

THE THAMES VALLEY AND CHILTERN AIR AMBULANCE TRUST

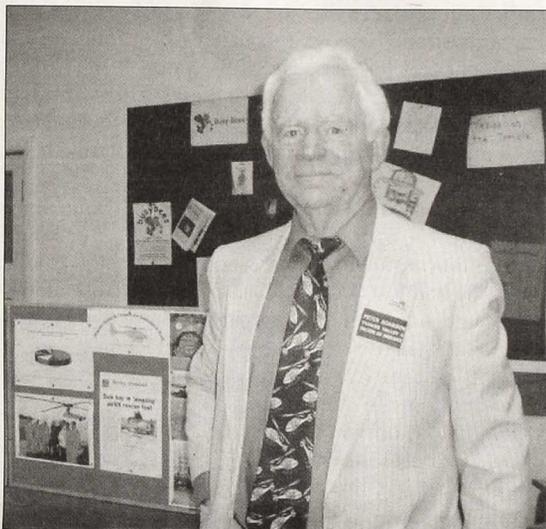
Peter Adamson, a volunteer with the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust, was the special speaker after the Emmer Green Residents' Association Annual General Meeting in late April. He brought to the attention of local people the organisation and service provided by the Helicopter Emergency Medical Service through which England and Wales are covered by 16 air ambulance trusts so that nobody is more than 20 minutes away from a hospital. The Thames Valley and Chiltern air ambulance is based at White Waltham Airfield near Maidenhead and provides a service that was launched in 1999; it is one of the busiest in the UK, flying over 1,000 emergency missions a year, being available during the hours of daylight 7 days a week, every week of the year. It is tasked from the Ambulance Control in response to 999 calls, requests from doctors and other emergency services.

Despite the many stories of saving lives that could not be achieved by land ambulances because of access or travelling time, a Government report shows that the benefits do not justify aid from Health Service funds. This Air Ambulance Trust, which is a charity, has to raise £900,000 a year to operate. Fuel costs £110 per hour. Between £77,000 and £100,000 a month is realised through fundraising. There is also a Public Private Partnership. The Royal Berkshire Ambulance Trust signs the lease of the helicopter from Bond Helicopters, who supply the pilot. Medical assistance is supplied by 19 paramedics drawn from ambulance services in the area, two of whom are available at White Waltham during operational hours.

The helicopter, a Bolkow 105, flies at 140 miles per hour and can carry two stretcher cases or one stretcher case and a relative in addition to the pilot and two paramedics, who can give emergency treatment while in the air. Because of its restrictive capacity, there are plans to

replace the helicopter with the larger Eurocopter 135.

The advantages of the helicopter are its speed and ability to access a site and then transfer a patient directly to hospital.



O. Jewiss
Peter Adamson, the speaker from the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust, was photographed at the Emmer Green Residents' Association Meeting.

This helps ambulance services with their response time targets. The helicopter is able to transfer the patient rapidly to the most suitable hospital, according to their injuries. Treatment of life-threatening crises and accidents within the "golden hour" can minimise subsequent use of intensive care beds, which cost the Health Service £1,000 a day. The audience were surprised to learn that there is no provision for a helicopter to land at the Royal Berkshire Hospital and it would cost £350,000 to strengthen the top of the multi-storey car park to support a helipad. We were informed that without such a facility the hospital would lose its trauma status.

45% of the call outs are to road traffic accidents for which the helicopter frequently is able to land on an adjacent road. Another 10% are equestrian accidents; often these and farm accidents occur in remote locations not easily accessible by land vehicles.



We are indebted to the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust for the photo of their helicopter.

Funding comes from local authority grants, business donors and private individuals. The Trust runs its own weekly lottery, but no money comes from the National Lottery because the rules say the Air Ambulance provides a service that should be provided by a statutory body. It is supported by an Open Gardens Scheme, fetes and shows, the usual round of fundraising activities and sale of mementoes. Pre-arranged visits, which are charged and include lunch, may be made between Mondays and Thursdays.

Peter Adamson's talk was of great interest and further information about the Air Ambulance Trust may be obtained through the website (www.airambulancetvac.org) or by phoning 01628 584210.

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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.

The Caversham Bridge is delivered each month to homes in Caversham. It could be delivered to you for £2.40 per year. If you do not regularly subscribe to the paper and would like to do so, please contact Mark Staunton on 947 2389.

TALKING POINT

By

by Paul Rhodes

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY

Many of us have marched in London, signed petitions, sent postcards and done all we can to support the campaign to eradicate poverty in the two-thirds world.

This must not become a bandwagon upon which we jump because it is the latest worthy cause. If our campaign succeeds it will have consequences for us. In order to give a fair wage to all workers, we will pay higher prices for their products. In order to allow all traders access to the world markets, we will lose bargains we currently enjoy. The rich will no longer be able to live in affluence at the expense of the poor. It will be a social change comparable to The Poor Laws and social justice campaigns in England in the 19th century which helped to reduce poverty - and its associated problems - in Britain. It is about justice.

The second book of Samuel chapter 9 tells of a lame man called Mephibosheth. He had no power or influence. But King David used his position of power to find Mephibosheth and give him the inheritance he had lost. It cost David to do it because all the profit he could have made from this land now went to Mephibosheth.

That is what MakePovertyHistory is about. It is a call to the governments of the rich and powerful countries to use their position to improve the circumstances of the other nations. It is a call to them to lose out in order to give a fair opportunity to all. It will cost us as it cost King David.

However, God has the right to require this of us, not only because He is a God of justice who loves all people equally and who hates oppression, but also because He has set the example.

Humanity can identify with Mephibosheth because we were spiritually impoverished. We had lost the heritage which God had given to us at creation. But God used His power to change things. When Jesus came to live amongst His people, He came to a poor family. He finally submitted Himself to death on a cross of wood. In emptying Himself of what was rightfully His, He made the way for us to receive the inheritance we had lost through our disobedience to God. It cost Him, but He did it for us.

Jesus came to make poverty history, to restore to all humanity what God wanted us to have in the first place - most importantly, an open door to come to Him.

It is therefore a godly thing to support the campaign to Make Poverty History. We need to make those in authority aware not only of our support but also of our willingness to lose out in order for justice to be done. Then we are following the one who, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich.

Paul Rhodes is Pastor of Caversham Baptist Church

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the July 2005 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 8th June. The date for submission of items for the August 2005 issue will be Wednesday 6th July 2005.

All advertising copy for the July 2005 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 7th June 2005. For the August 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday 5th July 2005.

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SUNDAY SERVICES**ANGLICAN**

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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

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11.00am Divine Worship
6.00pm Evening Service

CORRESPONDENCE

At its recent board meeting the Caversham Christian News Ltd, the proprietors of the Caversham Bridge, donated £500 to the Chiltern Centre for Disabled Children. The following letter has been received from the Centre.

I am writing on behalf of all of us at Chilterns to acknowledge receipt and thank you for the kind and generous donation of £500 which we received today.

The proceeds will certainly be of great benefit and will enable us to enhance the facilities and range of activities available to the children and young people who come to Chilterns.

Please could you pass our thanks and appreciation to all those involved. Thank you for thinking of us and for choosing us to be the recipient of this donation.

With best wishes and thanks once again for your valuable support.

Noelle Floyd
Project Administrator

Church Stretton

Dear Editors

I thought you might like to know how your information is circulated around the UK.

I was surprised to get a cutting from your paper sent to me by my daughter-in-law Alice. She lives in Ilkley and is the daughter of the Rev Canon Grimwade, once Rector of St Peter's Church. The piece was written by Derek Bartlett, who retired here a year ago. We made the move from Micklands Estate, off the Henley Road, 18 years ago.

Today, on my way to get the paper at 7.30, I saw Mrs Bartlett with her friends, in bright sunshine and even brighter jackets, happily clearing up by the station; enjoying every minute as, indeed, am I.

Yours truly,
R D Knight.

RE-DEDICATION OF CAVERSHAM WAR MEMORIAL

On St George's Day, Saturday 23rd April, 2005, Caversham's War Memorial was re-dedicated after the addition of 150 names of Caversham Fallen from World War II.

Despite the rain, about 200 people attended the very moving service at the Memorial. The service was conducted by Canon Richard Kingsbury with music from Reading East Salvation Army Band.

The Ode to the Fallen was said by Mr Ron Jewitt, President of Caversham Royal British Legion, and the Kohima Epitaph by Mr Dennis Shepherd, President of Reading Burma Star Association.

Although the project was endorsed by the Royal British Legion (RBL), the money had to be raised separately. A big thank you goes to everyone who contributed - with a very special thankyou to AB Walker & Son Ltd, who did the work on the Memorial at cost.

Pauline Palmer says "All of those killed in war are remembered on a Memorial somewhere in the world thanks to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission but now Caversham has gathered its

own to itself.

"All of us are touched by last century's World Wars. These names recall many families still living in Caversham - some were at the service. Many relatives travelled back to Caversham to be there."

One hundred and fifty crosses, one for each added name, were laid at the steps of the Memorial and fresh cut flowers and crosses were added by relatives.

The President of Caversham RBL said at the service, "I have stood here as President of Caversham RBL for twenty six years - I have never been more moved than I am today."

A big thank you goes to the people of Caversham for all the support they have given to get these names added after a 60 year wait.

There is, however, almost certain to be someone who has a name they think has been forgotten. So, just in case there is, and the Commonwealth War Graves

Commission can confirm the Caversham connection, a space has been left for a small additional stone to be added.

*Pass not this stone in sorrow but in pride
and strive to live as nobly as they died.*



Photo Pauline Palmer

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From the Lookout Post

Local democracy has been working in more ways than one in the build-up to the General Election. At the end of April well over 1,600 Caversham people attended the public exhibitions held on the **North Area Access Study** which is looking at ways of improving travel in north Reading. These exhibitions were an opportunity to ask questions about the ideas proposed and to express concerns about traffic issues.

There is a whole range of issues in the plan, which are too many to cover adequately here but I'll try to give a flavour. The first relate to making public transport more attractive and persuading us to leave our cars at home. There will be premier bus routes for the 9 and 25/44/45. The vexed question of bus lanes has raised its head again along with proposals for bus priority at certain junctions. A new route is planned between Nire Road and Henley Road and the possibility raised of a route along Milestone Way. (It was clear at the exhibitions that the latter had gone down like a lead balloon and may well be dropped.) An experimental taxibus service could be tried out for the area between the Woodcote Road and the Thames which would be pre-bookable from the station.

A Park and Ride service north of the golf courses would require support from South Oxfordshire but a Park and Sail service linked to a Park and Ride service off the Henley Road presents commercial opportunities and has fewer obstacles to overcome. This would provide an alternative route to Thames Valley Park and central Reading. Work on agreement for a third bridge continues to grind on but there is a new proposal for a pedestrian and cycle bridge which could link to a re-developed railway station.

More contentiously we see 'Review of river crossing operation', which relates to a potential one-way IDR and also a 'review of all junctions, pedestrian and cycle facilities' in the triangle enclosed by Prospect Street, Westfield Road and Gosbrook Road. This in all probability implies a one way system.

If anyone would like to follow this up you can phone 0118 939 9948 or visit www.reading.gov.uk/gettingabout. Questionnaires were due back by 6 May but this is not likely to be applied rigidly so do send in your comments.

Annual General Meeting

Talking of democracy, the local Councillors were out in force at the CADRA AGM. Tom Chadwick gave an interesting account of the many issues arising this year which will affect life in Caversham, ranging from housing development in the Thames Valley as outlined in the SEERA plan to improvements planned to the footpaths in Bugs Bottom and Balmore Walk.

Sadly that was Tom's last meeting as Chairman as he has decided the time is right to retire from the CADRA committee. He has worked hard for CADRA for many years. In his own unassuming way he has quietly but persistently pushed forward a whole range of issues and he will be a hard act to follow.

With Tom's retirement you may have noticed that Bystander, which ran in alternate months with this column, did not appear in the May issue but instead we have a new partner to welcome - 'Ex Libris'.

Other news, via the Safer Caversham Forum, referred to crime and policing in Caversham. Sadly the crime statistics for Caversham remain high. The only benefit to this is that it does help to make the case for more resources, so do keep reporting. We have a Police Inspector, a Sergeant and currently four Police Constables. The team will be responsible for neighbourhood policing with a central unit responding to incidents. There will be a more permanent office in Church House as the operation base and a new local Neighbourhood Policing liaison group. Problems in and around Amersham Road continue to cause concern which gave added relevance to an interesting talk on anti-social behaviour.

Festivals in Caversham

After much hard work behind the scenes, we have excellent news that Caversham Festival will be back on 10 September 2005 on Westfield Green. Many congratulations to all concerned. The festival became a part of village life and what better way to start the new school year after the summer break?

News which may be less well received is that the organizers of the Reading Festival have applied for permission to sell a further 10,000

weekend tickets. (All existing places are sold out.) The application outlines proposals to sell the additional tickets as part of a rail or coach package to reduce the additional number of cars and there are revised plans for parking, camping and a new helipad site. It will have been considered by the Licensing Committee on 11 May.

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DISQUIET AT EMMER GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION AGM

April saw the coming of age of the Emmer Green Residents' Association (EGRA), now celebrating 21 years since its inauguration. It was originally formed to give voice to the strong local view in opposition to the then threatened development of Bugs Bottom. Although it was no match for Secretary of State Nicholas Ridley, who overruled all local opposition, it continues to be a channel for local comment on planning and good citizenship, some of it on behalf of those now living in Bugs Bottom, or Hemdean Valley as it has become known. St Barnabas Church Hall was full in late April for EGRA's Annual General Meeting at which the Chairman, Paul Gallagher, reported the Committee's activities; these included keeping a watchful eye on planning applications in the area, successfully objecting to ones considered to be detrimental to the area. He also drew attention to



Members of the present Committee of Emmer Green Residents' Association; Paul Gallagher (chairman) and Margaret Ormonde (Secretary) are seated.

how, in association with the Caversham Safer Community Forum, members had been proactive in the removal of graffiti using anti-graffiti kits supplied by Reading Borough Council. The Association have in the past year also been instrumental in the appropriate refurbishment of the Community Notice Board outside the Cavendish Road shops. It is represented on the North Area Youth Project and hopes to commission some wooden animal sculpture which will double as seating in Clayfield Copse.

Points raised by the members were very critical of the inept and unsatisfactory North Reading Transport Consultation. In particular the Borough Council were castigated for the use of an unmodified single-decker bus as a consultation venue outside St Barnabas Church and the Milestone Centre when with some forethought and planning local halls could have been used. Among other matters the proposal to open the Hunters Chase/Tredegar Road link and the consequential extra traffic in St Barnabas Road was censured. EGRA is responding to the consultation and residents were urged to do likewise and not feel constrained to just answering those questions on the response form.

The EGRA Committee had earlier responded to the South East England Area Plan that threatens to develop land in an arc around Caversham. All other considerations apart, the area does not have the road and transport infrastructure, including a third Thames bridge, to support such proposals. There was also great dissatisfaction over the availability of primary school places, particularly where younger siblings were not being given places

alongside their older brothers and sisters at Emmer Green School. That parents are being expected to send siblings to two different primary schools two to three miles distant, when within walking distance of one of them, seems to demonstrate a lack of joined up thinking on the part of our local authority and to fly in the face of a transport policy that is trying to minimise the use of the private car. If a local residents' association does nothing more than draw attention to this nonsense it is serving its citizens well.

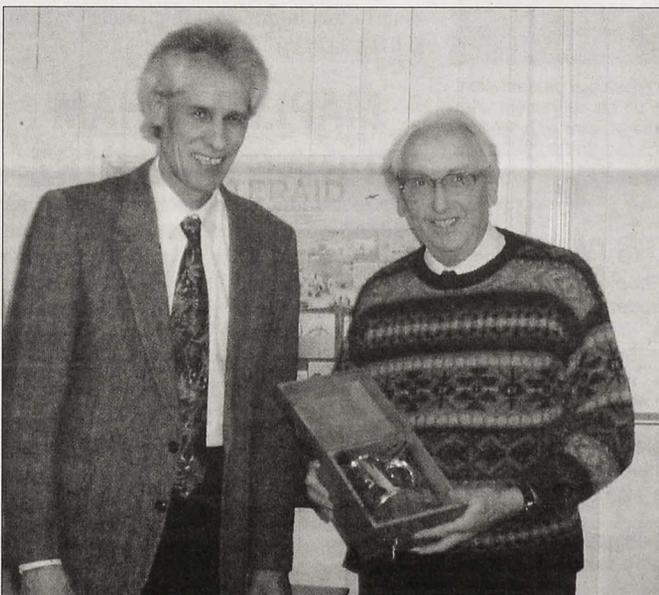
Presentations were made to two retiring members of the Committee: Anne Ayres and David Miles. David Miles had been a committee member since the formation of EGRA 21 years ago and Chairman for 11 of those years. The evening ended with a talk by Peter Adamson from the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust. (See page one).

Caversham and District Residents' Association

CADRA's Annual General Meeting took place on Tuesday 12th April at the Baptist Free Church Centre. The meeting was well attended. In his Annual Report, the Chairman, Tom Chadwick, outlined the many issues which have arisen in the past year affecting future life in Caversham. Tom explained that he would be retiring from the committee and the role of Chairman, and the meeting thanked him warmly for his hard work as Chairman and for his many years of service to CADRA.

Following the formal business, Rebecca Horn, Anti-Social Behaviour Case Officer, RBC, outlined the measures being taken to reduce behaviour which causes harassment, alarm or distress. She praised the way in which all the different agencies work to tackle particular problems and bring appropriate support as well as pressure on individuals. The work of the Police and the Local Authority relies heavily on good quality detailed information from the community on the individuals and the incidents of anti-social behaviour.

A retiring collection was held in aid of the Victim Support Group.



O. Jewiss

Paul Gallagher making a presentation to David Miles, retiring founder committee member of Emmer Green Residents' Association and for 11 years its Chairman.

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METHODIST DIARY

CAVERSHAM METHODIST CHURCH
(GOSBROOK ROAD)

June 5 10.30am *Holy Communion* -
Rev'd Dr John Ogden
6.30pm Rev'd David Ellis

June 12 10.30am Mrs Elaine Cresswell
6.30pm Mr Terence Rowell

June 19 10.30am Rev'd Dermot Thornberry
6.30pm *Holy Communion* -
Rev'd Dr John Ogden

June 26 10.30am Mr Chris Evans
6.30pm Rev'd Dermot Thornberry

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH

June 5 9.00am *Holy Communion* -
Rev'd Dermot Thornberry
10.30am Rev'd Dermot Thornberry
6.30pm Mr John Madeley

June 12 10.30am Rev'd Dr John Ogden
6.30pm *Holy Communion* -
Rev'd Dermot Thornberry

June 19 *Church Anniversary* -
10.30am *Holy Communion* -
Rev'd Dr. John Ogden
6.30pm Rev'd Dermot Thornberry

June 26 10.30am *Sunday Starters' Anniversary* -
Rev'd Dermot Thornberry
6.30pm Mr David Munns

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, WOODCOTE

June 12 9.45am Rev'd Dermot Thornberry

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

ST PETER'S AND ST MARGARET'S CHURCH FETE SATURDAY 2nd JULY 2005 OPENING AT 1.45pm

All the fun and excitement of a traditional summer church fete will take place at the Thames side location of Caversham Court just off Church Road Caversham.

This keenly anticipated event will feature for the first time Hurst Hump, a group of Morris Men who will be performing from 1.30pm at St Martin's Precinct, Caversham. They will then move up to the fete site to perform again later in the afternoon. We are also very pleased to welcome the Tropico Steel Band who will be performing at our fete for the first time.



D. Collis

Amongst all this music and dancing there will also be many fete favourites including a Punch and Judy show, Coconut Shy and Tombola. In addition there will be many traditional stalls where you can pick up a bargain including Homemade Cakes, Garden Produce and Books as well as some new ideas such as Multimedia and Kids Corner.

No fete would be complete without refreshments and there will be Cream Teas and cakes on offer as well as Ice Cream.

So make a note in your diary now to come and see us on the 2nd July. You will enjoy all the best of a traditional summer fete set in a spectacular riverside location and help us to raise money for the work both Churches support locally as well as relieving poverty and hunger abroad.

ST BARNABAS TREASURER RETIRES



Rev'd Derek Chandler (Vicar of St Barnabas Church) making a presentation, with the thanks of the congregation, to John Sansom on his retirement after fourteen years loyal service as Parish Treasurer. Those familiar with the role of a church treasurer will appreciate the level of dedication and commitment entailed by such a period in office.

ST PETER'S FLOWER FESTIVAL 24-26 JUNE WORLD OF FAITHS & FLOWERS (WOFF)

The Theme of the Festival is Our World, its People, their different Cultures and religious Faiths, both ancient and modern.

It will be open from:

3pm - 6pm on Friday 24 June
10am - 5pm on Saturday 25 June, and
11am-4.30pm on Sunday 26 June.

There will be music from the Berkshire Recorder Consort on the Saturday afternoon and on Sunday afternoon there will be a concert by St Peter's Choir. Light refreshments will be available during the Festival.

Any monies raised will go to the "Speakability" charity for victims of strokes to assist in rebuilding communication and to the St Peter's Sound System Fund.

Please do come along and see the flowers, listen to the music and enjoy a cup of tea and home-made cake.

For further details, please call Pat Williams the Festival co-ordinator on 0118 948 1489.

THE OAK HOUSE QUIET GARDEN 80 WOODCOTE ROAD CAVERSHAM

This Quiet Garden is open on Thursday June 16th, Tuesday July 19th and Tuesday September 13th between 10am and 3pm for the chance to leave behind the hustle and bustle of life and to spend some time in stillness, reflection and quiet fellowship. It provides an opportunity to sit by the pond and be calmed by the sound of flowing water, to relax in the prayerful atmosphere of the thatched Summer house. The day is yours to pray, read, sew, paint, knit or sleep, if that is what you need.

For further information ring Leslie Maynerd on 0118 947 6067

MAPLEDURHAM SPRINGTIME QUIZ

We received a good number of entries for the Mapledurham Tower Appeal Fund Springtime Quiz. The standard of entries was very high. The names of the competitors who had all the correct answers were put into a hat for a draw, which took place at the end of the 11am service at St Margaret's, Mapledurham on Sunday 1st May. The winner was Mrs R Payne of Earley, and she has been sent a cheque for £50.

A copy of the quiz with answers, has been put up in St Margaret's and in St Peter's, on the cork boards at the back of the church.

Many thanks to everyone who took part in the quiz. It was very kind of you to support our appeal, and we're pleased to report that it raised at least £350.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

GOLDEN JUBILEE & RETIREMENT CELEBRATION OF FATHER JOHN ELLIS

St Michael's Church Sonning Common

In July Parish Priest Father John Ellis will be retiring and it will also be his Golden Jubilee – 50 years in the Priesthood. The parish will be celebrating the occasion by hosting several events for this popular priest. As well as a parish lunch and a presentation by the youth of the church, a flower festival will be held on June 17-19th. Several local organisations have kindly given donations or sponsored exhibits so it is hoped to have a spectacular display.

Flower Festival

St Michael's Church Sonning Common

Preview Evening Friday June 17th 7.30-10pm

£5 inc. glass of wine & refreshments

Saturday 18th 10.30-5.00pm £1

Sunday 19th 11.30-5.00pm £1

Thanksgiving Service at 4.30pm

NEWS FROM OUR LADY AND ST ANNE'S PARISH

A most interesting and enjoyable evening was had by all in the Cenacle meeting room at Our Lady and St Anne's Church on Friday 8th April.

Michael Naxton, a local resident and antique expert, enlightened, delighted and entertained a packed audience with his general knowledge and amusing stories about the world of antiques. Michael and the organising committee plan to build on the success of this evening by arranging an Antiques Road Show to be held in the autumn. All proceeds from the April event went towards the Gateway appeal, the fund set up to pay for the church extension and for building a church and medical centre at Mpoza in South Africa.



Photo: Kath Turner

Report by Rita Welch. Michael Naxton with some of his antiques.

Westminster Abbey Day of Prayer

(This is the third of three meditations given by the Irish priest, poet and philosopher, John O'Donohue. the first was published in our April issue and the second last month)

For his third meditation "The heartbreaking tenderness of God", John O'Donohue asked us to imagine ourselves in our favourite place. "Let God look at you. God looks at you with forgiveness, mercy, joy. Now look at yourself in the same way".

"The human journey is about awakening your heart and bringing it home. Re-baptise all your worst qualities. There are great adventures to be had – have them!" he went on.

"You can be great at the divine if you let go of yourself. Let God take you beyond anything you know. Let God's presence allow you to navigate beyond domestication. You can't fall out of God. When His presence becomes real, it's unknown what becomes possible. Who are you? You are part of the divine. Take nothing personally, least of all yourself. Risk all to become what you were created to become," he said.

John Donohue's book, "Anam Cara: spiritual wisdom from the Celtic world", is published by Bantam Books, price £8.99.

For details of next year's Day of Prayer, visit website: www.westminster-abbey.org

St Andrew's Healing Service Guild of St Raphael

Our next full Healing Service with the laying on of hands and anointing will be on Sunday June 12th at 6.30pm.

A Guild Service is held every month, usually the third Tuesday at 7.30pm, also with laying on of hands and anointing offered.

All are welcome at any of these services which are held at St Andrew's Church, Harrogate Road, Caversham.

Further information from June DeVille Branch Secretary of the Guild of St Raphael. Tel: 947 8452.

SUNDAY STARTERS' ANNIVERSARY

At Caversham Heights Methodist Church, on the corner of Highmoor Road and Woodcote Road, the Sunday Starters' Anniversary will take place on Sunday 26th June. The Sunday Starters will be leading the service on the theme of food. The preacher will be the Revd Dermot Thornberry. Afterwards there will be a Church Family BBQ in a church member's garden, where activities will include a rounders match, an opportunity for the children to learn how to toss pancakes, and a bring and buy stall. The Sunday Starters' charity for this year will be 'The Chiltern Centre for Disabled Children.'

THE REVD CANON DR MICHAEL KITCHENER

Older Caversham residents will remember Dr Michael Kitchener as Priest in Charge of Mapledurham between 1974 and 1977. We observe from the *Church Times* that he is relinquishing, presumably on retirement, his present posts as Canon Treasurer of Norwich Cathedral and Diocesan Director of Ordinands, positions he has occupied since 1999.

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

**PROVIDING A FAIR FORUM FOR
ELECTION CANDIDATES**



Our picture shows (from the left) Tony Page (Labour), Jan Lloyd (Independent), Bob White (Green), the Ven Norman Russell (Chairman), Rob Wilson (Conservative), John Howson (Lib Dem) David Lamb (UKIP) and Rex Hora (Independent).

It is now recognised that, each time there is a General Election, Churches Together in Reading can be relied upon to provide a fair platform for the Parliamentary Candidates to be questioned by the electorate. Thus just one week before Polling Day all the candidates in the Reading East Constituency lined up under the watchful eye of the chairman for the evening, the Ven Norman Russell, Archdeacon of Berkshire, before an audience of around 170 in a full Wycliffe Baptist Church. From questions sent before the start of the meeting the chairman picked seven subject areas and gave each candidate two minutes to state their own views and those of their party on the issues, working each time in a clock-wise direction and starting with the next in sequence.

After a month of electioneering and in an article that will be appearing in print almost a month after the election itself, it would seem pointless, other than for an historical record, to record the views of the six unsuccessful candidates or to hazard a guess, prior to the votes being cast, at the views of the successful one. The following topics were dealt with in a good tempered and courteous way by all the candidates without the need to engage in anything more than the mildest inter-party accusations in a non-abusive way. While to some this may seem an anodyne form of hustings, it was in marked contrast to much of what had been happening elsewhere under media scrutiny.

The first question challenged the candidates on their views on how to deal with the problems of poor countries, taking up the themes of MakePovertyHistory under the headings of aid, debt relief, Free Trade or FairTrade and the regulation of transnational companies. Then came questions on immigration and asylum seekers, specific reference being made to the case of failed Kosovan asylum seekers and alleged failures in the processes dealing with them. Mixed views emerged on the issue of lowering the permitted time for abortion, some preferring to rely on scientific advice, while others took a moral pro-life stance, blaming faulty parenting for the need for much of the abortion in the succeeding generation.

When quizzed on personal morality and public life and the expectation of candidates, honesty and integrity were aspired to rather than spin and evasion, but one candidate reminded the audience that the candidates are only human. On a question of the place of Faith Communities in public life, and whether the Government should co-operate more with them, it was generally agreed that voluntary groups have a large part to play and the contribution from Faith based schools was advantageous. The nature of the evening did not enable one candidate to get an answer to his question about what the church is trying to do in education. On the one hand the support of the voluntary sector by local government in Reading was trumpeted, whereas another maintained local government was getting in the way.

On the general areas of environment, housing and transport all were in favour of improvement but differed on how these improvements might be achieved. More low cost housing is a general priority. The final comment from the last candidate to speak emphasised that the stewardship of the planet is the next important task to be tackled. This was an issue that could not be evaded and it is one that pervades every area of public life.

One was left with the conclusion that here was a group of people all striving to serve their community, but with differing depths of experience and ability. What a wonderful world it would be if all their good ideas could be coalesced. As might be expected from a church based meeting the questions mainly centred on issues with a moral content; generally the candidates did not deal with, nor were they asked about, the big issues of the economy, health and education, attention to which has been drawn on the national stage. The more politically adept candidates did attempt to refer to these issues in other answers. The electors of East Reading will, by the time this is read, have made their judgement and we shall have a new MP whom the readers of *Caversham Bridge* will have to trust to look after the best interests of the nation and their constituents.

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TRIBUTES

Eva (Eve) Beatrice Pickersgill (nee Castle) 1923 - 2005

Eva (Eve) Pickersgill passed away on Sunday, 3rd April 2005 on her late husband Desmond's birthday. Eve and Des arrived in Caversham in 1948. Eve had been brought up in Nettlebed, the fifth child of a family of ten. Eve was a telephonist and worked at many exchanges in the area, always cycling from her home in Nettlebed. One of her vivid memories was of VE Day; she was on duty and all the lights on the switchboard lit up. Her supervisor told her just to watch as there was no way they could connect all the calls. She met Des and they were married in 1948 at Nettlebed Church. She joined Des in his typewriter repair business which they ran from a workshop at The Wheatheaf public house in Henley-on-Thames, naming it "Henley Typewriters".

In 1948 a teashop in Bridge Street, Caversham became available and they relocated the business, maintaining the name "Henley Typewriters" and running the business from the same premises for nearly 50 years until Des died in 1997. In the early days, Eve supported Des, who built the business up. In its heyday it employed four mechanics and two shop assistants. Eve looked after the clerical side of the business and also served in the shop, allowing Des to concentrate on the thing he loved doing best, repairing typewriters. Eve and Des had two daughters, Ann and Heather, and the family lived in a flat above the shop. Des's parents and sister lived in Bridge Street, his sister running a Sweet and Homemade Cake Shop called "Marianne".

Ann and Heather were both christened, confirmed and married at St Peter's Church. Des and Eve were well known by the local clergy. They looked after the typewriters and duplicators in the Parish Office and the previous incumbents, including Reverend Nash and Canon Grimwade, were frequent customers, as was the present incumbent, Canon Richard



Kingsbury.

Eve was well known in Caversham, especially in the latter years when she ran "Caversham Stationers", after "Henley Tyewriters" closed down because of Des's failing sight. She ran a photocopy service and was always in demand as her prices were well below anyone else's in the area. Many of the traders in Caversham today remember her kindness and willingness to do everything to help them with their businesses.

She had a deep care for animals. Apart from the family pets, Eve was always taking in strays and finding them homes. She used to care for swans on the river at

Caversham, always feeding them and helping any injured swan well before the swan-related charities came into existence. She could never bear to see any creature in pain and was always there for them.

When Des died, she regrettably had to leave her beloved shop, and moved to Wordsworth Court, Emmer Green. She attended the Day Care Centre at Albert Road where she made lots of friends and enjoyed several years of retirement. Eve loved her family and nothing pleased her more than to be surrounded by her daughters and grandsons. Even then she was still active, helping her daughter Ann with the Sue Ryder Home reception at Nettlebed. When Eve was a child, the Fleming family owned the house and estate which was called "Joyce Grove". Her father, George, was Head Gardener. She was able to tell many visitors to the home stories about the house that she remembered from her childhood. Eve was also active helping a local operatic society with their box office.

Eve loved Caversham and saw many changes during her time but, in the last year of her life, nothing would give her greater pleasure than going into Caversham and meeting all her old customers from her shop in Bridge Street.

William John Harris (Bill) 1929 - 2005

Bill was born in Reading but was brought up and lived all his life in Caversham, apart from when he was away doing National Service.

He was a man of many interests who never did anything by halves: a devoted family man, a committed Christian, a skilled craftsman, a cricketer, a bowler, chairman of Caversham West Boys' Club, a National Trust volunteer. This may explain why so many people packed into St Peter's Church on the afternoon of Tuesday 12th April to celebrate and give thanks for Bill's life.

On leaving school Bill became an apprentice carpenter under his father's tutelage, working first for FT Robinson. He then moved to Collier and Catley and, after a time, went on to become a shopfitter for Reginald Haynes. He then spent over twenty years working for the Department of the Environment and was promoted to Clerk of Works.

In 1958 Bill met Sylvia in the Fox and Hounds in Gosbrook Road (despite its name a venue for the cricket team and its supporters). They married in 1961 and, sadly, Bill died suddenly the day before their 44th wedding anniversary.

Bill was a member of Caversham Cricket Club for over forty years, first as a player and then as an umpire, and introduced his two sons, William and Robert, to the game. He was also a keen bowler, both the indoor and outdoor game, playing for Heelas Bowling Club, the Masonic Bowling Club, Palmer Park Bowling Club and Caversham Bowling Club, where he helped to install a new bar in the clubhouse.

In a moving tribute given by his fellow Mason Roger



Seward, Bill was described as a good friend and an exemplary Freemason. He belonged to the Shiplake Lodge for 26 years, was chairman twice, secretary for seven years and, as almoner, checked on the welfare of members and their families. In addition, he was associated with 18 other lodges. He was on the Building Management Committee and often, maintenance jobs had been attended to before the ink was dry on the minutes of the meeting.

Bill died as he had lived, giving freely of his time and talents. He and Sylvia were volunteers for the National Trust at Basildon Park and it was there, whilst on duty, that he passed away. Sylvia plans to continue with this work on which they embarked together.

Bill's first priority was always Sylvia and their family. He was proud of their two sons and daughter Catherine and of their four grandchildren who called him Grandad Hammer, for it seemed that he always had a hammer in his hand!

Throughout his life Bill served St Peter's Church, as a choirboy, a server, a verger. Only two years ago it was reported in the Bridge that Bill, Sylvia and their friend Maurice Johnson had undertaken the refurbishment of Church House (see March issue 2003). In his modest way, Bill described this mammoth task as 'doing a few jobs for the church'. Revd Canon Richard Kingsbury paid warm tribute to Bill and his committee of two and estimated that they had saved the church at least £20,000. He described how Bill had made a vision into a reality and said that future generations would be grateful to him. What a memorial!

Our sympathy goes to Sylvia and the family.



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HAPPY WANDERER

Sweet Flags

Because it doesn't grow where I grew up, I assumed for years that the sweet flag was an uncommon plant, and even after moving to Caversham, it took me a year or so to learn that those leaves growing by the side of the Thames near Reading Bridge weren't flag irises that didn't flower, but sweet flags.

Unlike the irises, the edges of the leaves of sweet flags tend to crinkle slightly, here and there, but the difference becomes much more obvious when the plant flowers. A green spadix, or fleshy spike of tiny flowers, sticks out of the vertical leaves at an odd angle in June and July, but the plant only flowers here and there, so you may have to take a good look to find a spadix. The plant is related to the cuckoo pint, or lords-and-ladies, but unlike its cousin, there is no spathe, or sheath-like leaf round the spadix. Another diagnostic test, of course, is to break a little piece off and sniff.

The illustration is taken from John Gerard's *Herbal*, first published in 1597, at which time the sweet flag was a fairly recent introduction to Britain.

It was introduced from Turkey, and was actually planted in marshy areas as a crop, especially in



the Norfolk Broads. High prices were paid for "gladdon," as it was called in that part of the country. It was used to carpet the floors of the city churches and the cathedral in Norwich, and Cardinal Wolsey spent lavishly on importing "Norfolk sweet flag" for the floors of his London residences.

Nearer home, in 1685, John Evelyn reported in his diary that the lakes at Swallowfield were planted with it – "all flag'd about with *Calamus aromaticus*." It was gathered and hung in closets in the house to keep them smelling sweet.

If you don't know the plant, it's worth seeking when you're out for a wander, and gathering the odd leaf and crushing it to release the perfume, which is somewhere between vanilla and orange peel. Even if you do know it, it's good to remind yourself of it, a pleasant experience. The aromatic oils are particularly concentrated in the roots, which have been candied and eaten as sweetmeats, and they have been used in medicine, or so I have read. However, do not pull it up, and whatever you do, please be careful, because it always grows with its roots in water, and the Thames is very deep, even near the bank, in places!

Happy Wanderer

An Evening with a Difference

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The South Chiltern Choral Society will present at their Summer Concert a wonderful journey through songs from 25 musicals, from John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* of 1728 to today via well-loved favourites from shows including *The Mikado*, *Merric England*, *The Merry Widow*, *Rose Marie*, *The Threepenny Opera*, *Me and My Gal*, *Oklahoma*, *Annie Get Your Gun*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *My Fair Lady*, *West Side Story*, *Oliver*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Cats*, all arranged by Gwyn Arch, the Society's conductor.

The soloists will be David Allard (tenor) Libby Reeves (soprano) and George Tinsley (baritone and linkman) and the orchestra will be under the baton of Trevor Defford.

The concerts take place in The Great Hall of the University of Reading, London Road at 5pm and 8pm on Saturday 2nd July. There will be plenty of time for picnics in between in the lovely grounds.

For further information please ring Michele Whitehead on 01491 578 641.

And a Weekend with a Difference

Reading Abbey Rugby Club present their fourth Music Festival at their Rosehill Grounds, just North of Emmer Green on the B481, over the weekend of Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th June 2005

Saturday's event, which runs from noon till midnight, features an eclectic mix of music for all the family, including Glen Tilbrook (from Squeeze); Bohemians (Queen tribute); Nayfumble (Folk); Bird (Jazz Soul); Naked Apes (Pop Punk); Paperadio (Rock); Don Mescall (Middle of Road); The Skangsters (Reggae); The Storys (Country Rock) plus Acoustic Stage. A relaxed day out for the whole family with funfair, BBQ, hog roast, real ale tent and a variety of stalls to support the melodious extravaganza, set in 22 acres of beautiful Oxfordshire countryside.

Part of the proceeds of the day will be donated to

Sue Ryder Hospice in Nettlebed. More details on www.abbeyrfc.org or Tel: 0772 561 3761.

Sunday's *New Rock Fallacy*, runs from 1pm until 9pm, bringing the best British underground rock and metal to Berkshire in a Rock 'n' Roll fuelled day of music, featuring: Main stage: Biffy Clyro; Capdown; Sikth; Skindred; Oceansize; Million Dead; Reuben; Twin Zero; Exit Ten. Plus 2nd stage. With BBQ, real ale tent and funfair.

More details on www.bukandskit.com

Tickets for both may be obtained from Sound Machine, Harris Arcade, Reading and www.wegotickets.com

THE CLUBS

St Peter's Wives Group

At our April meeting Rosina Marsh entertained us with a talk and readings entitled 'An Evening with Joyce Grenfell'. As an art teacher, Mrs Marsh was once told, when 'encouraging' her students to tidy up quickly at the end of a lesson, that she sounded just like Joyce Grenfell - which gave her the idea for her talks and readings.

Mrs Marsh started her entertainment with a reading of 'Free Activity Period' - part of a 1944 radio series. This was incorporated into a book by Joyce Grenfell called 'How to talk to Children', which was dedicated to all who cope in nursery schools.

She was half-American, her mother was a sister of Nancy Astor and people like Noel Coward and Stephen Potter were frequent visitors to their home. Even as a child, Joyce enjoyed entertaining her family and friends. However, she started working life as a journalist and worked for a time at Punch before becoming an entertainer. She took part in ENSA concerts around the world during the war and in various radio shows, for which she wrote the lyrics of many of the songs.

After the war Joyce Grenfell went into films, namely St Trinians and The Happiest Days of Your Life, where she took on the memorable characters of Miss Gossage and Policewoman Gates. She married her husband, Reggie, at 19 and her humour was family fun - always clever, witty and never smutty. For this she was loved, respected and applauded and was much missed when she died in 1979. Maureen Lipman has since revived her memory in re-runs of her shows.

Rosina Marsh finished her entertainment by reading us an amusing account of a nursery class telling a story - with such well-known characters as Lavinia, George, Neville and Sidney - to gales of laughter from our members.

Our next meeting will be on June 21, when we will be visiting Tony Roberts' garden and model railway at 12 The Ridgeway.

Caversham Community Association

April started with the usual games evening, followed by a popular bingo session with prizes on the theme of Spring. The Club's 54th birthday was celebrated with a party which also celebrated St George's day, at which members wore red roses and had a sing-song with energetic flag waving. Members enjoyed a delicious meal of ham or salmon salad followed by creamy gateaux. The evening ended with the raffle and wine or juice and a slice of Wendy Colton's lovely cake. Down to earth at the end of the month with the AGM, at which the chairman, Mrs Briggs, gave her review of the past year's activities and the treasurer, Mrs Waite, presented the accounts. Although the finances look healthy, there are continued worries over the escalating rent for the room. The officers and committee were all re-elected and members look forward to another interesting year.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The April meeting of the Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild began with the presentation of the Chairman's Badge of Office to Mrs H Holloway by the retiring Chairman Mrs M Pocock with all good wishes for a happy year.

The groups then gave their reports, a film viewed by the Arts and Crafts (complete with dishes of popcorn), an afternoon discussing 'Words', appropriately at the Words and Music meeting, with some very amusing spoonerisms quoted, and a lovely day's outing to Wisley Gardens by the gardening group. Visits to an arboretum at Nuneham Courtenay and an outing to Bath are planned for the coming months and an afternoon of Elgar scheduled for the end of April. A full report of the Federation meeting was

given with the prospect of a Thames Cruise to look forward to.

The speaker for the evening was Anne Byard from Thrive, Gardening For Therapy. The charity was started by Dr Geoffrey Udall, later the Rev Udall. He was a paediatrician who later entered the Priesthood and realised the tremendous therapeutic effect that gardening had on the disabled, the sick and those recovering from accidents and depression. Although it is a national charity, with gardens in Hackney and Battersea, its base is local at Beech Green as the Rev Udall bequeathed his house and estate at Trunkwell for this purpose. Here there is a fifty acre walled garden and around one hundred people of all ages attend each week. Work is done in conjunction with Help The Aged and the RNIB and Thrive is hoping to launch a competition for the "Blind Gardener Of The Year"! Everything connected with horticulture is covered from making compost to flower arranging. Volunteers are trained to help elderly folk who are unable to cope with their own gardens and advice is given on the available tools and methods of working to assist them. A Tool Bank has specialist tools and information on their use and where to obtain them. Newsletters are sent out regularly and help and advice are readily available. Chiltern Edge School has set up a sensory garden with the advice of Thrive and work is also done with Addington and Loddon Schools. An open day is planned on 25th June, 11.00am-5.00pm when all will be welcomed to see the good work being done. Mrs M Pocock gave the vote of thanks.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

The Club is holding a flower demonstration by Gwen Hancock entitled "All kinds of everything" at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Rd, Caversham on Wednesday 8th June starting at 7.30pm, doors open at 7.00pm Entrance fee is £4.00 for visitors and £3.00 for senior citizens. The club meets on the second Wednesday of every month and welcomes all those who love flowers and all things horticultural. On Wednesday 15th June, the club is going on a day trip to Longstock Water Gardens, which will include a stop at White Windows Garden and a visit to Longstock Nurseries. The coach leaves Caversham Heights Methodist Church at 9.30am. Further details from Berna Macdonald.

Probus

The Reading and District Probus Club were taken aback when the speaker Reece Davies introduced his talk about Bert Harris, who was born in Monmouthshire, and whose great, great grandfather was a soap maker, going into partnership with a wine merchant! (Was this the start of 'Bubbly'?!)

Bert was a grammar school boy who became a farmer in Rhodesia and enlisted in the Africa Corps, returning to England to set up an aircraft squadron to protect London. By 1939 he was a Group Captain in the RAF (the penny dropped!). Bert was to become known eventually as Bomber Harris. With only 44 aircraft his missions then were restricted to the Western front but with his persistence this increased to over 40,000; that is when he got his name as 'Bomber', though acting on orders from the Air Council.

Harris was a great man, a leader, with humanity towards the crews with whom he made regular visits. The speaker spoke from personal experience.

This was truly a very informative history of a man and his time, which was much appreciated by the Probus members, who responded with personal observations and questions.

The Probus Club was sponsored by the Rotarians, and is for men of all ages who have retired, meeting once a month for lunch and a talk by an invited speaker. Interested? Give Ray Head, the Secretary, a ring on 0118 941 1445.

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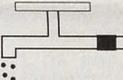
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