran the Centre but closed it in September 2003. A group of parents and supporters was

## TSUNAMI DISASTER

We have all been moved by the tragic events during and immediately following the disaster in South East Asia. On page 7 we record how a community in the North East corner of Sri Lanka was affected by and reacted to the events of 26th December 2004.

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**Caversham Heights Methodist** -  
Pam and Phil Chatfield - 947 2444  
**Our Lady and St Anne's** -  
Mrs C Palmer - 947 3117  
**St Michael's RC Sonning Common** -  
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Contributions are welcomed if they are  
relevant to community matters or church  
life. Copy should be kept short, typed in  
double spacing if possible and with a word  
count. Copy dates are given in the paper  
each month and copy should be handed in  
at the Parish Office at Church House,  
Church Street, Caversham. The office is  
open 9.30 - 12.30 on Tuesdays,  
Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please note  
the Editors reserve the right to edit copy if  
necessary.

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would like to do so, please contact the  
Parish Office on 947 1703.

## TALKING POINT

By  
**Derek Chandler**

## Shining as Ordinary People

We watched a video of "Oliver" on television recently. The film was originally made about thirty years ago, so it was fascinating to look particularly at the child stars and see whether we could recognise those who had made it to the big time. Sadly, we failed to spot any! In fact, apart from Ron Moody, Oliver Reed and Harry Secombe, all of whom were already famous when the film was made, no one else had become really well known. Like the cast of Oliver, most of us may feel we are destined to remain life's anonymous characters for the whole of our lives. For any of us who have felt like this the celebration of Candlemas (when the baby Jesus was presented at the Temple) on 2nd February is an encouraging festival.

You may recall the story: Mary and Joseph took Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, giving thanks to God for his safe arrival and to ask God's blessing on his future life. In this action, their understanding, like ours today, was to nurture the child to the best of their ability. But all through life there are many people involved in the care of children, from playgroup workers to teachers, from godparents to grandparents. Whether they are related to the children or not, all of these roles are important. Candlemas celebrates the important role of two elderly people in the life of Jesus, in the biblical characters of Simeon and Anna. Both are mentioned only once in the Bible, and they both have only a walk-on part. But it's such an important part in the cosmic scheme of things that neither of them has ever been forgotten.

When Mary and Joseph came into the Temple with their son, both Simeon and Anna instantly knew this baby was the long awaited Messiah. How did they know that? I think because they'd both spent a lifetime waiting upon God. The value of prayer isn't necessarily that God will do wonderful things for us immediately we ask him or as a sort of emergency service to cling to in dire straits, rather, it keeps us connected to God. And through that lifeline God is able to nourish us, so that, gradually, we can begin to recognise the holy in the ordinary. Candlemas is a day when we celebrate that, giving thanks for the presence of God in our lives, as we turn our attention from WHEN Jesus was born during Christmas and Epiphany to WHY he was born through Lent and Easter. Candlemas forms the connecting point of these Christian celebrations.

These thoughts fill me with encouragement because in our world it is easy to feel helpless and to be filled with despair as we listen to news of wars and natural disasters. However, we should also remember that in the wake of the tsunami disaster in South East Asia for example, it has been the concerted effort of millions of ordinary people around the world that is helping to make a difference; each playing a small but significant part. We may never know how important our walk-on bit-parts are to other people. But the point is, through their dedication, Simeon and Anna were ready and they made a difference. For this reason their walk-on bit-parts became transformed into something more glorious, shining clearly, as they still do today. May you and I shine with them as we seek to serve and follow our Lord in his world today.

*Revd Derek Chandler is vicar of St Barnabas, Emmer Green*

## CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the March 2005 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 2nd February. The date for submission of items for the April 2005 issue will be Wednesday 2nd March 2005.  
All advertising copy for the March 2005 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 1st February 2005. For the April 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday 1st March 2005.

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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## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ANGLICAN

#### St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am Holy Communion  
9.45am Parish Communion  
6.30pm Evensong

#### St John's, Gosbrook Road

8.00am The Holy Eucharist  
10.00am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School

#### St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

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

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

#### St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Family Communion (apart  
from 2nd Sunday)  
10.00am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

#### St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

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

### CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.30am Prospect Street  
6.30pm Usually at 191 Kidmore Road

### CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL, Old Peppard Road

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

### THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

#### Caversham Methodist Church (Gosbrook Road)

10.30am and 6.30pm  
Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road  
9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am and 6.30pm  
Woodcote Parish Church  
9.45am (second Sunday)

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

#### Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

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

### SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers),

#### Church Street, Reading

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

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham

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



# NEWS FROM ST ANNE'S SCHOOL

The words, "Not a drum was heard . . ." could not possibly have been written to describe the entertainment at Assembly on the last Wednesday morning of term.

There were drums and other percussion instruments, songs were sung in Swahili and local African dances were performed.

This swirling activity was the culmination of four weekly workshops which had been conducted at the school by Sarah Ann Robinson of the Berkshire Young Musicians' Trust.

Everything had started when Mrs Kait Nash, St Anne's head teacher, accepted an offer from the Trust for one of its staff to run the workshops. The Trust supplied drums and percussion instruments on loan and, in a very short time, the hitherto inexperienced children were showing great progress in their playing. No doubt their enthusiasm and obvious advances encouraged them to make further efforts.

Sarah Ann Robinson had spent some time in Africa and was able to teach the children to sing in Swahili and to dance in the appropriate regional style.



Saint Anne's School

Drums in the assembly performance.

The culmination of her tuition was the assembly performance which was enjoyed as much by the audience as by the performers.

The children's talents extend into other areas of the Arts. Conor McAdden won joint first prize in Thames Water's schools' poetry competition. Contestants were asked to write a poem about life in Reading in 2004 and Connor's won £200 for the school. Five other St Anne's pupils were highly commended for their poems.

Another prize-winning poet was Olivia Morrin whose poem about football, in a competition run jointly by the Evening Post and Reading Football Club, won the first prize of a ride in a stretch limousine and a meal at TGI Friday's.

The next time you notice a stretch limousine gliding through Caversham, it might not be carrying gangsters or a bridal party, but another of St Anne's prize-winning pupils.



St Anne's poets with the Thames Water prize

St Anne's School

## BROWNIES PROVIDE CHRISTMAS TOYS FOR FAMILY AID

5th Caversham St Peter's Brownies have been working hard during the Autumn term for children across Reading who are not fortunate enough to have such a great Christmas as they do. On Tuesday 19 October the whole unit took part in an hour's sponsored exercise. They started with a warm up to stretch muscles and then moved on to an hour of skipping, hoola hooping, ball games, exercises and bean bag throwing. The girls went round and round doing a few minutes on each, followed at the end of the hour by a yoga cool down.

Once the money was all collected in and counted we found that we had raised over £760 and the shopping trip was well and truly on. On Tuesday 16 November we met at McDonald's for tea and then walked over to Toys R Us where each of the sixes went off with a leader and shopped until their trolleys were bursting. With some advice from Reading Family Aid, the girls were looking for fairly specific things and were very grown up about not being allowed to buy soft toys. There was much stuff that it would barely fit into Brown Owl's car. The girls were very pleased to have their photo taken by the Henley Standard at the end of the evening.

We spent about £650 in Toys R Us and the remainder of the money was spent on Oracle vouchers as Reading Family Aid provides presents for all ages from babies to teenagers. All the gifts then made their way to Reading Family Aid via St Peter's Church Toy Service on Sunday 5 December.

*Girlguiding in Caversham is always looking for adult assistance. If you can spare some time to help a unit or to help with administration, please contact Caroline Smith on 0118 949 2382 (day time only).*



Brownies after shopping trip

Picture courtesy of Henley Standard

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# FROM THE LOOKOUT POST

As I sit down to write, the New Year has already passed and the first issue of Caversham Bridge in 2005 has just dropped on to my doormat. It will be a while yet before you read this but, notwithstanding, I wish you all a very Happy New Year.

## Prospect Street

The run up to Christmas saw some very welcome progress in 'the Village.' Prospect Street was full of opportunities for Christmas presents – what a joy to be able to cut down those trips into Reading. Dales Turner extended their trading hours to offer a range of pictures and other gifts. If you have not seen their exhibitions of photographs and local artists it is well worth a visit. 'Wordplay' who took over from Caversham Bookshop seemed to be doing good business on both books and toys. I was able to find inspiration from the book section as well as placing orders for specific items and what a pleasure it was to choose from a modest selection of toys instead of acres of toys, most of which I would prefer not to have in the house. For those wishing to look suitably glamorous there is now a new barber and another ladies hairdresser.

'Bangles' had a wide range of gifts including many for the pocket money budget. The Oxfam shop always seemed busy. I was particularly taken with the Fairtrade Advent calendar which combines delicious fairtrade chocolate pieces with a delightful depiction of the Christmas story, including the narration of the story which unfolds day by day on the back of the little doors.

I was pleased to see that a sensible compromise was reached about the parking on Oxford Street. A number of spaces are now available for residents at any time and also between 8am and 6.30pm for short stay parking. I hope this will prove a useful provision for residents and their visitors as well as providing better access to the shops and services on Prospect Street.

## St Martin's Precinct

The 12 white Christmas trees on the canopy of St Martin's precinct were a welcome contribution to the Christmas atmosphere. (Next year, could we have a unified Christmas theme right across Caversham village?)

Sadly the bright Christmas decorations were not matched by the shabby paintwork and general untidiness in the precinct. Can we hope for a spring painting and tidying campaign?

We welcome the new Age Concern shop that is occupying the Nickson' site, however there are two empty units in the Precinct, the vacant photographic shop and the travel agents. These premises will need to be filled in order to restore the business buzz to the area.

## Bridge Street

It is good to see new signs of life on Bridge Street with a new bespoke kitchen and bathroom service occupying the premises of the former antique shop. The previous Caversham Emporium is the subject of a planning application for change of use. Sadly the old wooden frontage has been replaced with stainless steel.

## Lies, damn lies and statistics

Some of the official statistics comparing year on year crime in Caversham, for certain classes of crime, indicate that the rates have declined. The story can give a glow of confidence that is not borne out by the comments on the streets of Caversham. Street talk can embellish what has happened, both in terms of numbers of events and their severity, but my fear is that victims of crime are sometimes not bothering to report crime because they have a low expectation that anything will be done to apprehend the offenders. They also do not wish to be swamped by the crime reporting paperwork, which may actually lead to their insurance premiums being increased. There are compelling reasons to report crime since resources to deal with crime are based on reported crime. By the same principle, do report to the Council matters such as dangerous trees, overgrown hedges, persistent areas of dog fouling, and offensive graffiti, and pester the Council until action results.

## Planning

The recent granting of a planning application appeal, by a Planning Inspector, relating to a proposal to demolish two houses at 13 to 15 St Peter's Hill and to put nine houses and five flats on the site, raises several interesting points.

The first is that the Council always has to have in mind the possibility that, on appeal, costs could be awarded against them. That means our Council Tax money may be handed over to a developer to cover all or part of their legal costs! In this instance RBC tried to stipulate that the developer accept responsibility for affordable housing, since with an adjoining application it exceeded the 15 housing unit threshold that triggers this requirement. The Inspector did not accept this argument and awarded an element of costs against the Council.

The second point is that the Inspector favoured the application that had the buildings set back more from the road as this would facilitate the required splayed access with landscaping to soften the view from St

Peter's Ave. This did not recognise the length of time it would take for landscaping to form a mature screen or the appearance of the development to the neighbours behind the site.

## CADRA Open Meeting

Back in November there was a useful meeting featuring two Planning Officers from Reading Borough Council. The meeting started with a quiz to test our knowledge of the extent and the limitations of the planning system. The two Planning Officers then led us through a range of issues to build up our understanding of their work in processing applications, supporting the Planning Committee and responding to appeals against planning decisions. It was well attended and seemed to be generally well received but inevitably left us with frustrations over the apparent inability of the planning system to protect our community from many undesirable developments.

## Leaflets at Civic Centre offices

If you are passing the Civic Centre ground floor reception area, do look out for the numerous helpful consumer advice leaflets. They include premium rate phone services, "Don't suffer noise", "Need a plumber or builder ...?", door step selling, complaints about holidays, a large range of Help the Aged guides and even "Your right to Complain – about RBC". There is also a wide selection of information about events, exhibitions, entertainment and public transport.

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## EMMER GREEN'S COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

Thanks to the generosity of Emmer Green Residents' Association, the community notice board at the Emmer Green Shopping Centre has been refurbished. The board is now mounted in oak, supported by stout oak posts, with a head rail that proclaims that it is the "Emmer Green Community Notice Board". Members of the Residents' Association and Ward Councillors, together with Andrew Noyes, the local woodcraftsman who undertook the refurbishment, met the press when the board was formally inaugurated on the Monday before Christmas. The Notice Board and the nearby Emmer Green 'village' sign are outward expressions of the civic responsibility of the Residents' Association whose committee do much to look after the concerns of local residents, including keeping a watching brief on planning applications and on the removal of unsightly graffiti.



Photographed at the inauguration were Andrew Noyes, the woodcraftsman (in the foreground), Bob Cruickshank, Vice-Chairman Emmer Green Residents' Association (extreme left), Councillors Mark Ralph (2nd from left) and Bob Green (extreme right), together with other members of the Residents' Association.

## "THE QUEEN COMMANDS"

Many of our older readers will be familiar with the Queen Victoria Institute in St John's Road, Reading, where a chiropody service is provided for the retired people of the Borough.

Here a total of 8 part-time chiropodists and 2 office staff run clinics throughout the week. There are well over a thousand patients altogether, who are treated for anything from just having their nails cut to having corns and ingrown toenails dealt with.

However, this charity was originally set up in 1901 as a nursing service, to "Nurse the Sick Poor of Reading". In order to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, some ladies of Reading collected 'a purse of money' to present to Her Majesty. These ladies were of high social standing, including such illustrious names as Sutton, McLroy, and Jackson. But the Queen then graciously returned the purse and said "Start a home nursing service in my name".

The ladies purchased 25 Erleigh Road as a home for the nurses and set about starting such a service. The house was duly opened and the Queen's Nurses, as they became known, set up their rounds, supported by collectors who charged 6d. a week and another 2d. for dressings. Should you pass 25 Erleigh Road, look high on the side wall where there is a wonderful terracotta medallion naming the service.

The service continued until the advent of the NHS when 25 Erleigh Road became a nurses' home attached to the Royal Berkshire Hospital, and the District Nursing Service was born.

The funds were split and money was given to the Queen Victoria Institute charity which purchased a house in Queen's Road, and began a chiropody clinic for residents of Reading and Earley. Several years ago this property was sold, and the present lighter and more spacious property in St John's Road purchased, which will be well-known to many of you.

At present there is a short waiting-list for new patients, and a slightly longer one for patients who need home visits. The fees charged are approximately half those of independent chiropodists. If you are in need of treatment regularly, and are a retired Reading resident, you could phone the Clinic Manager on (0118) 959 0306.

### The Institute is also inviting suitable people to become Trustees:

There is a need for people of varying experience and expertise to be Trustees. They have quarterly meetings at which the affairs of the clinic are decided, in a congenial room in the Civic Centre. The duties are not onerous, the main requirements being an ability to absorb government regulations for charities, and then to administer the affairs of the clinic in a sensible way. If you think you can assist in this way, do please phone the Clerk on (0118) 947 6075, who will be pleased to send you more information.

(I am indebted to Janet Bond for the details of the history of the QVI)  
*Sylvia Chumbley*

## FOLK FESTIVAL WINTER WARMER

The weekend of November 19th to 21st saw a successful second Caversham Charity Folk Festival Winter Warmer. This would not have happened without the support of the three Caversham venues which hosted the various events. These took place at the Clifton Arms, Gosbrook Road, The Riverside Bar, by Caversham Bridge, and The 3 Men-In-A-Boat, Holiday Inn.

"We had brilliant evenings" said John of Tudor Lodge who hosted two of the concerts, "and I'm always amazed by the variety and high standards we get, especially when you remember that all the artists are appearing free of charge."

It is estimated that the weekend will have raised £1500 for the benefit of local charities.

There were plenty of sessions and sing-arounds which attracted a lot of good musicians and were great fun. Among the highlights were the combined contributions from former Pressgang members, George Whitfield and Damian Clarke, whilst the Saturday evening Clifton Arms concert featured Southampton based Blo Na Gal who brought the evening to an exciting close.

Further information about CCFF and the charities it supports can be found at [www.ccff.org.uk](http://www.ccff.org.uk)

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# 2005 - a unique time to MakePovertyHistory

by John Madeley

It can happen, it could happen and 2005 is the year to make it happen, to remove the gross poverty that kills 30,000 children every day.

A wide range of non-governmental organisations have come together to launch a campaign for 2005 to MakePovertyHistory. It's ambitious, it's unprecedented, and all of us can play a vital role.

Why 2005? Because this year will be marked by a number of key moments and events which give us a unique opportunity to be the generation which takes action to bring poverty to an end.

In April, a significant report will be published by the Commission for Africa. In July, Britain will host the G8 gathering of the eight most powerful world leaders. The Prime Minister has said that the summit will focus on poverty issues. There will be a big rally in Edinburgh on July 2nd to remind leaders of the importance of the issue.

This July also marks the 20th anniversary of Live Aid. From July to December, the UK holds the presidency of the European Union. And, in September, there will be a special summit of the United Nations General Assembly to assess progress to achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals.

The gap between the world's rich and poor has never been wider. Malnutrition, AIDS, conflict and illiteracy are a reality for millions.

Trade, debt and aid are the key issues in the MakePovertyHistory campaign. For it isn't chance or bad luck that keeps people trapped in bitter, unrelenting poverty. It's man-made factors like the glaringly unjust global trade system, a debt burden so great that it suffocates any chance of recovery, and insufficient and ineffective aid.

Our leaders are influential players on the world stage. They have the power to cancel the debt, to change trade rules and to give more aid to those who most need it.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu says: "2005 is a year of great opportunity. We can really do something to change the world. The time has come to stop talking and start taking some action. If everyone who wants to see an end to poverty, hunger and suffering speaks out then the noise will be deafening. Politicians will have to listen."

Bono, who has done so much to highlight the debt issue, says: "2005 is our chance to go down in history for what we did do, rather than what we didn't do. This campaign is critical."

## What can we do?

1. Log on to website [www.makepovertyhistory.com](http://www.makepovertyhistory.com). On the site you can send a letter to the Prime Minister. Alternatively, ring or write to any of the agencies involved, such as Oxfam or Christian Aid.
2. Write to your MP to let her or him know about the importance of MakePovertyHistory.
3. Use every opportunity you can to publicise the campaign. Tell friends, write to your local newspapers, organise a get-together.
4. Wear the MakePovertyHistory armband, available at Oxfam shops, price £1. If you watched the Vicar of Dibley programme on New Year's Day, you will have seen these.
5. Come to a meeting on Wednesday 2nd February at 7.30 pm in the Wesley Lounge, Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road to discuss action.
6. Reserve Saturday July 2nd in your diary for the Edinburgh rally. Details in due course.

**And - a most important one for preachers -  
Please preach about MakePovertyHistory!**

Make History - that's what you get when you remove the Poverty from MakePovertyHistory. This year we have the chance to make history. If there is a universal will to see the end of poverty, it could and can happen.

(Queries to tel. no. 0118 947 6063. More contacts in next month's Bridge).



Photo - J. Madeley

Dawn French and women clergy present a petition at Downing Street.

# A revolving way to spend One World Week

by John Madeley

The theme of One World Week 2004, in October, was "Your Move". I decided to take this literally by moving by bike from Southport on the Irish Sea to Hornsea near Hull on the North Sea. The route I followed is known as the TransPennine Way, a 230 mile route, two-thirds of which is traffic free.

Thus it was that I loaded my bike on a fast early Monday morning train to Wigan, then changed for a much slower train to Southport. By noon I was on my way, cycling along sand dunes, the wind moderately favourable. My first destination was Manchester which I reached late afternoon.

I carried with me some leaflets, explaining about One World Week - and most of the people I gave them to had never heard of it - and spoke at a meeting in Manchester Town Hall about the issues on the Monday evening.

I highlighted in particular the campaign in 2005 to "MakePovertyHistory" and the effects of climate change on the poor. The following morning I was interviewed for 10 minutes for a school television programme. It allowed pupils the opportunity to watch it later in the day.

Then it was the hardest part of the ride, over the Pennines, where a lovely autumn day gave way within minutes to a bleak mid-winter's steep and rugged hill. But a marvellous downhill

swoop into Sheffield, my second overnight stop, made up for it.

Day 3 to Hull and it poured down. My leaflets went limp, I skirted Doncaster, rode through a soggy Selby, regularly mislaid the route but finally made it to some beautiful country lanes from Selby to Hull. This was new country for me, and perhaps the best part of the ride, ending with wonderful views of the majestic Humber Bridge, my longest day, about 80 miles.

Day 4 to Hornsea and it blew a gale! Only 15 miles to the North Sea, mostly along an old railway line. The gale blew me there and reduced me to walking speed coming back. Then train for an overnight stay in York, and to cycle a side-leg of the route the following morning to Selby and the train home.

The ride was some 20 miles longer than it should have been, due largely to my inability to read a map, but partly, I plead, because the route's signs - and it's generally well signposted - had disappeared.

And I was able to speak to a few people about cycling and to make the point that if only the world we've got is to have a future we need to lower our emissions of carbon dioxide, end our love affair with the motor car and stop polluting the Earth's atmosphere, God's creation, in the way we are doing.



# THE DAY THAT SHOOK THE WORLD

David Palmer, who is the brother of a member of Caversham Heights Methodist Church, is serving the Methodist Church in Sri Lanka as a Mission Partner. Below we record some of his story of the events in the north east of that country following the disastrous tsunami of 26 December 2004.

Boxing Day began for me with worship at 8.00am at St Peter's Church, Jaffna Town. After I arrived I was asked to speak on Father Christmas and the Christmas Tree. Matters of great moment? No! But it was the 'Christmas Tree' service, for the children, at the end of which Father Christmas (the all-dancing, red-dressed, white-masked and mischievous figure) was to visit and distribute gifts. From St Peter's I went to Vanarponnai to our church for their Christmas celebrations. It was only back at St Peter's at lunch that I learned anything of the day's (South Asia) disaster.

(Jaffna town, where I live and work, is on the south side of the northern 'Jaffna Peninsula' of Sri Lanka. Between the town and the sea lie extensive, natural lagoons. In Jaffna Town itself we were doubly protected from the tsunami from the east.)

It was the sound of ambulances in Jaffna Town in the afternoon that impressed on me the seriousness of the situation. The ambulances just kept on coming. They were ferrying injured, non-uniformed people from Point Pedro, which had taken the full brunt of the wave attack in the extreme north.

The land-phones were operating, though the cell-phone systems were down. Through the afternoon we heard, from Tamil Methodists in the North and East, of the devastation and deaths of Methodists' family members who were known here. Sunday services, Christmas Tree Services just like ours, had been taking place just as the big wave struck.

During the afternoon we got our information on Sri Lanka and the whole South Asia region from TV and radio including the BBC World Service. Major TV channels in Sri Lanka wonderfully joined forces and interspersed news items with music, until the music was drowned out all together by the deluge of news and pictures (though, of course, all pictures on that first day were from the stricken Sinhala south of the country only and not from the Tamil north and east). All three Island languages were in use on the one channel. The nation was being drawn together in a single, unified grief and action.

Late in the afternoon I went into Jaffna Town to discover that Hospital Road was extremely busy around the bus stand and the hospital. The hospital was being inundated. All bus services were cancelled and all buses, along with the ambulances, were being directed to Point Pedro to ferry the injured and dying from there to Jaffna Town. As we went to bed, we had the TV and radio updates on deaths, missing and homeless swilling around in our heads. A telephone call from my brother in England, via a US satellite telephone link-up, warned of reports of another, possible wave at 2.00am. We sat, for an hour, drinking tea and mulling over the previous day's events.....

The third day I attended a meeting, at St John's, of the Christian Union (Church of South India, Church of Ceylon, Salvation Army and Methodist Church) to plan an aid programme. Seven Lachs (700,000 SL rupees, about £3700) from the National Christian Councils was immediately promised. One Lach would go to each of seven areas, with pastors being appointed to oversee the use of monies, record expenditure and furnish reports.

The Methodist minister in Point Pedro, Satish, arrived on motorbike about lunchtime for supplies. They needed transport and money. We found the money they immediately needed. It took us two hours to get everything: bed mats, bed sheets, towels, hurricane lamps, aluminium plates and cups, buckets, that kind of thing. As we drove back to Point Pedro with supplies, Satish told us what had been happening. The previous day had been a mass burial. The Hindu priests intoned first. Then the Christian priests and ministers led prayers. Nearing Point Pedro, we passed a busy refugee centre at a Roman Catholic church. We were to pass several more before we finished our journey.

First stop was at Karaveddi at the Methodist Church compound, where there is a Boys' Home. In the partially built home were twelve 'families' who had fled the stricken sea front area. We unloaded purchases and were then introduced to the refugees. Children variously daubed, with gentian violet, visibly on arms and legs were presented. As the waves carried them they had fought with everything sharp – barbed wire, stones, shells, splintering wood. Two boys proudly displayed their bandaged legs. A young woman stepped forward: her child of less than two years had been yanked from her hands by the waves and was gone.

Satish took us to the coast. What had been a fishing and non-tourist beach (because holidaymakers didn't get there) was now a devastation of metre-deep troughs in the sand and ground where a six to nine metre wave had crashed down. The electricity and telephone cables lay in swirls all over the scene. Shattered remains of house walls were everywhere. Some tiled roofs still hung precariously. Carcasses of goats, legs pointing to the sky, lay still tethered at their fullest stretch in the direction away from the sea.

The fishermen had returned from their morning work....the beach had been a busy scene....before the wave struck. In Point Pedro itself 560 deaths had been recorded so far but many more adults and children are missing.

David Palmer reported that funding sent directly to the Methodist Church Headquarters in Colombo was to be apportioned around the coastland of the island according to need and not whether anyone or church was Sinhalese or Tamil or near to or far from the capital, Colombo.

Retiring collections were taken in the Caversham Methodist Churches on Sunday 2nd January and a very substantial sum was sent in the following days to Sri Lanka. A portion of the donations is being allocated to the Theological College, where Rev Rosemary Fletcher and her husband James Rowley are to work from September, to help finance the relief work it is undertaking in Sri Lanka. Further gifts have been received including a generous donation from the Albert Road Day Centre. A second substantial amount has now been transferred to the Methodist Headquarters in Colombo.

## ST ANDREW'S HEALING SERVICE GUILD OF ST RAPHAEL

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These services are held at St Andrew's Church, Harrogate Road, Caversham.

All are welcome at any of these services.

Further enquiries from June DeVillie (0118 947 8452)  
Branch Secretary of the Guild of St Raphael

## Women's World Day of Prayer 2005

(Interdenominational)

The Women's World Day of Prayer service for 2005 has been prepared by the women of Poland and the theme is 'Let our light shine'

The program for the day is as follows:-

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Polish Church  
Watlington Street, Reading

**On Friday, March 4th, at 10.30 am**

Speaker - Father J. Januszkiewicz

There will be special Polish singing and refreshments will be served after the service.

## Our Lady and St Anne Roman Catholic Church

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## AROUND THE CHURCHES

# OXFORD DIOCESAN DEAF CHURCH CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

On December 12th Caversham Heights Methodist Church was privileged to host the annual Christmas Service for the Oxford Diocesan Deaf Church, whose members come from Deaf Churches in Berkshire, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire.

The service was led by the Chaplain, Priests and Lay Ministers of the various Deaf churches, with the Oxford and London Deaf Choirs and Peter Bernard, the Caversham Heights Church Organist, helping both hearing and Deaf worshippers to enjoy traditional carols together. The service was displayed on the screen, and there was a lip speaker and a signer. The preacher was the Rev Trevor Dorey of the Miriam Dean Foundation.

He began his sermon "I am a late developer. Fifteen years ago, in Salisbury, I learned that 'this sign' means Jesus." Here he used the Deaf sign for Jesus, in which the middle finger of one hand touches the palm of the other and this is repeated using the other palm. "For the very first time, I realised how much more powerful signs or actions are than words! Imagine how many words you would have to conjure up to express the profound meaning that 'that sign' communicates in one simple action! Signs go deep." Our call in this Holy Season is to take the birth of Jesus, this sign from God, utterly seriously and to live accordingly – to follow the sign.

Miriam Dean chose to take the sign utterly seriously. First, when running a little bakery in London in 1944 she took cakes at Christmas to wounded German prisoners in a nearby hospital. Later, she sent goods to Algeria, the Middle East, Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia and Burma.

Clinics and hospitals were built in India and Africa. Water schemes were completed in China and Zimbabwe; weaving projects for lepers, homes for destitute old Tibetan refugees and those made homeless by floods – all signs of the kingdom, signs that speak louder than words.

Today, most of the work is focused in South India. There are beautiful clusters of foster-homes for orphan children, many of whom have unbelievably awful stories to tell. These are all 'Signs', signs, that when we serve the least we are serving Christ himself. That's the work that the Miriam Dean Foundation tries to do.

Amazingly, in the last ten years alone, over two million pounds has been donated, to show those with eyes to see that the Christmas event is not just an old, old story but a living and liberating sign of a God who loves and cares for his broken world and calls us to do the same. Actions- signs – speak so much louder than words!

The service concluded with the sacrament of Holy Communion, presided over and signed by the Rev Roger Williams, the Diocesan Chaplain for the Deaf.

For those of us in the hearing world, attendance at such a service reminds us vividly of the power of signs and signing and the depth of meaning that can be imparted with simple gestures. We can all learn from such experiences.

After the service about 100 worshippers shared tea and fellowship in the church hall.

## BISHOP CHALLENGES DEANERY SYNOD ON MISSION

The new Bishop of Reading, the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, was the guest speaker at the December meeting of the Reading Deanery Synod when he challenged the Deanery to think about what it should be doing as part of a missionary church. He began by explaining what the church is and what it should mean to us on a Monday morning,

by unpacking a phrase we regularly say in our creed, namely that we believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic church. This illustrates what our relationships should be with God, each other and the world, and how this could be expressed through prayer and worship, by building community and by going out into the world and sharing with others what we have received from God in faith. He reminded us that Jesus was sent into the world so that God's purpose might be known. This is a message of hope and good news for all.

Bishop Stephen asked us to think about what we should be doing because we are Christians; he asked every parish to think about what it should be doing to develop a ministry of evangelism; and he asked us to think about what we could be doing together as a Deanery. He suggested that people today are looking for an authentic spirituality and he questioned the extent to which our encounter with God is sustained and expressed. Are we a people of prayer and is enough attention given to teaching people how to pray? People need to be nurtured in this.

What are the parishes doing about evangelism, he asked, and suggested that we had learnt a lot during the recent decade of evangelism but had not engaged with the insights learned. Becoming a Christian was like being on a journey. How much are we helping people to make that journey? They need to explore faith and experience community before taking the next step and he suggested that, nationally, sixty percent of the parishes are doing nothing. We need to be more accountable and set achievable goals.

The Bishop then asked what are we doing as a deanery acting together? He reminded us that, together, a Deanery has a range of human, financial and prayer resources. Often people are in cultures and networks that are not connected. Does Reading have any Mission Priority Areas? We were asked

to work in small groups to consider if there were any unchurched neighbourhoods or networks. Are there any struggling parishes and what could we do to help them? What are our training needs? There followed an animated period of group discussion, followed by a feedback session in which a whole range of issues were put forward but, as the next meeting of the Deanery Synod is to be a continuation of group work on these themes, it would be premature to draw conclusions at this stage.

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Bishop Stephen was photographed with the Deanery Officers: Canon Brian Shenton, Area Dean, and Mrs Daphne Jefferies, Synod Secretary (on the left), and Lt Col Mary Harwood, Lay Chairman (extreme right).

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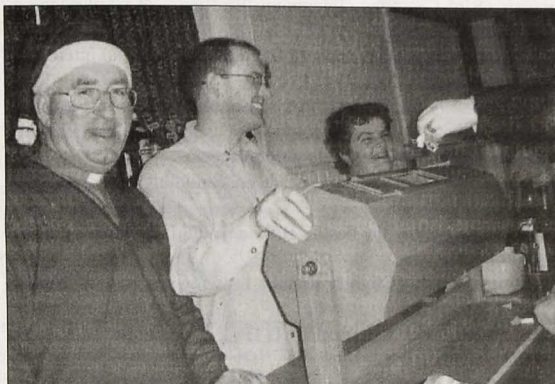
## AROUND THE CHURCHES

## News from Our Lady and St Anne's Parish

December saw the annual Christmas Fair at Our Lady and St Anne's parish hall. As well as being a great social event, the Fair this year raised a tidy sum towards the Gateway appeal.

Father Christmas was there, of course, and a steady stream of children and parents queued up the steps to the stage to visit him in his grotto.

The cake stall did a roaring trade and soon sold out of the initial stock, and late arrivals were lucky to be around to seize any new offerings as fast as they were put on the table. Books, videos, toys, fancy goods, craft items made by the ladies group, and jewellery were all on sale. Some lucky customers had the unique opportunity to bag a brace of



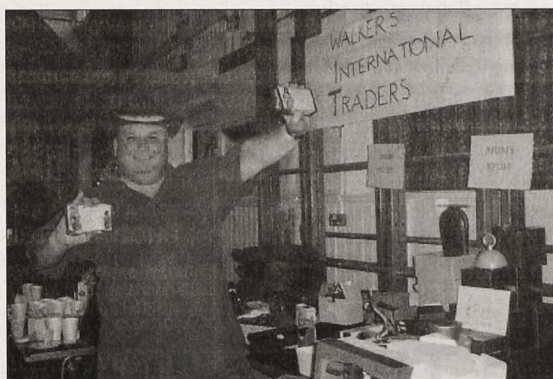
Father (not Christmas) Tony keeps an eye on the Tombola

pheasants from the Mapledurham estate.

The bottle Tombola was its usual success while, across the hall, mulled wine and mince pies were available to refresh the weary, and at the next stall a large banner invited all to buy from the "Walkers International Traders" stall a miscellany of goods for Mums, for Dads and for anyone.

Raffle tickets had been available for several weeks and helpers were kept busy folding the tickets sold during the afternoon as well as those brought in already sold.

Altogether this was a very successful parish event and thanks go to all who helped make it such a success.



Dellboy's Caversham cousin, Lex, touts his wares

## ST BARNABAS SUPPORT FOR AMAJUBA EDUCATION TRUST

The Christmas Fair at St Barnabas, coinciding with that at Emmer Green Primary School, was the last of three fundraising events by the church's Overseas Group for the Amajuba Education Trust which operates in the Kwa Zulu region of South Africa. Through the generosity of members of the church and the local community, a total of over £4,000 was sent during 2004 to this charity, which supports the continuing professional education of black South African students. Each year, in return, St Barnabas receives letters of thanks from the students supported in this way through an initiative originally set up by Dr Guy and Mrs Jan Daynes with whom the church has had contact for around 30 years.



Father Christmas had plenty of helpers at the St Barnabas Christmas Fair.

## RIDING LIGHTS RETURNS FRIDAY 11TH MARCH

Many of you will remember the visit last year of the Christian theatre group, Riding Lights, who presented a very moving version of The Passion at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. We are delighted that they will be returning to Caversham with their new passion play, *Calvary*. This is only a three week tour and we are privileged to be able to play host again to this group.

"*Calvary* starts and ends at the cross. Above us, Christ hangs crucified. At His feet we gather, shoulder to shoulder, with those who knew Him. As they witness His suffering, their stories, told in flashback and dramatic recreation, speak of their own suffering and the mercy they found at His hands. The whole presentation becomes a powerful act of remembrance which is both participatory and reflective. Threaded with moments of great joy and celebration, robustly and full-bloodedly performed, *Calvary* uncovers a deep connection between the audience's ordinary and extraordinary sufferings and the crucifixion of Christ." (from *Riding Lights' information*.) Six dramatic episodes are interspersed with time for reflection and music, creating a memorable whole.

The presentation will take place on Friday 11th March, at 8pm, at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. Tickets (priced £5, £3.50 for concession) are available from the box office, tel: 0118 946 1763 (answerphone when office is unstaffed). For further details, please contact Kathy Munns (0118 954 6680). Riding Lights website: [www.ridinglights.org/news/](http://www.ridinglights.org/news/) gives some more background to the presentation and to the company itself. Tickets are likely to go quickly, so please apply in good time!

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## Scops Owl

During the last few years, bird identification has become very advanced - and easier if one can afford facilities. Internet, Pagers, Bird Cassettes, Telephonic Birdline - at sixty pence a minute!

The next few articles are simplified for learners and interested readers.

As birds change appearance seasonally, males in Summer plumage are most easily recognised. Of necessity, females are often less "showy". Start with garden species.

1. **Blackbird** - Very black - no sheen. Smoothly rounded head, yellow bill.  
Song - arguably the best in Britain. Liquid, languid, loud and fluty.
2. **Song Thrush** - Slightly smaller, brown with "Arrow-head" spots on breast.  
Song - EXTREMELY REPETITIVE, loud phrases. Another fine singer.
3. **Mistle Thrush** - Larger, but numbers sadly decreasing. ROUNDED spots on breast. Pale grey body.  
Song - far carrying, slowish, forlorn quality. Sings from roof-top, presaging bad weather - hence known as "Storm Cock".
4. **Redwing** - Smaller, migrant Thrush from Northern Europe. October/November, "See-up" contact flight calls heard at night as thousands arrive in Britain and many fly on to Spain. Often remain during Winter in Emmer Green recreation field where probe for food. The contact call often heard on ground and adjacent trees.  
Brown with red flanks and white eye-stripe. They are rather shy.
5. **Starling** - Redwing size. Resident but large influx from Russia and North East Europe during Autumn/Winter. Off-black body, raised head shape.  
Song - whistles, squeaks and squawks, sometimes mimics other species.
6. **House Sparrow** - "Passer Domesticus" - once highly sociable, flocking, living and breeding alongside us. Closely related to African Weaver Bird. Seed eating bill, grey head, black throat and bib.  
Song - delicate, as is its behaviour. A gentle, "Chip-Chip-Chip-Chup-Chup-Chirrup".  
Sadly VERY misjudged, this cheerful and very well behaved little bird is a true example for all.
7. **Hedge Sparrow/Dunnock**. This is an Accentor, NOT a Sparrow - Note thin, insect eating bill. Feeds on ground, often beneath bird table with "mousey" behaviour. Brown body, Sparrow shape but slimmer with GREY head.  
Song - Rapid and cheerful.
8. **Robin** - Christmas card bird.  
Song - mellow and wistful quality.
9. **Wren** - Small brown, "Cheeky" appearance. Very short tail, often cocked vertically. Whitish eye-stripe.  
Song - VERY loud for tiny size, with always a "Trrr" in the middle.
10. **Blue Tit** - Small, white head with blue cap and black eye stripe. Pale yellow below.  
Song - "Si-Si-Si-Lu-Lu-Lu"

Scops Owl

## News from The Copse

Plans are going ahead for the Woodlands Day in June. Some dangerously leaning trees in the Copse will be felled in February, leaving space for replanting and hazel coppicing. Those trees will be pulled out of the woods in June by Monty and Dylan, the Ardennes geldings from The Working Horses Trust. A saw mill will be on site to cut them into usable timber which will be for sale.

The Friends have received a grant of £1000 towards the cost of improving the pathways between the car park and the woodlands. The money, from the Reading Primary Care Trust Your Good Health, along with a contribution from Reading Borough Council's Parks Department, will help pay for the materials needed to provide a proper pathway to improve access for all, including wheelchairs and buggies.

The woodlands there are a beautiful piece of natural countryside enjoyed by many local people but sometimes the mud defeats the 'would be' walker. The Friends hope to get more people walking with a Healthy Walk circuit. Come and try it on their Woodlands Day, June 4th 2005!

At the moment Friends are organising a Mega Task Day early this year and are looking for volunteers to help them lay down the path. All tools are provided [and tea]. No great skills or strength needed, just half an hour or an hour of your time. The more who contribute the more successful the outcome will be!

Please contact Anne Latto on 948 4454 to let her know when you can help.



Mud defies the walker!

A. Latto

## FORTHCOMING CONCERTS

### SINGSPIRATION

is a group of mixed voice singers from Southwest London, who, under the leadership of Marion Redwood, enjoy sharing their Christian faith through song, dialogue and testimony in an attractive lively manner.

The choir will be singing in  
**Caversham Baptist Church at 7 pm  
on Saturday 5th March**  
and it should be an evening not to be missed.

So do not be disappointed  
Book tickets by phoning 0118 947 8330

### The Erleigh Cantors

will be performing a concert of music  
for voices, harp and organ on

**Saturday 5th March 2005**

**at St Peter's Church at 7.30pm.**

Proceeds to the Speakability Charity.  
Speakability is a charity which assists those who find it hard to speak, read, write or understand language as a result of stroke, head injury or other illness.

Details and tickets -  
Ian Westley 0118 966 1087.

### Parenthesis

On Saturday 5th March at 7.30pm, Parenthesis choir will be giving their Spring Concert at St Andrew's Church in Harrogate Road, Caversham. The programme will include two Te Deums, by Dvorak and Andrew Carter, who is an American contemporary composer. The choir will be joined by the children's choir from English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School for the piece by Andrew Carter.

In addition to these pieces **Parenthesis** will perform music by Telemann and Taverner, Beethoven's Hallelujah chorus and a set of four spirituals.

Tickets are £6 and £3, for further details contact Chris Hawkins on 0118 926 7510 (evening)



## the CLUBS

### Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The December meeting of the Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild commenced briefly with the business. Several members had enjoyed the Federation Carol Service in St Mary's Minster Church the previous day and were looking forward to the Pie and Poetry Day in February.

The Words and Music Group entertained their fellow members with a varied programme of Christmas poetry and sketches – Joyce Grenfell's Nursery Nativity, and a "Talking Heads" with apologies to Alan Bennett. One member had written a poignant piece called "Carolling" and another read "The Cratchitts' Christmas Dinner" from Dickens's "Christmas Carol". Auld Lang Syne was beautifully read, in full, by a Scottish member, with translations where necessary, and we were treated to an account of the Jewish Festival of Chanukkah. The music was provided by a "Musical Consequences" and singing round the piano to round off the evening. There was a bumper raffle with proceeds going to the Air Ambulance. The committee and the Words and Music ladies provided delicious mince pies and sausage rolls.

Visitors and new members are always welcome in St Barnabas Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm.

### Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

Mrs E Manning, Chairman, welcomed members to our December meeting which was also our Birthday and Christmas Party. She read out a card from Mrs Hilda Adair who had moved from Reading, but had found a new thriving TG in her new town. Following a short business meeting, for the rest of the Afternoon members enjoyed festive fare provided by Committee members. A quiz and poetry read by Mrs T Kirby were enjoyed. Mrs Anne Deane provided our cake which was cut by Mrs T Kirby, oldest in membership, we were told by the Chairman, not age.

Before closing, each member was given a Christmas gift, donated by the Chairman, Mrs E Manning.

Meetings are on the third Thursday in the month, 2pm at Church House, Caversham.

New members are welcome to join us.

### Caversham Community Association

The festive month of December started with the usual games evening. The following week the choir of St John's

Church were welcomed to lead the carol evening. Familiar carols, mixed with some readings, allowed the audience to join in. Delicious mince pies provided the welcome refreshments.

The following week was the Christmas party when the talented ladies from Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild provided a varied entertainment on the theme of "money". A Bring and Share supper followed with plenty of festive treats. A large raffle, with all prizes donated by members, was followed by a slice of cake and a drink to finish an enjoyable evening.

### Caversham WI

It was a double celebration for members with a combined birthday and Christmas party. Guests were warmly welcomed and, after a brief business report, the entertainment started. Mr Ken Fitt sang songs of the 30s and 40s and also played saxophone and clarinet. There were carols to sing along to and plenty of nostalgia.

The evening continued with a delicious Bring and Share Supper and then the drawing of the seasonal raffle. Everyone went on their way with a present from the tub and good wishes for a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

### NEW YEAR MBE FOR LIZ BENNETT

Dr Elizabeth Bennett was awarded the MBE in the 2005 New Year Honours Diplomatic and Overseas list. This was for her services over many years to wildlife conservation in Malaysia.

Liz Bennett worked for many years in Sarawak, researching the proboscis monkey and effecting programmes for the protection of it and many other species of wildlife in that country. In 1994 she was awarded the prestigious Dutch Order of the Ark for her work, and in 1993 the "Order of the Star of Sarawak".

Many in Caversham will remember Liz Bennett's father, Ken, who died in 2000. He had been Treasurer, and later Chairman, of the Sue Ryder Care Home at Nettlebed.

Both Ken and Elizabeth's mother Doreen (who died in 2003) were involved over many years in St Peter's Church.

Liz now lives in New York where she is Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society's Hunting and Wildlife Trade Programme based at the New York Zoo. Visiting Caversham briefly recently, she told *Caversham Bridge* "I am delighted that so many friends have shared my joy at receiving the MBE – I still have many contacts here and will keep in touch!"

### APOLOGIES FROM CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

The Editors of the Caversham Bridge are sorry for the quality of the printing in recent issues. The technical problems causing this are being investigated and it is hoped they will be resolved in the near future.

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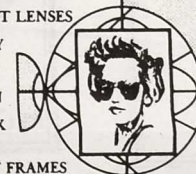
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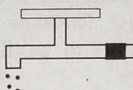
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