

# CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Christian Aid Week 2005 is from 15th-21st May. The annual Christian Aid Service will be on Sunday 15th May at 6.30pm at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. The guest speaker will be Hilary Blake, Volunteers Development Officer from Christian Aid Oxford Regional Office.

The Christian Aid Walk will be on Saturday 14th May over the usual courses at Henley.

During the week it is hoped that most of the roads in Caversham, Emmer Green and Mapledurham will be covered but Collectors are always needed and if you feel you could help, please contact your own Church Representative.

## Making poverty history: the trade justice campaign

The UK government is committed to making 2005 a year when poverty is on the international agenda. To tackle poverty it must address the injustices in world trade. Christian Aid Week this year asks churches to call for trade justice.



Christian Aid/Felicia Webb/PA

Louisa Mahahle, 25, works on a sugar plantation in Maragra, Maputo Province, Mozambique. She is the only member of her family to have a job

To find out more or make a donation, visit [www.caweek.org](http://www.caweek.org) or call 08080 006 006.

**Christian Aid**

We believe in life before death

UK registered charity number 1105851

Company number 5171525

Republic of Ireland charity number CHY 6998

## This is how your donation can make a difference this Christian Aid Week

- £5** buys five chickens, helping to restore a family's livelihood in Mozambique.
- £6** maintains one girl at the Bridge School in India for a month, giving her a chance of education that otherwise would not be available.
- £66** will pay for the internet connection for a computer school for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS in the Democratic Republic of Congo. £11 will buy the network card to access the internet, so students can train in computer programming.
- £112** buys a water tank for a Peruvian village. This means that the villagers can get water without having to walk to the nearest stream which could be over 2 km away.

### When making your donation don't forget about Gift Aid!

Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows Christian Aid to claim back the tax paid on any donation made by a UK taxpayer. If you are a UK taxpayer then all you need to do is fill in the declaration on the red CAW envelope and your gift is worth 28 per cent more to Christian Aid. If everyone does this it will raise at least an extra £1 million for the world's poorest communities.

*giftaid it*



Teresa Palacio Durand from Peru washes her five-year-old son, Rolando, in a sink provided with Christian Aid's help

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John Madeley - 947 6063

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Contributions are welcomed if they  
are relevant to community matters or  
church life. Copy should be kept short,  
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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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you do not regularly subscribe to the  
paper and would like to do so, please  
contact the Parish Office on 947 1703.

## TALKING POINT

By  
Heather Serjeant

## When is an alien a human being?

Did you know that Dennis the Menace is now a cartoon on television? I came upon my younger son watching a little while ago. Dennis and dog Gnasher were there before me on the screen in animated form, but perfectly recognizable. Research proved the cartoon has existed since 1990, so I'm obviously a bit behind the times! In this story Dennis and friends were having an encounter with some aliens, who most of the time appeared in a kind of television shape with legs and two antennae. However, they could change shape at will, allowing them to disguise their alien nature, except that they always retained the two antennae, and three eyes! In fact, they changed shape so often that they'd forgotten what their 'real' shape was.

The aliens were in need of help: they were having some problems on their planet, which was being overrun by bone trees. They enlisted Gnasher's help, because he loved eating bones, and transported him off to eat the unwelcome ones that were causing so much trouble. So as not to arouse suspicion, one of their number transformed himself into a Gnasher lookalike (except for the antennae and the three eyes) and stayed on earth with Dennis. Naturally things got a little difficult, and one of the adults began to suspect that there were some aliens around and that they intended to take over. To put him off the scent two of the aliens transformed themselves into humans and claimed to be taking care of the situation. All was well and Gnasher returned having done his job. But it was a close call: expert as they were at changing shape, the aliens found it very difficult to transform themselves into human beings. They told Dennis that they'd practised doing human shapes all Sunday afternoon!

As I write, just after Easter, spring has arrived - at least on some days! We've had one or two really warm ones with temperatures we'd think of as reasonable for summer. These warm days have given me a taste of the sense of well being and optimism that summer always seems to bring. Life seems so much easier when the weather is warm. I find the change so marked I could almost believe I was a different person in the summer. But I'm not, of course, because changing into a completely different person is quite impossible, much as we may sometimes wish to.

Accepting ourselves for what we are can be hard sometimes, can't it? Some people attempt to change themselves so much that, like the aliens, they've forgotten what their 'real' shape is - except that there's always the giveaway antennae or the three eyes, that let people know who we really are. As the aliens discovered, being human is a complex business. We may not be able to change into someone completely different, but with God's help and inspiration we can work on making the most of whom we are - we can work on being better at being human. The aliens had to practise doing human shapes all Sunday afternoon - I couldn't help but wonder if that's exactly what we do! For the rest of the week maybe we just don't bother trying, or we put our efforts into being something else. Getting to be the best human beings we can be will take a lifetime, seven days a week. But all that work will turn us into rounded, fully human people, without a trace of alien to be seen!

Rev Heather Serjeant is curate at St Peter's Church Caversham

## CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the June 2005 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 4th May. The date for submission of items for the July 2005 issue will be Wednesday 8th June 2005.

All advertising copy for the June 2005 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 3rd May 2005. For the July 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday 7th June 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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Fr John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common  
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Rev H R Gayle Tel: 945 3849 (contact)

## 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  
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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  
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NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham  
9.30am Sunday School  
11.00am Divine Worship  
6.00pm Evening Service

## YOUTH

## News from St Martin's

Parents, children and staff of St Martin's School made a magnificent effort during the Spring term to raise funds to help others.

During the first half term, over £900 was raised for the Tsunami Appeal, a tremendous amount for such a small school. The money came from several events, the biggest ones being a Bring and Buy sale organized by the PTA early in the term and a Sponsored Skip run by staff at the school later in the term. The amount collected was sent to CAFOD, who are one of the agencies providing help in the devastated area.

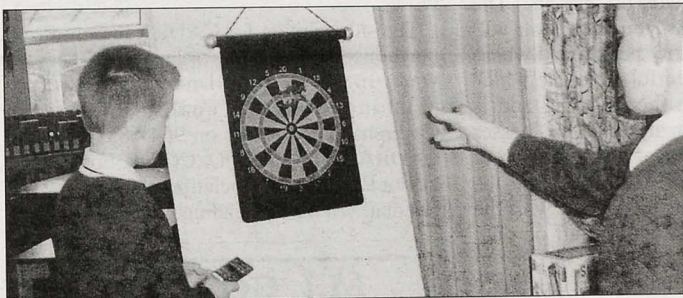
A Sponsored Spell took place shortly before the end of term by which time the Tsunami Appeal Fund had been closed and the money from this event was sent to the Smiling Children's Home in India.

The Traditional Lenten Fayre, in which the Year Six pupils organize games and competitions for the rest of the school, took place in the last week of term. A game of table football was very popular, a queue developed at the dart board to see who could get the biggest score during the afternoon and a motor racing track was set up in one corner of the hall. There was an Easter Egg raffle, a "Guess the name of the Teddy Bear" competition and tables selling various children's toys. The children on the cake table were doing a roaring trade all afternoon selling small cakes to go with the cups of tea, coffee or squash that members of the PTA were offering. It is amazing that this event generated £277 in less than two hours considering that 10p and 20p are the normal prices charged. The proceeds from the Lenten Fayre were sent to Fr Alphonse's She-Buffalo project in India.

Both the Indian charities are ones that the school has been associated with for several years.

Mrs Hogg, acting headteacher, thanks all the children, parents, staff and everyone else who helped to raise these wonderful sums of money during the term.

*Report by Jane Shaw*



The dart board was very popular.

*Jane Shaw*



Sampling their own goods at the cake table.

*Jane Shaw*



Concentrating at the table football game.

*Jane Shaw*

## St Anne's School

Year 5 took part in a hockey tournament which was held at Rivermead. Having reached the finals and in spite of having played superbly, they were unlucky not to have won and they had to be satisfied with second place.

First place, however, went to the Year 6 rugby team. Success came in the Active Schools Rugby Tournament which was held at Reading School.

Congratulations to all the players in both tournaments and many thanks to the helpers who provided transport to and from the venues.

Feed the Children and Comic Relief will share the money raised from a charity day which was organised by Year 6 and also from a hats and eggs competition. Among the day's activities, the water splash seemed to be a particular favourite. Why is it that, to misquote, "One may take a child to water, forty cannot keep him dry"?

As the children will be wearing their summer uniforms when they return to school, it is to be hoped that any water splashing will be confined to leisure hours now that summer, officially, is here.

*Report by Norman Shaw*

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# From the Lookout Post

BY EX LIBRIS

Caversham still has the feel of a village. It is pleasantly surprising just how many familiar faces one sees while walking around. Since our retirement, my wife and I have abandoned the car (as much as possible). We have also started to use our local shops at the top of Donkin Hill. We thought it would be interesting to report on different parts of Caversham over a period of time for the Caversham Bridge. So why not start close to home? We have always appreciated the variety of services on offer here; take-aways, gift shops, a convenience store, off-licence, bike shop, and a chemist. And yes we even have a hairdresser's and a betting shop.

Like many men of a certain age I have tried my hand at making bread. However a new baker, Wards, has recently opened and along with the new Co-op store we have a really good selection of fresh bread on offer. The village nature of Caversham was underlined when I went to talk to Jemma Ward who runs the new bakery. First I discovered that she is exactly the same age as my eldest son and went to the same school. Of course I remembered her as a little 5 year old coming to my son's birthday party, and instead of talking about the bakers we were sharing memories of teachers and catching up with mutual acquaintances.

After going to St Anne's and Highdown, Jemma travelled in the Middle East, worked on a kibbutz and finally went to University College Winchester, where she recently graduated in Performing Arts. Whilst a student she got experience of catering by working at a Pizza Express. She took the plunge to start up her own business late last year. Her bread comes from G W Shepherd and Sons, bakers at Chieveley, and is delivered daily every morning. The bread is really delicious, not good for the waistline, true, but real bread that tastes as bread should. Jemma also stocks a variety of cakes, scones, cream buns etc and prepares sandwiches from fresh ingredients each day. If you are interested in celebration cakes and the like give her a ring on 947 5874.

Next door is the new Co-op. The Co-op took over the old Balfour store last year and has transformed it. Inside there is a new post office counter. The store manager, Robert Cremin, helped by his deputy Tina Mortimer, a local Caversham person, heads a team of eleven. The shop is open from 6am to 10pm every day. As you enter you will usually be met by Naseem Ayo who acts as security person and whose friendly face and helpfulness set the tone of cheerful welcome which all the staff have. Their day begins at five in the morning and is indicative of the long hours and hard work so many retail businesses put into supplying our needs and whims. They are at the sharp end of the business, so that when the supply chain goes wrong they are the ones who get the stick. Back in March there was a problem with the newspaper suppliers. Not the store's fault but it was the staff on duty who had to placate exasperated customers. I would urge everyone to have sympathy with shop staff when things go wrong, as inevitably they will on occasion. They don't want the 'aggro.' any more than we do.

The Co-op is known to back the Fair Trade movement, and this store is no exception. Indeed if you want a wide range and choice of Fair Trade items from coffee to wine then this is the place to visit. Twice a year they also have a 20% discount offer on Fair Trade goods so watch out for that. The store now stocks fresh veg which is delivered three times a week, and bakes its own French bread each day. I do recommend their croissants!

As most readers know, articles for this paper have to be prepared about a month in advance, so some of the information can seem dated or even wrong if one is not careful. However at the time of writing it looks as if the No. 9 bus service from the Heights to Shinfield should be in the process of being upgraded to one of Reading's 'Premier Routes'. This means new single decker buses and eventually the introduction of real time information signs at some bus stops. These signs will either show the timetable or the estimated time of arrival, thus if it shows 10.30 then that is the time the next bus is scheduled to arrive. However if the sign shows 5 minutes then this is controlled by the oncoming bus and shows the number of minutes before the bus is estimated to arrive at your stop. This number will therefore decrease as the bus gets nearer.

Parking always causes controversy. At the time of writing I have heard that the Council is rethinking its policy regarding traders' permits in the Chester Street Car Park. Five years ago the traders and Council came to an agreement which one leading councillor and ex mayor regarded as having got it 'just right'. It prevented people parking all day and disappearing into town, the charges were reasonable and it allowed the local shops some spaces so that they could carry out their businesses. The number of independent shops is rapidly declining and those that survive do so on very narrow margins. I do hope the council will not rush into changes that could adversely affect the viability of the businesses which underpin our community. Last year we saw how a minor change to on street parking almost

closed half the businesses along the top of Prospect Street.

### Jemma Ward in her bakery



About 20% of the population of Reading live in Caversham. I didn't realise this until I read the March edition of the CADRA newsletter. I always thought of Caversham as a village. With the possibility of another 5000 houses being built in South Oxfordshire under the plan being proposed by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), I might have to rethink this view. Every household received a questionnaire a couple of months ago. If you think this of some concern or interest you may consider joining your local residents' association. Issues being looked at for instance, are the provision of recycling skips, behind Waitrose and the state of pavements such as those along the Peppard Rd between Kiln Lane and Courtney Drive.

The subscription for CADRA is only £2.00 per household and the organisation keeps a watching brief on all matters related to planning and the quality of life in Caversham. Do phone on 954 6899 or email CADRARG4@YAHOO.CO.UK For Emmer Green Residents Association phone 947 2162 or email www.map-reading.co.uk/egra

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## ENVIRONMENT

# Monkeys in Caversham?

No longer, I'm afraid, but the first written record of the Monkey Orchid in Great Britain was apparently of plants in Caversham.

The Flora of Berkshire by George Claridge Druce was published in 1897. (Incidentally, a new flora of the county is about to be published, and may be in the shops by the time you read this.) In his discussion of the Monkey Orchid, Druce says that the Revd William Browne, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, was apparently the first to record the Monkey Orchid, and its close relative, the Military Orchid, and it was probably William Browne who "supplied the Caversham locality" for the Monkey Orchid. This was back in the 17th century.

In our stretch of the Thames Valley the Monkey was once abundant, on the thin turf on chalk banks on both sides of the River. One of the main reasons for its decline was agricultural "improvement." One gentleman, remembering the abundance of orchids above Whitchurch, told Mr. Druce that in 1838 or 1839, he saw "the steep slopes pared and burnt in

order to enrich the land with ashes, and so I actually witnessed the roasting alive of both soldier and monkey orchids." The application of artificial fertilisers and re-seeding of the grasslands with grasses more nutritious to livestock which has occurred more recently is equally deadly to these plants.

There are two nature reserves in Kent where it survives, and one above Goring, where it's usually to be seen in some abundance in late May. Of course, there's always the hope that it will have seeded itself in some other suitable grassland, now no longer needed for agriculture.

Each flowering stem carries a spike of small flowers, each of which is like a little white-and-pink monkey, decorated with stripes and dots – if you use a lot of imagination! The upper floral leaves form the head, and the pollen-sacs form the eyes. The limbs – arms, legs and tail – are formed by narrow extensions of the lowest petal, and are coloured deep pink. It's a remarkable sight, if you come across it, and are prepared to stoop down and take a close look.

HAPPY WANDERER

## FRIENDS of

## MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS



A group of 'the Friends' met on a glorious spring day in March. There were the lemon yellow brimstone butterflies, tortoiseshell butterflies, lots of hoverflies, bumble bees and several 'nests' of ladybirds [English ones!] in the clumps, ready to do their bit in the adjoining gardens.

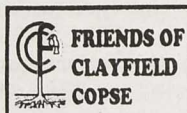
A pair of mistle thrush on the newly cut grass, a pair of nut hatches in one of the oak trees and, lurking in the undergrowth, a young frog and a large toad. In the woods along the path primrose and violets flowering and along the north edge, sweet violet scenting the air. How lucky are we to have this site?

Recently, some hazel 'binders' were taken out for use on the dead hedging being built by the Green Gym up at Clayfield Copse. This is a traditional use for hazel wands, and coppicing reinvigorates the plant as well as letting more light onto the woodland floor. They grow back within 5-7 years.

The work task was to clear the goose grass from around the young bushes and scarify the grass to allow more variety of grassland plants to grow through. It proved to be rather warm and sunny so coffee break took longer than usual, while contemplating the scene.

St Andrews Brownies will be doing their annual tree planting on April 29th. Anyone available to help out would be welcome. Contact Brown Owl on 947 3913.

The next and last 'Friends' task [until September] is on Saturday 16th April at 9.30. Anyone is welcome to join in and help maintain this special area. Contact Steve on 947 3294.



## Friends of Clayfield Copse

Not everything goes to plan! The Friends had a very successful work party of 40 or so Post Office volunteers from London who helped to lay the new surface along the pathway in the recreation ground. They did a wonderful job. The snag was laying the soggy hoggin – it was too sodden and sticky to be flattened with a roller. We hope at our next work party the hoggin will be drier and we can roller it down.

In places in the woods the trees are so dense that light does not get through to help the ground flora, so several sycamore trees are being felled. We will be replanting with wild cherry and the hazel already there will grow stronger. Maybe bluebells will come through too!

Green Gym will be working on some dead hedging at the Kiln Road entrance this month. We like to keep parts of the woodland as special quiet areas for wildlife and the hedging discourages too many walkers there.

A new information leaflet about the site will be launched in May. It has been designed with illustrations by local artist Sally Castle and has a little history, geology and wild life info. as well as a useful map.

Plans are progressing for Woodlands Day on 4th June. The photo shows Dylan one of the horses from the Working Horse Trust, who will be pulling out some of the trees felled earlier this year and taking them to the saw mill on Woodlands Day. All events are free.

Local churches are working together under Regula Adams to provide traditional teas in the marquee, proceeds to the Amajuba Educational Trust in South Africa.

A core committee of four are the minds behind this project, but they will be relying on lots of volunteers to help the day run smoothly. Please contact Anne Latto if you can help in any way. Tel 948 4454.



Dylan working in the woods.

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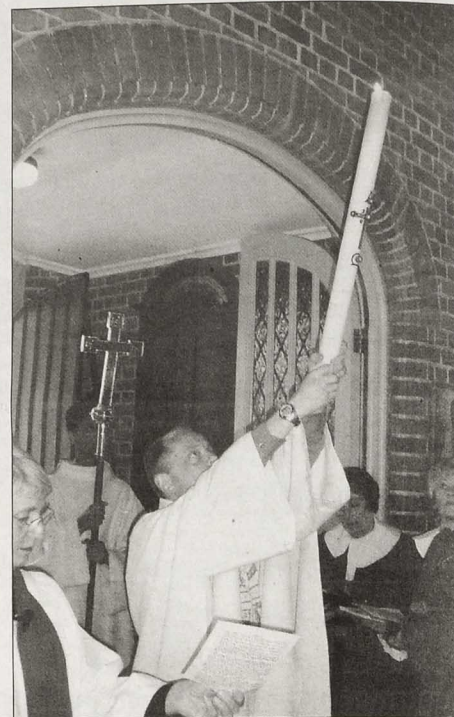
Sunday Services

10.30am and 6.30pm

## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER AT ST BARNABAS

Although each year the observances for Holy Week and Easter at St Barnabas Church follow a similar pattern to those in many churches, they are a vibrant reminder of the sequence of events at the root of our faith. A simple procession with palm branches and palm crosses from Church Hall to Church via the public footpath is a modest re-enactment of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week, the events of which are reinforced by a dramatic reading of the Passion. Holy Communion within the context of a meal, and the associated symbols present at the Passover meal, bring a depth of meaning to the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, especially when it is followed by going out at the end of the meal into a darkened church to keep watch until midnight, reminiscent of the Apostles watching with Jesus while he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.

On Good Friday the Service coincided with the last hour that Jesus was on the Cross. It was a Service watching and waiting at the foot of the Cross reflecting on the mystery of God's love through which Jesus suffered and died for us. By contrast Easter Day started at sunrise with a light taken from a new fire in the churchyard to light the Paschal Candle, which was taken into a darkened church thus symbolising the light of Christ rising in glory to banish all darkness from our hearts and minds. The same act was repeated in a modified form at the beginning of the main Easter Day Service conveying the Good News of Easter; there followed the Blessing of the Easter Garden, previously prepared by the young people, the Baptism of baby Jack Collard, a rededication of Baptismal Vows by the congregation and the Easter Eucharist. In one small church, representative of the whole of Christendom, the acclamation went up and continues to do so: *Christ is Risen; He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!*



The entry of the Paschal Candle on Easter Day.



Palm Sunday procession at St Barnabas Church.

## CALVARY AT CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS

The Methodist Church was delighted to welcome back Riding Lights Theatre Company in March for their Lent production of *Calvary*. This was a moving presentation, featuring the stories of some of those who had been involved with Jesus during His earthly life, and who gathered at the foot of the cross to witness His death and reflect, with us, on its possible meaning. We saw the woman caught in adultery, as Jesus halted the stoning to save her life; Mary and Martha when Lazarus died and Jesus raised him to life; Mary as she poured her perfume on Jesus' feet; and the thieves crucified with Jesus. We experienced their emotions, and prayed for forgiveness for our lack of faith and love. We shared in music, singing reflective hymns, and symbolically laid stones at the foot of the cross.

With a basic set and a minimum of props, the actors nonetheless conveyed the reality of the crucifixion and reminded us of the effect that Jesus had on the lives of those around Him. It was truly a thought-provoking evening.

As a footnote, those who were there will remember that one of the actors, Fred had been taken ill earlier in the week. We are pleased to report that he is now recovering well from his heart attack.



Photos by O. Jewiss

The symbol of the empty Cross a reminder of the crucified and risen Christ.

## AROUND THE CHURCHES



The Pope blesses the Crown being held by Fr Tony while Peter Lennon, then Chairman of the Parish Pastoral Council, prepares to present him with a photo of Our Lady of Caversham

## POPE JOHN PAUL II'S CAVERSHAM CONNECTION

There has been much coverage in the national media of the life of Pope John Paul II, and there is little that *Caversham Bridge* might sensibly add. Nevertheless, there is one event of local interest that merits recall: the occasion on 8th May 1996 when, in the Centenary Year of the Parish of Our Lady and St Anne, the late Pope received representatives of the Parish in audience, and blessed the Crown which now adorns the statue of Our Lady of Caversham.

As *Caversham Bridge* goes to press, the election has just been announced of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, to be known as Pope Benedict XVI. Things may change, but nothing will diminish the pleasure of recalling that meeting with his predecessor, enjoyed by those parishioners who made the journey to Rome in 1996.

## WOMEN LET THEIR LIGHT SHINE

Each year women from a different country provide the theme and material for the service for the Women's World Day of Prayer. In retrospect it now seems providential that only a month before the death of Pope John Paul II the women of Poland, his country of birth, should have been responsible for the strong message of making a difference that came through the service they had prepared for this worldwide event, this year celebrated in Caversham at the Church of Our Lady and Saint Anne. It bears testimony to the strength of the Christian message of hope that had enabled Poland to emerge as a strong Christian country following years of first Nazi and then communist domination.

Ladies drawn from the Caversham churches led and assisted in the conduct of the service; the congregation was welcomed by symbols of hospitality and friendship in the form of bread and salt and the Polish greeting of "Szczęść Boże", May God bless you. The service focused on these symbols and that of light, together with the example of the servant girl of Naaman's wife who caused Naaman to seek a cure for his

leprosy from Elisha, the prophet of Israel. The Revd Jo Loveridge, Area Dean of Bradfield and Priest in Charge of Burghfield, was the special preacher; she took up these themes suggesting that those present could go out together, not alone, as fellow Christians rooted in Christ, who is with those who have faith. She urged everyone to let the light of Christ shine through them and thereby make a difference to the lives of others. Symbolically the service ended by the light from a central candle being

lit and passed among the congregation with a prayer asking God for his Light, so that those present may become a light to others and by passing on his Great Light no one will be left in darkness.

This was a simple service with opportunities for confession, rededication and thanksgiving and a clear message to let our light shine in order to make a difference. It was a part of an international event by women but not

just for women. It is disappointing that so few men choose to attend and thereby miss the opportunity to experience the strength of this corporate act of ministry and worship by women.



Our picture shows the group of women who organised and led the service: the Revd Jo Loveridge is on the right in the back row.

## WESTMINSTER ABBEY DAY OF PRAYER

(This is the second of three meditations given by the Irish priest, poet and philosopher John O'Donohue. The first was published last month and the third will be published later)

John O'Donohue's second meditation was entitled: "The imagination as the door of the divine".

View the imagination "as the door to the divine" he suggested; "we are made in the image of the divine imagination. Imagine the things around you; be alive to their possibilities. When the imagination is alive, there are new possibilities. The relationship with those you love dies when you are no longer able to imagine."

"The most significant things about you only come up on the radar of your imagination. When you awaken your imagination you become fully alive to who you are", he said.

"Eternal moments are within you, they are what you were sent into the world for. 'I came that you might have life, and have it more abundantly', said Jesus. When you appreciate good music you are elevated above the earth. Worship should be like that."

"Now is the moment, it is all we have. Give your heart to it. The greatest sin of all is the unlive life. What is your unlive life? One day you will know yourself as you are known to God. You have a responsibility to be what you could be."

He told a parable - "a colony of ants lived under a stone in a field. One of the ants was a genius. He was sent out into the world by the other ants and emerges on a wet day. He sees a horse but cannot perceive the horse, it's too great, we don't have the radar to pick up everything in the world. Stop measuring the divine - and experience it".

"There is a place in the soul that no time, no person can touch. Visit that sacred stillness within yourself. You are more than anything that has ever happened to you. Be awake to the divine. Happiness is being with the people you love in the place you love. The gaze of a child can recall you to humanity."

"When God's presence becomes real, who knows what can happen? Presence opens up a new way. The unseen presence is the Holy Spirit. We are the expression of God, and through us, God brings to expression, all kinds of wonders".

"Don't look away, look around. The eyes with which you see God, are God's eyes seeing you. Acknowledge the blessings that come from God. The opportunity to take risks - that's life!"

John Madeley

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## RETREATING TO GO FORWARD

by Francis Serjeant

Recently I went on my first religious retreat and found it an inspirational if exhausting three days. At the end, the combination of mental and physical exercise left me wishing I could immediately retire to the nearby hermitage to recover. My destination was the Anglican nuns of the Community of St Francis at Compton Durville, Somerset.

I arrived in haste and rather flustered having misjudged the journey time from Reading. I had a quick tour of the guest quarters, including to my delight a well-stocked library, before attending the first of a number of services during my stay. There was no compulsion to attend but I found it useful to share worship with other people as a contrast to the periods of solitude and individual reflection. In theory there was a calm sense of meditation in the minutes before the service. Unfortunately I usually did not reach this state as inevitably I forgot to collect the hymn and prayer books outside the chapel so had to retrace my steps and make a second entrance immediately before the service. Coping with the prayer book provided further anxiety, as I had to find the right service and be alert to prayers and psalms hidden elsewhere in the book.

There was an interesting contrast between the serenity of nuns at the service and their presence at lunch. I can best convey the atmosphere at the table as being in a teachers' staff room. Much chatting and gentle teasing between the nuns occurred, plus a detailed discussion about a computer internet problem. This is perhaps a bit of an unfair description. I was not expecting to encounter the outside world so soon after my arrival. Perhaps I should have realised by the contents of the library, which had a fine collection of Terry Pratchett novels that the nuns weren't cloistered from the world. I also learnt that many of the nuns had joined the Franciscans later in life and also that they were not "confined" to Compton Durville. This was rather comforting, as when I had some spiritual guidance, I knew that the Sister had practical knowledge of everyday issues within life in addition to religious wisdom.

All work and no play would have been counterproductive so I "escaped" twice for country rambles. OS maps and a leaflet enabled me to explore the district. Fittingly, in light of St Francis' love of nature, I heard skylarks and saw a kingfisher. The sunken lanes were full of luxurious harts tongue and male ferns. Lambs and primroses completed the picture of a wonderful world.

It was not all activity. Two of the deepest experiences were "discovering" the silent chapel and the preamble to the evening service. The former had a wonderful sense of peace whilst praying but I was still connected to the outside world with the sounds of a tractor and voices in the lane below. Opening the door to attend the evening service I was faced by a darkened chapel slightly illuminated by a candle in the centre of the space. Around it sitting in silence on the floor were the other worshippers. Focusing upon the candle stopped any distracting thoughts and made the act of worship which followed much more significant and focused.

I adapted quickly to this "life" but I think I would have gained more had I read a book such as Margaret Self's 'Soul Space' before the visit. I really enjoyed my visit and would recommend a retreat for any one who wishes to take stock, or "retire" for a brief period from the rounds of shopping, commuting, traffic jams etc. A fellow guest used the Community to "escape" her family and concentrate on writing a dissertation. There are a number of retreats in this country whose addresses can be found in an annual directory. A number of retreats also advertise in Christian newspapers such as "The Church Times".

## LIFE IN PALESTINE TODAY

After the recent Annual General Meeting of Churches Together in Berkshire, representatives heard at first hand about life in Palestine today. Rosemary Read gave a graphic description of what it is like living in Nablus, an experience she gained through a joint project of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland and Christian Aid, which is managed in Britain by the Quaker Peace & Social Witness, and internationally by the World Council of Churches. This project, known as the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), recruits volunteers to accompany Palestinians and Israelis in their non-violent actions and concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation. Rosemary Read had been one of a party of 28 from eight different countries and eight different denominations; her experience was three months living in Nablus.

Those going as accompaniers through EAPPI have the following roles:

- to offer protection through non-violent presence;
- to monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law;
- to support acts of non-violent resistance alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists;
- to engage in public policy advocacy;
- to stand in solidarity with the churches and those struggling non-violently against the occupation.

continued on page 9

## METHODIST DIARY

CAVERSHAM METHODIST CHURCH  
(GOSBROOK ROAD)

May 1	10.30am	Revd Dr John Ogden
	6.30pm	Mr Chris Evans
May 8	10.30am	Revd Dermot Thornberry/ Mr Chris Evans
	6.30pm	Mrs Marion Cruddas
May 15	10.30am	Mrs Karen Ward
	6.30pm	United Christian Aid Service - Revd Dermot Thornberry
May 22	10.30am	Revd Dermot Thornberry
	6.30pm	Revd Dr John Ogden
May 29	10.30am	Mr John Madeley
	6.30pm	Professor Sir John Marsh CBE

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH

May 1	9.00pm	Revd Dermot Thornberry
	10.30am	Revd Dermot Thornberry
	6.30pm	Revd Dr John Ogden
May 8	10.30am	Mr David Beck
	6.30pm	Mrs Paula Andrews
May 15	10.30am	"Feast of Life"
	6.30pm	United Christian Aid Service at Gosbrook Road
May 22	10.30am	Revd Dr John Ogden
	6.30pm	Revd Dermot Thornberry
May 29	10.30am	Revd Tony Bell
	6.30pm	Revd Lynne Davis

ST LAURENCE'S CHURCH, WOODCOTE

May 8	9.45am	Mr David Munns
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## TRIBUTE

## DR DAVID WILLIAM GILLINGS

1916 – 2005



Dr David Gillings

O. Jewiss

With the death of David William Gillings in late March, Emmer Green lost another long term resident of distinction; he and his wife Dorothy, who survives him, have lived here for the past 49 years. David was born in London, where he went to school and then University College where he successively obtained BSc and PhD degrees; he continued his research in sonochemistry, the use of ultrasound in chemistry, which bridges the divide between chemistry and physics. With the outbreak of the Second World War his expertise was engaged by the then Ministry of Supply at their experimental research station at Porton, near Salisbury.

He and Dorothy married in 1943 and after the war returned to their roots in Hampstead, where their three children, Richard, Andrew and Susan were born. David continued his research in the iron, steel and coal industries before taking up an appointment with ICI Laboratories at Whitchurch Hill, at which time he moved to Emmer Green. In the 1960s he was working at the leading edge of a specialised technology applying computers to the control of complex chemical plants and to financial forecasting, expertise he subsequently passed on to American students and research workers at the University of California. He took early retirement from ICI in the early 70s but continued working as a consultant, contributing papers to international conferences.

With a social concern for the less fortunate, like his father before him he supported Toynbee Hall, a charitable foundation in London that supported the education of young people with limited means from the East End. He was also an active instructor in the Sea Cadet Corps, through which he was commissioned as a Lieutenant Commander in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve.

Both he and Dorothy were involved at St Barnabas Church. In latter years David had been an enthusiastic member of one of the Fellowship Groups bringing a perceptive scientific mind to many a discussion, often playing devil's advocate with a merry twinkle in his eye; he enjoyed the stimulation of debate and spoke with sincerity and conviction on a whole range of social, political, moral, theological and scientific issues backed by a lifetime of experience and learning.

It was with particular sadness that in recent years his family and friends began to detect a gradual deterioration of his sharp mind that heralded the development of Alzheimer's disease, a condition that necessitated his going into care at the Oaks. Last autumn he suffered a stroke that caused him to be hospitalised for a period and then transferred to Becher Hall Nursing Centre where he was comfortable but later succumbed to an attack of pneumonia. The affection with which he is remembered is borne out by the large number who sympathetically supported Dorothy and his two sons Richard and Andrew at his funeral; sadly his daughter Susan predeceased him.

continued from page 8

## LIFE IN PALESTINE TODAY

Rosemary Read described Nablus as a city of 150,000 people, with four refugee camps and 950 Christians, from which every exit is blocked by manned military checkpoints at which a Palestinian woman standing with a child in her arms may have to wait up to three hours to be cleared; young men are not allowed through at all. She described the arrogance of Israeli soldiers at these checkpoints, many of whom were unhappy with their role. She also told how military detachments would invade Nablus two or three times a week and that the family homes of suicide bombers, sometimes as young as 17 years of age, were destroyed, rendering families homeless when they did not even know the intentions of the suicide bomber. Elsewhere Palestinians are having to endure the inconvenience of being separated from their Israeli neighbours by a massive wall that is being built in a place different from the internationally agreed peace line; not only does this wall separate the two communities, it also often separates Palestinians from essential services, relatives and their farmland. Israel and particularly the settlers, many flown in from overseas, have annexed 80% of the water available to the Palestinians. She also told how Israeli protesters opposed to the occupation are being reviled by their fellow Israelis.

We were asked to become better informed about the situation, to write to politicians about it, to speak to others and even to visit as an accompanier, to pray and to support the EAPPI initiative financially. The following prayer from a Palestinian Christian and distributed by Christian Aid best summaries our possible action:

*Pray not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli, but pray rather for ourselves that we might not divide them in our prayers but keep them both together in our hearts.*



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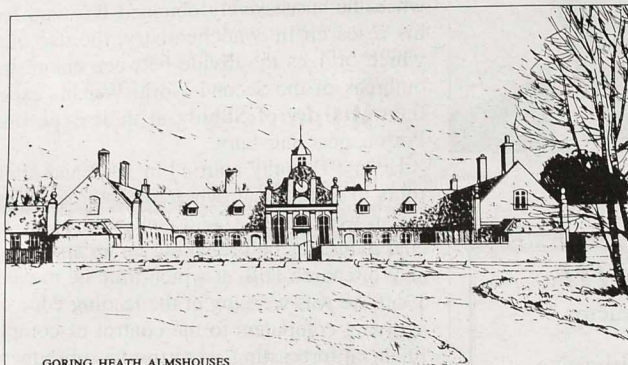
The Trustees of the Charity, set up by our founder, Henry Allnutt, in 1742, would like to put this right and invite everyone to come and join us for an Open Day on Saturday 4th June between 2pm and 5pm, to have the opportunity to enjoy these wonderful grounds and meet some of the residents.

We will be celebrating the day by holding two short Concerts in the delightful Chapel situated in the courtyard of the Almshouses. Glynn Stackhouse, who is the regular organist for Sunday worship, is also a director of the Francis Kitching Trust and he will be in charge of giving us the opportunity to hear some of his award

winning young soloists performing. As well as the wonderful music on offer in the Chapel there will be a Flower Festival organised by South Stoke Flower Group. There will be a dance display by the children of Checkendon School.

We are hoping that children will be coming to join us so we will be organising games while the older generations can enjoy a bowls match that will be taking place at the same time.

We would like more people to be aware of the charm of these Almshouses, therefore a couple of the residents



GORING HEATH ALMSHOUSES

have kindly agreed to open their houses for viewing.

Come and join us for a lovely afternoon in these wonderful surroundings. This is an opportunity to come and enjoy the peace, quiet and tranquility of Goring Heath Almshouses.

## LANGTREE SINFONIA CONCERT

The next concert of the Langtree Sinfonia takes place on Saturday 14th May at 7pm. It will be held in the beautiful Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester on Thames.

The concert includes the Symphonic Poem 'Finlandia' (Opus 26) by Sibelius, Liszt's Piano Concerto No 1 in E flat and concludes with Symphony No 3 in E flat major (opus 10) by Dvorak. The solo pianist will be Nils Franke and the conductor Paul Fox.

Tickets including programme are £8.50 (children under 16 £4) and can be obtained at the door, at 'Inspiration', 1 The Arcade, Goring or by contacting 0118 941 5498.

## THE GIFT OF SIGHT

During the month of February the parishioners of Our Lady and St Anne's Catholic Church collected 170 pairs of unwanted spectacles which are now on their way to bring hope, light and self respect to others.

In this country many people wear spectacles which are changed regularly and the old ones pushed into the back of a drawer without a second thought. But in the "third world" these discarded bits of glass, metal and plastic can make a real difference to lives because failing eyesight can seriously limit the ability to earn a living, bringing hardship and deprivation to the sufferer and their family.

The *World in Sight* charity sorts, cleans and grades unwanted spectacles and delivers them to ophthalmic clinics all over the world where opticians match the spectacles to the needs of their patients. Think what could be achieved if we all combine our spring cleaning with an act of charity which costs nothing at all and pass on unwanted spectacles to where they can do so much good. Even broken metal framed glasses can be utilised to defray expenses. The spectacles can be taken to any branch of Dolland and Aitchison opticians or any Help the Aged shop.

The parishioners of Our Lady and St Anne's have done their bit – wouldn't it be great if other groups and individuals did the same?

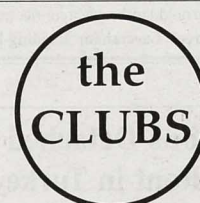
For further details see [www.helptheaged.org.uk/SupportUs/Donate/Recycling/world\\_in\\_sight.htm](http://www.helptheaged.org.uk/SupportUs/Donate/Recycling/world_in_sight.htm)

## See the Bluebells at Chazey Wood

From April 10th the bluebells at Chazey Wood can be seen by kind permission of Mr J J Eyston and you can support the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed at the same time.

Permits and collection boxes are available at the following stores: 'Wordplay' in Prospect Street, Woodcote Way Post Office, Emmer Green Post Office and St Anne's Road Convenience Store.

For further information please contact Imogen on 0118 947 7899



## Probus

'Education for Employment' -  
not as it was 'Education for Living'

This, in a nutshell, was the conclusion after a talk by Professor Keith Watson at the Reading and District Probus Club.

Born in Huddersfield, (we accepted his apology) he studied English and Politics at St Andrew's University - only to get his first job with Metal Box in the 'Tin Printing' Works. But his desire to teach took him to Poland and Bangkok before returning to England to take his PhD. International Education with the British Council took him to Bulgaria (and Captaincy of the Tiddlywinks Team!)

A number of narrow escapes added to his experiences: driven off the road by 2 trucks filled with ballast; a crash landing in Nepal; on the 5.18 London - Oxford train which crashed killing 10 people. When he was in Poland as a member of the British Council, he found he was up against Hitler's propaganda against the British which still persisted. Periods in Pakistan and Communist China followed, then off to Bangkok to teach English to the two Princesses of Thailand.

The speaker is a member of Reading & District Probus Club, so if you would like to be in his company, and that of many more retired chaps who enjoy a 'get-together' for lunch, just give the Secretary, Ray Head, a ring on 0118 941 1445. Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday each month from 11-ish to about 3pm.

## THE CLUBS

## Rosehill WI

On Wednesday 6 April, the members of Rosehill WI enjoyed a talk by Mrs Jean Sheppard illustrated with slides taken on a recent holiday to China organized by the Berkshire WI.

The sightseeing started in Beijing immediately upon landing, after an exhausting 10 hour flight! We saw the Temple of Heaven and Tiananmen Square, which was beautifully decorated with flowers as this visit took place in October immediately after the annual Chinese holiday. Those members who had seen the film "The Last Emperor" were able to recognize some locations from the film. Many of the buildings were beautifully painted and we were intrigued to learn that the little gilded figures which adorned the roof ridges indicated the importance of the occupant – the emperor had the most, the servants' quarters meriting only one.

We also wondered at China's most famous monument – the Great Wall – and noted the steepness and the vast number of uneven steps to be climbed.

Leaving Beijing, and crossing the wall, the visit continued to Chengde to visit a number of very beautiful temples, including the famous Putala Temple which is built in the Tibetan style, with huge, solid walls on the exterior and a series of increasingly beautiful painted and gilded buildings hidden behind the walls.

The holiday continued with a visit to Xian to see the famous terracotta warriors which were apparently discovered when local farmers were digging a well during a period of drought.

In addition to this, there were visits to the Beijing Opera, acrobatic shows, cloisonné factories, etc. All this in 10 days, which seems to indicate that one needs to be extremely fit before undertaking such a trip.

Rosehill WI meets on the first Wednesday of every month at St Barnabas Church Hall, Grove Road, Emmer Green. Visitors and new members are always welcome.

## Caversham WI

Members met in March for their annual meeting when the past year's activities were reviewed. The business part of the meeting was dealt with first and then the President, Miss M Cameron, gave her report of the previous year, reminding members of the varied speakers plus social activities enjoyed. The treasurer, Mrs S Myzior, gave the financial report which was adopted. The committee were willing to serve again and Miss M Cameron was re-elected as President as well as winning the competition cup. After refreshments, including some of Mrs Nora Coates' 90th birthday cake, two brain-teasing quizzes were produced and the winners received little Easter eggs for their efforts. The evening ended with the raffle and members looking forward to another busy year.

## Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

Members of the Guild were in good spirits for the March AGM. Group-seating resulted in a buzz of conversation and activity to welcome the Returning Officer, Mrs Christine Cook, from Tilehurst Townswomen's Guild. She congratulated members on having a full committee returned for the coming year and wished them continued success. In her report, the Secretary commented on the high attendance rates in all the special interest groups, which provide a regular social activity open to all in the Guild.

The Chairman, Mrs Margaret Pocock, thanked all for their support during her period of service. Times have changed greatly since the inauguration of the Guild nationwide, but women still enjoy the annual events and contribute in many ways to help each other and society in general.

Mrs Margot Sutherland, speaking for Arts and Crafts, commented on the regular Guild report to

Village Voice. This Caversham Park magazine, celebrating its 40th year, had opened with a Guild report and still receives them. Further reports were given prior to the tea-break, after which the Chairman introduced a "Cornucopia" of quiz-sheets – Actresses, Actors, Birds, Committee as Babies, Newspaper Hats and Places (Home & Abroad)! Winners were awarded Mars bars. Raffle tickets were drawn and the evening wound up with a presentation to the retiring Chairman and thanks for all her work.

## St Peter's Wives Group

At the March meeting, Frances from Hare Hatch Nursery, Bath Road, spoke about the work of the nursery and its development over recent years.

From a fairly small nursery which opened to the public only at weekends, it has become a much larger enterprise which employs 48 staff, opens seven days a week and has a wide range of plants and trees for sale. The nursery aims to be unique and most of the plants are grown in-house but, after a recent trip to Italy, they have started to import various specimen plants and unusual items, such as hardy banana plants and kiwi fruit.

Frances gave some useful tips on garden design and advised how to produce year-round interest using different shapes and colours. A colour wheel was used to demonstrate the ways in which various colours enhance and animate each other. Frances also demonstrated different container arrangements using primroses of various colours and utilising a cordyline or a box as a centrepiece. The nursery stocks a large range of containers in metal, terracotta, etc and many unusual basket plants at this time of year.

Tall plants and trees add more layers of interest to a garden design and the use of spiky plants such as yuccas, phormiums, cordylines and palms etc can add drama.

After a short question and answer session, the primroses were given away to members who were able to purchase the other plants used in the demonstration at very reasonable prices.

The next meeting will be held at Church House on Tuesday 17 May at 8.00pm, when the speaker will be from Reading Museum and the subject will be "The Thames – Secrets from the Depths."

New members always welcome.

## Caversham Community Association

March began with the usual informal games evening and a chance for a friendly chat.

It was 'ladies in green' the following week when St Patrick's day was celebrated with an Irish evening. Margaret Briggs led members in the Caversham version of 'Riverdance' which proved rather hilarious. Everyone enjoyed a 'bring and share' supper with an Irish flavour, sausages, potato scones and a few sweet delights to finish. A quiz on a green theme and an Irish sing-song finished a fun evening. The month ended with a bring and buy evening to help raise funds for the club.

## Caversham &amp; Chiltern Flower Club

On Wednesday 11th May, Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club is holding a Demonstration of Floral Art by Jeannette Bell entitled "Inclinations". The venue is Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road, Caversham, starting at 7.30pm. Doors open at 7pm. Entrance fee for visitors is £4 and £3 for members and Senior Citizens. Refreshments are available. Contact 0118 947 7400 for more details. The Club is also holding a Table Top Sale on Saturday 14th May at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, from 10am until 12 noon. To book a table costs £10. Entrance fee 30p. Contact Berna Macdonald on 0118 947 7400 for details.

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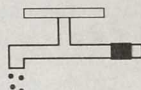
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