

WOODLAND OPEN DAY

In the beautiful setting of the summer-green fields and woods at Clayfield Copse it was a day for families! The recreation ground was filled with people enjoying the sunshine and Friends of Clayfield Copse's Woodland Day. There were 30 stalls and crafts, all related to woodland and wildlife, there were 14 guided walks, dog competitions, horses working in the woods, a display by birds of prey, and all kinds of activities for children. Teas in the marquee, hot dogs at the bar-b-q, musicians to entertain, red kites circling

overhead and a mysterious green man!

At the end of the day, the Copse was back to its peaceful self - then at 9 pm, 60 people arrived to go on the bat walk! And at 4.30 the next morning 6 nature lovers came to listen to the dawn chorus!

Do you know, at least two people said they had lived round here for 20 years and not visited this site!!!

It was worth all the six months, and more, of hard work if at least two more people now know about this special piece of countryside on our town boundary and will begin to enjoy it; worth it too to see so many happy family groups having a day in the fresh air; the two young lads with charcoal smudged faces working so hard at the charcoal display, the emotion of a lady on seeing the working horses, [she remembers working with such horses herself] the excitement of the children hearing the bats, and many, many more happy memories.

The day was free, thanks to grants from the Local Heritage Initiative Fund, Emmer Green Residents' Association and Reading Children's Festival plus support from Reading Borough Council's Parks Department and it was run entirely by local volunteers.

As it is the year of the volunteer, and May being the month of environmental volunteers, this was a particularly suitable event, and we volunteers hope more of you out there will feel you can contribute your time to ensuring days like this can continue and that this very special 'town meets

country' site will stay as a natural open space for many years to come.

We are back to work on the first Sunday of the month, 10am in the car park. See you there? Contact 948 4454.



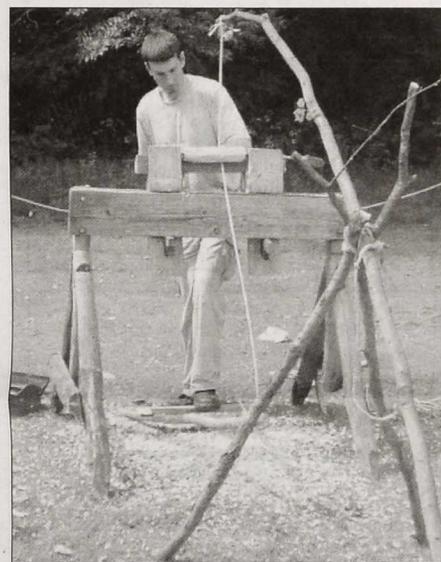
European Eagle Owl - part of the Cotswold Falconry Centre Display.

O. Jewiss



Children helping to make nest boxes at the RSPB display.

O. Jewiss



Wood turner Andrew Noyes on his eco-friendly lathe.

O. Jewiss



Wheelwright Ted Fox.

O. Jewiss

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is according to the latest information provided
to this paper).

St Andrew's Church -
Mrs V Vincent - 947 7644

St Barnabas Church -
Mrs P Fuller - 946 1945

St Peter's Church -
John Madeley - 947 6063

Caversham Heights Methodist -
Pam and Phil Chatfield - 947 2444

Our Lady and St Anne's -
Mrs C Palmer - 947 3117

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The *Caversham Bridge* is your paper,
providing a link between the churches
and the community.

Contributions are welcomed if they
are relevant to community matters or
church life. Copy should be kept short,
typed in double spacing if possible and
with a word count. Copy dates are given
in the paper each month and copy
should be handed in at the Parish Office
at Church House, Church Street,
Caversham. The office is open 9.30 -
12.30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and
Thursdays. Please note the Editors
reserve the right to edit copy if
necessary.

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you do not regularly subscribe to the
paper and would like to do so, please
contact Mark Staunton on 947 2389.

TALKING POINT

By

Canon Richard Kingsbury

NO SUCH PLACE AS CAVERSHAM?

'It's a real village community'
'It's on the way to the Crematorium'
'It's a highly sought-after residential area'
'It's where Queen Anne's School is'
'It's just a suburb of Reading'
'It's full of foreign spies working for the BBC'

Two of these things 'they' say about Caversham are true (only one, if you approach the Crem from the east). The rest are part of the fabric of fantasies we like to weave about where we live. What do the residents of Amersham Road, Shepherds Lane and The Ridings have in common? The postcode RG4. But so do Dunsden and Chazey Heath. Is that all that gives 'Caversham' an identity - a share of a postcode? Oh, and a new Tory MP, though his constituency is 'Reading East'. Caversham hasn't got a mayor or a parish council, but we've got at least six primary schools, four post offices, at least four shopping 'centres', three health centres, three golf courses, enough exotic eateries and take-aways to satisfy all but the weirdest of tastes, estate agents galore, and, looking on the bright side, a burgeoning range of charity shops. As for churches and clergy, just look at the list on this page. If Caversham's still a *village*, which one of us is the village idiot?

From the top of the Peppard Road slope, doesn't it feel distinctly *Emmer Green*? On a good day, the cluster of Closes and Drives still encourages you to call it Caversham Park *Village*. And leafy avenues of Betjamenesque mock-tudor almost excuse residents for their neo-gothic 'Caversham Heights' letter-headings. The area covered by this newspaper isn't a seamless garment; it's a patchwork quilt. That's why it's a good place to live in. We're spared the uniformity of a one-off new town. Kafka must have envisioned Milton Keynes in his struggle to escape from a nightmare. Dawdle in an award-winning 'Prettiest Dorset Village', and you can imagine the local watch-committee frogmarching you off their patch for having your shirt untucked.

Caversham's like Topsy. It just 'grows'. There's a diversity in the mini-communities we lump under a 30,000 'Caversham' umbrella. If autumn's *Caversham Community Festival* can reflect, not a regimented suburb but a network of glorious differences, then it will be a success. July's WOMAD weekend pulsates with the dances of life. At WOMAD, Churches Together In Caversham will have a presence. CTC's pitch will show how Caversham folk are involved in God's life-dance - our involvement with people in Africa, Asia, and, yes, in this variety we call 'Caversham'.

It's a rare treat to find someone born and bred in Caversham. We're more of a transit camp. I can drive around Caversham any day and see furniture vans shipping folk out and in. That's why I enjoy living here. Far from the white-collar commuters' dormitory I anticipated when I arrived a mere 22 years ago, Caversham's proved to be a delightful hotch-potch of cultures, creeds and colours.

I asked one of the gentlemen-of-the-road, who regularly lean on the Rectory doorbell for a handout: 'Why do you keep coming back to Caversham? What's wrong with the rest of Reading?'

'Well now,' he said in broad Irish brogue, running his hand through a recently acquired greying Afro hairstyle, 'Tis a fact, over the bridge here, folks don't hassle me. I can be myself here.'

I know the feeling. Long may we celebrate our God-given differences. I've not found another place such as Caversham for generous acceptance, where you can 'do your own thing'. And I'll miss it, when I'm taken off to the eventide rest-home for nutty parsons.

A plague upon conformity! Vivent les differences!

Canon Richard Kingsbury is Rector of St Peter's Caversham
and St Margaret's Mapledurham

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the August 2005 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 6th July. The date for submission of items for the September 2005 issue will be Wednesday 27th July 2005.

All advertising copy for the August 2005 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobbey, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 5th July 2005. For the September 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday 26th July 2005.

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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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BAPTIST

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ROMAN CATHOLIC

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Tel: 947 1787

Fr John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common

Tel: 972 3418

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev H R Gayle Tel: 945 3849 (contact)

SUNDAY SERVICES**ANGLICAN****St Peter's, 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

The Eucharist

6.30pm Evening Prayer (as announced)

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

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

8.00am Holy Communion

10.00am Family Communion (apart

from 2nd Sunday)

10.00am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)

Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)

All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.30am Prospect Street

6.30pm Usually at 191 Kidmore Road

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL, Old Peppard Road

10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church

6.30pm Prayer Meeting

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Methodist Church (Gosbrook Road)

10.30am and 6.30pm

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am and 6.30pm

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

Saturday 5.30pm,

Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm

Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers),

Church Street, Reading

10.30am

(House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham

9.30am Sunday School

11.00am Divine Worship

6.00pm Evening Service

YOUTH

News from St Martin's

In the Catholic Church, May is the month of Mary. May has always been the season of new life. In Greek culture it was dedicated to Artemis, the goddess of new life, and in Roman times to Flora, the goddess of flowers. In the Middle Ages, both Mary and the month of May were celebrated on specific days; gradually the whole of May became dedicated to Mary.

The crowning of a statue of Mary with a crown of flowers has taken place for many years in most Catholic countries. Before World War II it became a very lavish performance in churches in this country with a "Queen" who performed the crowning, cushion bearers, flower girls and little page boys all dressed up to the nines. The dressing up was a victim of the period of austerity after the war.

At St Martin's, a special assembly was held in May and a statue of Our Lady was placed at the front of the hall surrounded by flowers and candles. The children read pieces about Mary, hymns were sung and Father Ellis spoke about some of the titles given to Mary. Then two children carried a cushion bearing a crown made of small white garden flowers and placed the crown on the statue.

Older Catholics may recall the singing of "Oh Mary, we crown thee with blossoms today, Queen of the Angels and Queen of the May". Let us hope that these youngsters will have equally fond memories of this ceremony in the years to come.

Jane Shaw Cushion Bearers with crown.

- Jane Shaw



St Anne's School



- Photo by St Anne's School

St Anne's children with animals.

In May, the children took part in a Save the Children Friendship Band Day. That is, Band as in wrist not brass. St Anne's established a web-link with a school in Pakistan and received a great deal of information about the school. The wrist bands which the children made during the day became part of a display and the images will be uploaded on to the charity's web site for all to see.

Also in May, Millers' Ark Farm brought animals and birds to the school and the children were able to hold and pet the creatures. The children learned about the different breeds of animals and how their coats can be used but, more interesting to them, was the information that one of the young goats was an accomplished escape artist. Did anyone notice the Washington Road Goat Chase?

Norman Shaw

89th Reading Scout Group

The 89th Reading (Milestone Wood) Scout Group are now able to resume meetings of the Scout Troop on Wednesday evenings. The Group has been able to restart the Troop with the support of leaders from across the District on a rota basis. It is hoped that over the Summer break we will be able to recruit a permanent Scout Leader for the start back in September.

The Group has a new Group Scout Leader, Nic Drew. Nic was a Cub, Scout and Venture Scout at the 89th and more recently has been Venture Scout Leader and Scout Leader.

The Group's AGM will be on Wednesday 20th July 2005 at 7.30pm. All parents and children are invited to attend.

If you know of anyone who wants to become a Scout Leader, please get in contact. Similarly if you know any children who would like to join Scouts, please also contact Nic Drew on 947 2730 or nic@pjdrew.co.uk.



- Sandy Onofrio

The children proudly display their decorated and filled boxes.

PRE-SCHOOLERS HELP THE HOMELESS

To tie in with the end of the children's topic - Countries & Cultures around the World - and also World Wide Food Day, the youngsters at Caversham Park Pre-School decorated and filled shoeboxes with foreign food items and donated them to Reading Single Homeless Project.

For further info call Sandy on 0118 947 1989.

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From the Lookout Post

BY EX LIBRIS

Don't even think of going there! These were the sage words of advice from a local councillor when I said I was thinking about looking at transport in Caversham. Certainly in my experience anything to do with cars, parking and public transport is certain to arouse strong opinions and even stronger emotions. So here goes!

ON YOUR BIKE

Since we retired, in a bid to be environmentally friendly, enjoy the countryside and lose a few pounds, my wife and I have taken to our bikes. Rather tentatively, at first, we explored our immediate area. We took to cycling using as many paths and back roads as possible, and apart from a short stretch along the old Peppard Road, past the Hill School, we were pretty successful. We then discovered the joys of dedicated cycle routes. We could go most of the way along the Henley Road by cycle route and then passing through Caversham Park village, along Milestone Way, we were back at the Emmer Green shops. There are also enjoyable off road rides scattered throughout Caversham and generally it is a pleasurable experience. Caversham does not have the most bike-friendly environment, but there is some worthwhile provision for cyclists. It is always wise to lock your bike to something solid and there are good bike stands outside the library. The railings outside Waitrose are also fine... It is best to use a decent lock and remember not to leave anything parked in Reading that you could not bear to part with (yes, this applies to other things too!).

The bike/bus lane in Hemdean Road is handy as are the paths along the Thames in and through Christchurch Meadows: the recently surfaced path from Gosbrook Road is very useful. There is of course the bike lane over Caversham Bridge that forms part of the National Cycle Network. The worst bits of Caversham are probably the dreadful mini roundabout outside Waitrose and the recent narrowing of Church Street that will squeeze timid cyclists. Don't ride in the gutter unless you wish to invite motors to squeeze past you). You can get a map of cycle facilities in the town from the Council.

Improvements to cycle facilities are promised as a result of the "North Area Access Study", but the study as yet contains few firm proposals: the aforesaid mini roundabout will no doubt be examined and we can but hope for a real improvement there. There is a proposal for a pedestrian/cyclist bridge over the Thames from Christchurch Meadows into what will probably be the New Reading Station complex. Funding for all this seems a little vague.

Reading Cycle Campaign is a local interest group dedicated to making the town a more cycle friendly place: contact details below.

Caversham is a great place to start a bike ride. There are the Thames and Kennet towpaths to explore and heading north you are soon in country lanes. Reading CTC organises rides for all tastes every Wednesday evening and on Sundays.

National Cycle Network: www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk or 0845 113 0065
Reading CTC: www.readingctc.co.uk or 0118 986 2763

Cycling map: Reading Borough Council www.reading.gov.uk or
<http://www.reading.gov.uk/Documents/cycling/Cyclemap.pdf> (long download)

Reading Cycle Campaign www.readingcyclecampaign.org.uk or 0845 330 2543

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

If you think you have any ideas for improving local facilities, it is always a good step to talk to your local councillors who are only too happy to listen to your suggestions. Cllr Steve Waite specifically asked that I should mention this. I have always found it helpful and useful to keep up a dialogue with our elected representatives. In this way we can learn why decisions have been made and they can test the waters of public opinion. It is especially important at this time to take a look at the North Area Access Plan. This is a major look at the whole of Caversham, its parking facilities, whether to have park and rides, public transport, cycle routes etc. There are several possible implications. Not least is the introduction of the one way system round Prospect Street and Westfield Road. I have been given to believe that another serious contender is that the bridges could become one way. I have no intention of giving my views of these issues here, there is just not enough space. I would like to think however that this could stimulate the debate and help those who have the final say come to a decision which has broad public approval.

AND THEN ON THE BUSES

I cannot waffle on without at least one gripe, however, and at least one resident in Emmer Green has complained about the state of some of the footpaths. Once again I took to my bike to check this out and certainly on corners where there has been damage, the repairs are insufficient. On one corner for example the 44 bus has to hit the curb and HGVs cause further damage, the temporary looking tarmac is splitting and it certainly looks as if it could lead to a serious incident. I also checked with the Council about the lack of any public transport on Sundays for a significant part of Caversham. The No 9 bus soon to be upgraded to the new PREMIER service still does not run on Sundays. Since it does run from the town centre in the other direction I wonder how much would be needed to make extending the run a viable option. I have to say that on the whole the public transport around Caversham seems pretty adequate. I still think that there should be a service from the Henley Road area into the village centre and I have for long advocated a circular Caversham route

LOCAL HERO

Few people use their bikes more and know Caversham better from a cyclist's point of view than our postmen. Ours is no exception, except that he is an

exception! He is Andrew Breakspear who has been a postman for 28 years and for the last 15 years has delivered in our area. In December 2003 he became ill with acute myeloid leukaemia. It was a shock to all who knew him. He not only braved the elements to deliver our post, as indeed all our postmen do, but I would often see him in the afternoons running along the Thames towpaths and I discovered he was a keen marathon runner. It is now a year since his painful and extensive treatment finished. He still needs to have check ups every 3 months but all is going well. Andrew has asked that I should pass on his thanks to all the residents who live in the Grosvenor and Derby Roads area. Many sent him get well wishes whilst he was in hospital and I know this helped him considerably. In his own words "I would like to thank you all very much". Take care Andrew.



Andrew Breakspear

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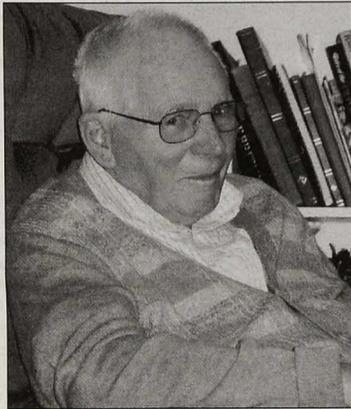
TRIBUTE

KENNETH JOHN NICHOLLS

25 June 1930 - 1 May 2005

With the death of Ken Nicholls Caversham lost another senior resident who has rendered great service to the local Church and the community. Although born in Ealing, he moved to Lindfield near Haywards Heath at the age of five where his mother bought a general shop and Ken became familiar with country life; he looked after the school pig, worked on farms and in nursery gardens. Travelling by train to school in Lewes was the start of two very long associations: at the age of 14 he met Jean, whom he subsequently married in 1952 and who now survives him; at the age of 16 he left school to work with the Great Western Railway at Paddington and remained a railway man for nearly 40 years.

His career took him to Neath, Swansea, the British Railways Board in Marylebone, Liverpool Street, Euston, Paddington (again), Swindon and finally Reading. His interest in trains continued after early retirement in 1985; he attended as many of the retired railwaymen's gatherings as possible and became treasurer of the Western Region Retirement Association, as a result of which he was pleased to be invited to numerous Christmas lunches across the Western Region. Ken shared his love of railways with his son Peter, enjoyed overseas Railway Conventions and visiting daughters Susan and Sally on numerous occasions when they were living abroad. Although restricted by Parkinson's Disease he fulfilled his ambition last summer to travel on Eurostar to Paris and to make a day trip to Brighton by train, events that gave him much pleasure.



Ken had been an active member of St John's Church after arriving in Caversham in 1961. Since then he had been sidesman and bell ringer, churchwarden, treasurer, PCC secretary and church gardener and, with Cyril Badger, was instrumental in installing heating in St John's. With the whole family he was a regular at the 9.15 am service and, until the Forsyte Saga took over, he went to Evensong.

After retirement Ken became Parish Clerk of Eye and Dunsden Parish Council and one of the Trustees of Caversham Hall, as well as pursuing his other hobbies; these included vegetable gardening, which produced enough harvest to feed the five thousand, cooking, bird watching and a love of classical and Welsh music. It was also at this stage in life that he learnt to drive the car that enabled him to reach those parts inaccessible by train. He was always interested in current affairs and geography and had a wealth of information at his fingertips which he was able to pass on easily to anyone who needed it.

Ken was known to everyone as a kind and generous gentleman, a family man throughout who kept in close touch with his immediate family and his wider family in this country and overseas. On behalf of its readers Caversham Bridge extends sympathy to his widow, Jean, daughters Susan and Sally and son Peter and the three granddaughters. This tribute reflects that given by daughter Susan at his funeral in St John's Church in mid-May.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editors,

I refer to the article on page 4 of the May issue written by "Ex Libris".

It states that it looks as if the No 9 bus service from the Heights to Shinfield is going to be upgraded with new single decker buses and time of arrival displayed at some stops. This move to upgrade buses and information is all very well but there are lower tech improvements that could be made at lower cost.

For instance, on the No 9 route from Caversham Library up to and around Caversham Heights there are only two "pretend" bus shelters. The one adjacent to Rectory Road can hardly be described as a shelter. On a very narrow pavement where waiting passengers can be sprayed by passing motorists in wet weather, this has to be shared with the 45 service. Frequently, passengers queue well out beyond the limits of the short roof.

The only other shelter on this long route is in Albert Road at the junction with Highmoor Road. This is also frequently inadequate for the number of passengers. It is no encouragement to wait in inclement weather at the other completely open bus stops. Why on earth can't we have bus shelters instead of glitzy new buses?

Equally unsatisfactory is the appalling state of many of our local roads. Albert Road is a good, or should I say bad, example. Riding along this is like being conveyed along a dried up river bed in a jeep. This badly maintained road causes much discomfort to elderly passengers and must cause excessive wear and tear on the buses. This is only one example but there are many more.

When buses are late, or, as on occasion, they fail to arrive at all, "traffic" is the standard excuse. Whilst this is true to some extent much of it is caused by the Council allowing the parking of vehicles on both sides of roads. We should adopt the American/Canadian system whereby vehicles are allowed to park on one side of the road only on even date days and on the other on odd date days. Any transgressors are immediately towed away to a pound with a hefty charge for release. A typical example where this needs to be implemented

immediately is Priest Hill which is a dreadful obstacle course for bus drivers. I suggested this to the Council two or three years ago but it was rejected immediately with no reason given.

It would be interesting to know of other readers' views on these aspects of the bus service at the Heights.

Yours truly,
A E Lott

Dear Sirs

I may be naïve but I was always under the impression that the aims of Christian Aid (front cover May issue) were to provide basic education, water and the needs of those less fortunate than ourselves, in order to "make poverty history".

Where then do Computers figure in this equation? Not a "basic" need surely.

Yours faithfully
S Taylor (Mrs)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Langtree Sinfonia present a Concert with Talk and Musical Illustrations on Wednesday July 6th 2005 at 7.30pm at Langtree School, Woodcote.

The programme consists of the 1st Symphony by Sergie Bortkiewicz and will be introduced and conducted by Paul Cox. Tickets £5.00 (Children £2.00) at the door or from 0118 941 5498.

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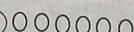
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A MAYORAL YEAR – Looking Back

In May of this year, Caversham resident Richard Stainthorp completed one of the most memorable years of his life – as Reading's Mayor. He has passed on just a few of the moments that will stay with him for a very long time, both good and, occasionally, embarrassing!

Most anticipated moment

One of Richard's last acts in office was to open the newly revamped Forbury Gardens. This was the culmination of many years of planning, with which he had been involved right from the beginning as a member of the Planning Committee.

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Despite suffering from a bug picked up abroad he was able to fulfil his ambition of finally re-opening those wonderful iron gates. He says he was most struck by the appearance of the Maiwand Lion, which has had many layers of paint stripped away and just one thin layer newly applied. This shows off to perfection all the details of the sculpture and makes the statue a fitting centrepiece to the gardens.

An ambition realised

Having been involved since the beginning with the Friends of San Francisco Libre, on the 10th anniversary of the Friendship Link Richard was finally able to visit the town. This was an eye-opener, as it is a very poor area compared to the rich areas of the capital Managua, which he was also able to visit. While in San Francisco Libre, he looked at the education system – it was the first place in Nicaragua to achieve 100% literacy after the Sandinistas took power. It sounds impressive, and there are obstacles to overcome, such as the long distances that children must cover to get to school; to help, the Friends have purchased bicycles, provided scholarships to allow children to stay on at school longer and sponsored vocational training back in the UK.

A promise kept

At the beginning of his Mayoral year, Richard pledged to visit every primary school in the Borough of Reading, taking an assembly and meeting the children and staff. A long-term resident, rather than a native, of Reading, he felt that it would be an opportunity to talk to primary-age children

Most poignant moment

During this year, you will remember the dreadful train crash at Ufton Nervet. The moving service of remembrance and the reception that followed for those involved (relatives, survivors, members of the emergency services) was attended by the Countess of Wessex. Richard took the Countess from group to group, introducing her to each and was touched by the time spent and trouble taken with each, truly making a difference.

Most embarrassing moment

Richard very generously shared a true foot-in-mouth experience. The radio station, Reading 107fm, had organised a charity day, Give a Child a Chance, where employees were urged to take £1 to work to donate to charity. The mayor, along with some other dignitaries, was to be taken round to a number of workplaces to collect the donations and acknowledge their generosity. He arrived at the radio station and was whisked straight in to be interviewed live, without the usual preparation. One of Richard's pet hates is stretch limousines – on purely aesthetic grounds – so when informed that he was being taken around in one such vehicle, being totally unprepared he let forth a stream of not very complimentary comments on the said vehicles! He hastily had to backtrack and apologise to the radio station and limousine company involved, and explain that it was nothing to do with the drivers or the service provided, but he really just didn't like stretch limos. The (hired) mayoral Jaguar was pressed into service instead!

Lasting impressions

Throughout the year, there was a feeling of pride at having been chosen to represent the people of Reading in such a wide-ranging role. Richard is grateful that he was given the opportunity to meet so many people doing so many wonderful things for others, and also attend so many events that otherwise he wouldn't have done – the variety of Reading's artistic and cultural life was also a revelation. Above all, he experienced a huge sense of community; truly a memorable year to treasure, with support throughout from his wife Sue and their family.

Looking Forward

There was also global tragedy during Richard's year as Mayor, with the devastating tsunami in Asia. The response locally was huge, but, inevitably, other news takes over and events such a long way away can be forgotten. There is also the problem for fundraisers of not necessarily knowing where money will go or on what it will be spent. Richard was anxious to keep up the fundraising, but hoped to find a specific area and specific projects that could be supported by people in Reading, who could then relate to them more directly. As a result, a group called Reading Initiative for Tsunami Action (RITA) was formed, with the assistance of a Reading resident named Chamlie Wetthamuni. He originally came from a part of Sri Lanka called Beruwela, 40 miles south of Colombo on the coast. It was badly affected, losing many houses and everything that was on the shoreline – shops, boats and hotels. A suggestion was made that to make effective contacts, a visit was needed, so after initial hesitation Richard accepted the invitation, along with Dr Paul Starkey, a local development expert, using money donated specifically for the purpose.

Richard was also able to take some money with him, to pass on as appropriate, and saw at first-hand what a difference a comparatively small amount can make. For example, in a camp for displaced people, a water tank had been installed with aid money, but there was none to pay for its connection. He was able to do that and cover the water charges for the following six months.

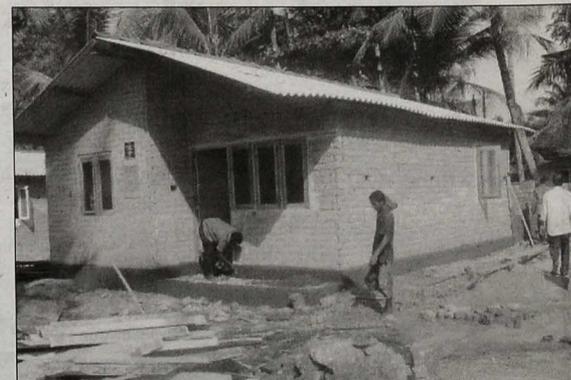
During the visit Richard was looking for particular projects to support – the main idea he brought back was to do with rebuilding the houses that had been destroyed. The cost of the materials to rebuild one house and one skilled labourer to oversee its construction is £1250 – if the family lived within 100m of the shoreline, an extra £1000 is needed to purchase a new plot of land. This is because the Sri Lankan government has banned all building within this distance of the sea, leaving a very poignant empty strip. The family involved do the majority of the manual work and materials are available, so it is purely money that is needed – about 200 have been built so far.

Another specific project is to help one of the two local mosques rebuild their mortuary. It is hoped that the Reading mosque will be able to link in to this and provide specific assistance. Other possible links include the two police chiefs. Targeted links are what is envisaged.

Until he returns to full-time teaching in September, Richard is using his time to promote RITA and raise funds for it. He is willing to speak at meetings or visit groups to give a presentation on what he found in Sri Lanka, and would welcome the opportunity to help establish specific links between groups in Reading and in Beruwela. If you are interested, please contact Richard either by e-mail at: Richard.Stainthorp@reading.gov.uk or by post at 23 Oakley Road, Caversham.



Remains of beach shops.



£1,250 House.

P. Starkey

BISHOP OF READING ENCOURAGES WOMEN'S CENTRE

Attendance at an event at the Churches in Reading Women's Centre is like being welcomed into a large happy family; this was certainly the impression given to those who attended the recent Annual General Meeting preceded by a lunch in the Wesley Methodist Church Hall, the home of the Centre which is open every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. A warm welcome was given to the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, Bishop of Reading, the speaker after the AGM.

This year the Women's Centre passes another significant milestone in its 12 year history as it continues to provide love, support and encouragement to all who come. It is structured as a partnership whereby each person who comes is encouraged to have an active role in the day-to-day running so that an ethos of inclusion is fostered. The large range of activities extend from a cup of tea, a meal and a chat to arts and crafts, flower arranging and gardening. Some women are involved in the 'Steps into Learning' programme at Reading College, and some take IT lessons at Reading Library. There are also cooking lessons and a slimming club.

Grants and donations make up 85% of their income; this year there is a funding gap of £14,000. Support for the Centre is not only through finance; there are the many volunteers and also the prayer partners who uphold the work of the Centre in their prayers throughout the year.

The Women's Centre is now experiencing a period of change, with both manager for



- O. Jewiss

Photographed at the Churches in Reading AGM were (from the left): the Revd Suzanne Knight (Centre Chaplain), Bishop of Reading, Ann Cameron (new Chair of Trustees), Marion Lowe (Manager) and Glenda Siddings (retiring Chair of Trustees).

the last five years, Marion Lowe, and Glenda Siddings, Chair of the Trustees, leaving. Thanks and presentations were made to both Marion Lowe and Glenda Siddings at the meeting.

In his talk, Bishop Stephen spoke about how important it is to live and make the most of the present moment. Using the analogy of a video recorder; he reminded his audience that we do not have the luxury of a pause, rewind or fast forward button. There is too much worrying about tomorrow and fretting about yesterday.

The occasion ended with the commissioning by the Bishop of the Revd Suzanne Knight as Chaplain to the Centre and a prayer that God would guide and strengthen the work so that others may be brought to a knowledge of his love. In appreciation of the work that Suzanne Knight has already done she was presented with a quilted banner of the Good Shepherd.

INNER WHEEL CLUB



Valerie Caswell presenting Vicki Mountford with gift.

The Inner Wheel Club of Caversham celebrated their 21st Charter Anniversary on 22nd April. The event was combined with President Vicki Mountford's

charity evening in aid of Helen and Douglas House Hospices.

The evening took the form of a dinner at which Caversham Rotarians, and many Inner Wheel clubs of District 9, together with District Chairman Valerie Caswell participated.

Vicki received gifts from the Rotary Club of Caversham, the daughter club of Maiden Erlegh, and a briefcase from Valerie Caswell for Vicki's and subsequent Chairmen's use when attending meetings.

The event was held at Caversham Heath Golf Club, where an excellent dinner was followed by an informative talk by John Garrod, who spoke about the "Hidden Gardens in the City of London". The talk was illustrated by slides which made all present realise how little they knew about their own capital city.

Margaret Smallbone

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

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

Pope John Paul declared the year 2005 to be the year of the Eucharist. Archbishop Vincent decided that in the Birmingham diocese the Blessed Sacrament was to be exposed daily in all the churches in turn throughout the year. The last week in May was the turn of the South Oxfordshire Deanery and each day of the week a different church observed a day of Watching and Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. At St Anne's church this took place on the Saturday, 28th May, with the day broken up into six hour-long stretches for people to spend in prayer.

On Sunday 29th May, a procession took place in Dorchester on Thames, on a beautiful sunny afternoon, when over 400 people from the seven parishes that make up the Deanery walked from the Church of St Birinus to Dorchester Abbey with the Blessed Sacrament carried in the monstrance. The procession left the church and proceeded along the lane at the back of the village and then emerged on to the main road for the walk to the Abbey. Hymns were sung, accompanied by a silver band from Witney, and a decade of the rosary was said. All the while the Abbey bells rang out over the village. Father Tony Jones, as Dean, organised the order of the procession and singing and led the Rosary.

Father John Osman, Parish priest of St Birinus, carried the Blessed Sacrament and officiated at Benediction in the Abbey. He was accompanied by the parish priests and deacons of the deanery and by Canon Tom Farrell, Episcopal Vicar for Oxfordshire, Warwickshire and Coventry, who gave the homily. After Benediction, to the refrains of Faith of our Fathers, the procession was re-formed and walked the short distance back to the parish church where, in a short ceremony, the Blessed Sacrament was replaced in the tabernacle. Thanks go to the Reverend Sue Booy for her cooperation in allowing the use of the Abbey for the ceremony.

In the evening, a Pig Roast Barbecue was held in the Presbytery garden. Many of those who had taken part in the procession stayed to eat and socialise, taking the opportunity to meet and chat with members of the other parishes.

Report by Jane Shaw



- Jane Shaw

Clergy of Deanery escorting the Blessed Sacrament.

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ST BARNABAS HANDYMAN SALE

Each year St Barnabas Church has three fundraising events specifically



- O. Jewiss

John and Margaret Notton run the plant stall with Daphne Jewiss (centre) at St Barnabas' Handyman Sale.

to support the Daynes Education Fund in South Africa referred to in relation to the Woodlands Day. The spring event, termed a Handyman Sale, involves the sale of used tools, garden plants, toys, books, bric-a-brac and furniture, as well as a tool sharpening service. All the material is contributed and all the proceeds, which at £1,128 are up on last year, go towards the charity. Once again voluntary effort and local support has enabled considerable help to be given to those in greater need than the overwhelming majority of people in Emmer Green.

**JUNIOR CHOIR RINGS THE BELLS
AT ST PETER'S**

On Friday, 13th May St Peter's junior choir had a chance to go up the bell tower. When we arrived we climbed up the long spiral staircase to a small room near the top of the tower. In pairs, we went up to the next floor containing the bells. One of the bell ringers showed us the bells and told us how they worked. At St Peter's there are eight bells which is a full peal.

After this, we were allowed to ring the hand bells - there are also eight of these. We then had a demonstration of four of the church bells, after which we each tried ringing a bell. Because we are all rather light in weight some of us were taken off the ground! We all enjoyed our visit very much and thank the bell ringers for giving us this opportunity.

Eleanor Hodgson

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WOODLAND DAY HELPS PEOPLE IN THE THIRD WORLD



- O. Jewiss

The teams from St Peter's and St Andrew's.

As part of their Christian service volunteers from several of the Churches in Caversham and Emmer Green provided refreshments in the marquee at the Woodland Day (see report on front page) the profits from which went to support work in the Third World. In this way just over £375 was raised and is shared between St Andrew's, St Peter's and St Barnabas Churches. St Andrew's share will support the work of supplying clean and reliable water at St Francis' Hospital, the Polio Children's Hostel and the community in Kwamkono, Tanzania. St Peter's share will be channelled through the Overseas Fund

of the Mothers' Union. St Barnabas share will go to the Daynes Education Fund (formerly the Amajuba Education Fund) which supports the continuing professional education of black South Africans.

A further £350 was raised by Margaret Notton on her home-made preserves and pickles stall, the proceeds of which also go to the Daynes Education Fund. The profits from the Traidcraft stall support the producers of goods and produce bearing the Fairtrade Mark from across a wide area of the Third World. Not only are the volunteers to be thanked but also those who patronised these stalls.

ARTS & CRAFTS SUCCESS

The Spring bank holiday was a busy time at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. The three day Arts and Crafts event was opened on the Saturday afternoon by the Cadence Cadet Band which got the proceedings going in a rousing fashion. Over two hundred people visited the church during the weekend. In the exhibition in the Church there were many beautiful paintings, embroidered pictures and tapestries; wood turning, ceramics and pottery; knitting, needlework and a lovely hand-made wedding dress, also three delightful christening gowns. Organ and piano recitals took place which were also enjoyed by many people.

In the hall there were various demonstrations of Craftwork - sugar flowers, barge painting, lace making, spinning, fabric pictures, cross stitch, hand-made cards, calligraphy, water colour painting and temari (a Japanese art). Visitors were able to watch the work being done and were invited to "have a go" at some of them. There were refreshments, refreshments and more refreshments. This gave lots of opportunities to sit and talk to friends and visitors, to catch up on old friends, and meet and welcome new ones.

The Sunday services took place in the centre of the church. The congregation was surrounded by all the many pictures and paintings. John Madeley led the morning service and he enjoyed looking at all the exhibits and gave thanks for God's great gifts to us. The evening service took the form of Songs of Praise and was led by Revd Dermot Thornberry. This was a happy time with many beautiful hymns chosen. The success of the whole event was down to the dedication and hard work of many people. It was a time of sharing friendship and fellowship and we thank all those who helped to make the weekend such a success.



- Eunice Cooper

Left to right: Jean Allen, Kathleen Barren, Mary Prior and Joy Bosier at the Arts and Crafts Exhibition.

CHURCH HOUSE SUPPORT FOR MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY

The White Band worn around the wrist, your arm or in fact anywhere is the symbol of the MakePovertyHistory Campaign. Not only have these White Bands become a fashion accessory, they are also springing up in unusual places, such as round church towers, to draw attention to the message prior to the G8 Summit in Edinburgh in July. There can be no better advertising spot in Caversham than the front of Church House and no better way of demonstrating the commitment of the Church locally to the cause.



- O. Jewiss

NEW MAYOR GREETED BY THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Our picture, taken in the Mayor's Parlour, shows Major Samuel Edgar and the Revd Elizabeth Jackson, respectively Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Churches Together in Reading, visiting the new Mayor, Councillor Riaz Chaudhri, shortly after his installation. They brought greetings, prayerful support and gifts of a Holy Bible and Fairtrade chocolates on behalf of the Christian community in Reading.



- O. Jewiss

NEWS OF FORMER CAVERSHAM CLERGY

The Revd Peter Atkinson, Priest-in-Charge of St John's from 1969 to 1975, and until recently Team Vicar in the Aylesbury with Berton and Hulcott Team Ministry, retired in mid-June.

The Revd Martin Loveless, who was Curate at St Peter's and St Margaret's between 1975 and 1981, and until recently Chaplain of Kings College, Taunton, is to become Priest-in-Charge of Glossop, and Minister responsible for Dining Vale, in Charlesworth and Dining Vale.

Canon Peter Mullins, who was curate at St Peter's and St Margaret's from 1984 to 1988, and is currently Team Rector in Great and Little Coates Team Ministry, and Canon and Prebend of Lincoln Cathedral, is also to be Rural Dean of Grimsby and Cleethorpes.

The Caversham Bridge sends good wishes and every blessing to all these one-time Caversham clergy in their new status and ministry.



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HAPPY WANDERER

Hunting for a Needle

I'm writing this on Monday, 8th May. There are articles in the national press this morning saying that someone has reckoned that if present trends continue, something like a fifth of British wild flowers will become extinct in the near future. These are not the rare and specially protected plants, but those once common around farms in what wild flower books used to call "waste places."

The villain of the piece is, of course, "intensive farming," with the better screening of crop seeds, the use of pesticides, the use of artificial fertilisers and the tidying up of those waste places.

But, I wondered, what about set-aside and stewardship? Shouldn't there be more and more places for wild plants to grow, if the countryside isn't being farmed so intensively? But many of the plants found to be unexpectedly scarce are plants needing disturbed soil, where the farmer has ploughed it, or his animals have trampled it. This led me to speculate on how common the plants would have been in the Stone Age, before agriculture.

These musings came into my head because yesterday morning, after the church service, a friend told me that she'd been on a walk with the



Reading and District Natural History Society, and they'd found the Shepherd's Needle at Dunsden.

It was many years since I'd seen the plant, so after lunch I set off to find it, trotting up to the top of Emmer Green, along Kiln Road, and through Clayfield Copse.

It's not the most showy plant in the world but, unlike a lot of the umbellifers with white flowers, it's very distinctive, with those bunches of very long, narrow seed capsules pointing upwards.

With my mission accomplished, in Reading Central Library today I turned to William Mavor's

General View of the Agriculture of Berkshire, published in 1813. Of the Shepherd's Needle it says that the plant occurs in "cornfields, too frequently." Druce's *Flora of Berkshire*, 1897, says it's still very common and frequent, but Bowen's *Flora of Berkshire*, 1968, says it is "locally frequent but decreasing."

And in 2005, at the mere mention of the plant, I'm pulling my boots on and seeking it out as something special. Perhaps those gloomy predictions are in fact correct.

Happy Wanderer

THE CLUBS

Caversham Community Association

May began, as usual, with an informal games evening. The following week was one of the highlights of the year with the visit of the Woodford Singers. This talented group gave an evening of songs ranging from Vaughan Williams to the Beatles. In between were some humorous poems and guitar solos to make a most enjoyable evening.

The month ended with a popular bingo session - prizes and cash to be won and plenty of fun.

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Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

Members were welcomed at the May meeting by their new Chairman, Mrs Helen Holloway. Thanks were given to Mrs Peggy Darper for running a coffee morning which had raised £83 for the MPS Society.

Helen House children's centre was agreed as the charity to be supported by the Guild during the coming year. Plans were made to contribute to St Barnabas' Fete on 9th July.

Representing the Words & Music Group, Mrs Jean Perrin reported on a very lively presentation on the music and life story of Sir Edward Elgar, given by Mrs Ruth Witcher.

The evening's speaker showed many coloured slides of 'Life on the Reef', with brilliant colours of underwater corals. Mr Neil Stewart gave a very entertaining talk to accompany his startling pictures, showing how each character of sea life, from anemone to shark, has an interest of its own. Life on the Reef is wild. 'Crown of Thorns' can come as a plague and strip the Reef bare in no time, as well as being a danger to divers. A manta ray or giant turtle can suddenly appear and give a great shock. Eels have nasty teeth that must be avoided. Many of the pictures had a background story about their filming, in such areas as the Red Sea and Sri Lanka. Mr Stewart invited his audience to share his feelings of affection for many of his fishy friends and by the end of the evening some were wishing for the opportunity to don diving suits. The Vote of Thanks was given by Mrs Edwina Child.

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

Mrs E Manning welcomed members at the May meeting, and also read out birthday greetings to the appropriate members. The Handicraft class is doing well knitting Squares. The competition "Herb Arrangement" was won by Mrs Doris Smith. The speaker, Anna Cannon, Medical Herbalist, gave a very enjoyable and interesting talk on "Herbs for Summer Health". We were enlightened on the properties of some of the most common garden herbs namely, rosemary, thyme, bay, and even nettles. Mrs Doris Smith thanked her on behalf of members. New members are always welcome. Do come and join us. Meetings are at Church House, Caversham.

THE CLUBS

Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

The chairman, Hazel New, welcomed everyone to the May meeting.

The Social Studies Group has organised a trip for July 11th. Mrs New introduced our speaker, the Reverend Squadron Leader Eleanor Rance MA AKC RAF - her subject "Being an "RAF Chaplain". Reverend Rance's talk was fascinating. At the age of 13 she wanted to be a vicar, at that time an impossibility for women. However, by the time she left university it was possible, and she became a priest in leafy Barnes.

Six years ago she joined RAF Benson, undergoing officer training including fitness tests, marching and learning to lead people, in order to become their chaplain. Reverend Rance said her work was varied, the usual christenings, weddings etc, but also lots of counselling, and last year she spent four months in Basra, Iraq, with her "flock".

In conclusion, Reverend Rance reiterated that she lives the same life as the troops, and that although her role is a challenge, it is hugely rewarding. A vote of thanks was given by Mrs New, then coffee and biscuits were served.

We meet every third Thursday of the month (except August) in St Andrew's Hall, Caversham Heights at 7.30pm; visitors and new members are always welcome.

The Reading and District Probus Club

The speaker David Mitchell-Baker showed slides of the way the chains supporting the Clifton Suspension Bridge are inspected every year. Brunel was the engineer but the design had been put out for competition resulting in many ideas! Finally the suspending chain was selected with Brunel appointed to control the costing of the Contract, but he gradually became involved with the technical variations which structurally meant the maximum span was 600ft and inspired the towers at the abutments that were completed in 1860, the year after Brunel died.

In 1952 the Clifton Bridge Trust was formed and charges introduced, the profit invested for future repairs.

The Probus Club is for retired men with varied interests. Future speakers already include 'The Mill at Sonning', 'Classic Driving', 'Plans for a Healthier Reading' and 'Bletchley Park'.

Interested? A phone call to the Secretary, Ray Head, on 0118 941 1445 e-mail: raymond-head@supanet.com will put you wise about Probus.

STOP PRESS

CAVERSHAM THEATRE SUCCESS

Congratulations go to the Caversham Theatre, who were delighted to receive an award at the Wellington Drama Festival in June. More details follow in next month's issue.

Father Chris Bester arrives at St Michael's, Sonning Common, on Monday 4th July for a few days handover from Fr Ellis. His first weekend (with a family Mass at 10.30am) will be the 9/10th July.

St Peter's Wives Group

At our May meeting David Pearson from Reading Museum gave a talk entitled "The Thames - Secrets from the Depths". However, he began the evening by outlining various exhibitions which will be held at the museum during the summer, including the Thames Water Collection.

Many of the objects recovered from the depths of the river were found when dredging took place to keep waterways free and prevent flooding, and early acquisitions in the Thames Water Collection, such as spearheads, were recovered during the 1890s. In the 1930s the Curator of the Museum, Henry M. Wallis, made the case for displaying items found in the Thames. There are currently about 500 objects, including skulls, coins, ginger beer bottles, a starting pistol found at Henley, handcuffs at Marlow, a Nazi airman's dagger at Windsor, a Civil War breastplate and a medieval sword. There is also some prehistoric material. We look forward to visiting the exhibition during the summer.

Our next meeting at Church House will be on 19 July at 8.00pm. This will be a Strawberry Supper and Bring & Buy Sale.

New members always welcome.

Caversham Women's Institute

"The hours were 6am - 9pm" for shop assistants working for Heelas in 1900!! This was one of the fascinating facts given by the speaker, Cheryl Dibden, who told members of the history of our famous store, its gradual development and the re-branding as John Lewis, now open seven days a week. There were plenty of old photos to give a glimpse of the past and some members recalled their experience either working or shopping there.

There was an exhibition of members' own needlework and after refreshments reminders were given of future events. A most interesting evening ended with the raffle.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

Jane Haas and Irene Manson were awarded a Silver Gilt medal at Chelsea Flower Show for their interpretation and arrangement of "Bazaar".

They are both Area Demonstrators for Berks, Bucks and Oxon Area of NAFAS, and will be giving a demonstration at the Club on Wednesday 13th July, entitled "The two of us". The Club meet at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road, on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.30pm for demonstrations and talks. Visitors are very welcome.

Chelsea Medal Winner



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