

SRI LANKA BOUND

There have been Links, Links and still more Links in the life of the Reverend Rosemary Fletcher. They began in Sunday School days, went on through training for the Methodist ministry, into the churches of Swindon and Caversham where she ministered, and on, during this last year, at the College of the Ascension in Birmingham.

Now Rosemary and her husband, James, are embarking on new careers as Methodist Church Mission Partners in Sri Lanka. The commissioning service was held on Saturday, 23rd July at Trinity Methodist Church in Watford, where Rosemary's parents are still members. The church was decorated with yellow and orange flowers, the colours on the resplendent Sri Lankan flag.

There was a strong contingent from Caversham in the congregation (a whole coach load plus a few in private cars).

The services started with a welcome from Peter Cannon, now a circuit steward and a member of Trinity Church. There is a strong link here as Peter and Rosemary were Sunday school pupils together.

After the singing of "Now thank we all our God", Revd Margaret Locke-Wheaton led prayers of adoration and confession from Sri Lanka. Here is another link; Margaret, who is now a minister in the Watford circuit, previously lived in Reading.

Bob Simpson from Gosbrook Road Methodist Church read from Colossians chapter 3. This was one of the readings used at James and Rosemary's wedding in June 1997. This reading was taken into the future by repeating it in Sinhala, which is the language Rosemary and James have been studying for use in Sri Lanka.

Revd Jim Booth, now chair of the Liverpool District of the Methodist Church, and formerly Superintendent Minister in Reading, preached on the need to hear and listen as the Holy Spirit touched us and opened our eyes.

In this way boundaries are crossed, and there is a need of "telling" in a language, simple and understandable. From Jim's own experience, and he was a Mission Partner on the Ivory Coast of Africa some time ago, simplicity is of the essence. He used the example of a game of cricket. Not all understand the rules, but it becomes more comprehensible when described as "two teams hitting a ball with a piece of wood"! Jesus makes sense of life on every level.

At the presentation and commissioning, James and Rosemary were asked, among several other things, that they will maintain their links with the church in the UK, receiving its support and sharing their experience with it. In connection with this, they promise regular newsletters. To receive a copy please contact Janet Bull on 0118 947 3935 or email: janet@alltwen.net. A colourful bookmark, asking for prayers for Rosemary and James and the witness of the Theological College of Lanka, where they will live and work, is also available.

This home link was continued with Prayers of Intercession led by students and staff of the

College of the Ascension, together with personal and family friends of Rosemary and James.

After the final hymn "The spirit lives to set us free" we almost felt WE were being sent out to "walk, walk in the light" – as in a sense we are.

Here is another link!

Finally, a very big 'thank you' to Marjorie and George Fletcher, Rosemary's parents, who with their friends provided superb refreshments in the hall afterwards.

A memorable afternoon, and "good bye" to Rosemary and James, but not really, because we are well and truly linked!

Meryl Beek



James Rowley and Revd Rosemary Fletcher

I Sunman

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TALKING POINT

By
Colin Ferguson

WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

What a crazy month it has been. Even the weather has been hot and cold, wet and dry. The world seems to have followed suit with the high hopes of the G8 conference being partially fulfilled to the background of joy at the coming of the Olympics and the horror of the terrorist attacks in London. The most frightening element of all is that those who committed the terror were British citizens. They were or could have been our neighbours. In all respects they were good people to those around them but in their minds a terrible hatred had been developed and a horribly warped idea of what pleases God resulted in the death and maiming of so many completely innocent people.

There is no place in any religion or any just political cause for this, yet history shows us that all such causes have been used to try and excuse the most vile human behaviour. The horror of what they do is a great test for those who believe in the teaching of Jesus' words, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who ill treat you."

Ironically their actions have made both Christian and Islamic groups realise how much we need to work together and to respect each other. Both religions, and indeed all others have been unanimous in their condemnation of the terrorism and are looking to find ways of overcoming the barriers that have divided the many peoples of this nation. There really should not be this type of ignorance and prejudice in a society where our schools are mixed and learning about each other is strongly encouraged.

Respect for each other is the first step in true neighbourliness and enables the rich variety of culture, faith and tradition to be part of the whole of life, even if people hold strongly different views. Personally, I believe completely in the Christian faith but respect the right of others to be different. After all we share the roots of faith in the one God with both Judaism and Islam, and as we all believe in one God then surely it must be the same God revealed to us all in different ways. We should know that from our own different ways of understanding the Christian Gospel.

Being different is not a reason for disrespect, hatred, or prejudice, though historically we have so often allowed difference to divide us. If the Church has achieved anything in recent years it is surely the development of a proper respect for each other. The miracle of the church is that it still exists in spite of what we have done to it. Thank God we can now be good neighbours to each other even if church unity is more difficult to achieve.

Recently though we have had real evidence of this willingness to be a good neighbour. The public response to the Tsunami disaster was enormous and the campaign to make poverty history shows a real concern for the whole world and not just our own corner.

Some weeks ago a television programme sought to find the new ten commandments. This will to respect each other and to be good neighbours is clearly present.

1. Treat others as you would like them to treat you. 2 Take responsibility for your own behaviour. 3 Do not kill. 4 Be honest. 5 Do not steal. 6 Protect and nurture your children. 7 Protect the environment. 8 Look after the vulnerable. 9 Never be violent. 10 Look after and protect your family.

Personally I would put God at the heart of all we try to do, but as a way of life these new commandments sound very much like His original intention. They certainly have no room for destructive or hateful action. Peace to all who read these words and may be we be true neighbours to each other.

Colin Ferguson is a lay preacher in the United Reformed Church.

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for October 2005 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 7th September. The date for submission of items for the November 2005 issue will be Wednesday 5th October 2005.

All advertising copy for the October 2005 issue should be sent to Mrs Loble, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 6th September 2005. For the November 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday 4th October 2005.

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EDITORS: Mr Eric Chappell, Mrs Marjorie Tillman, Mr Kevin Corrigan, Mrs Kathy Munns, Mrs Val Reynolds, Mr Alan Bradbury c/o Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham. RG4 8AX Tel: 947 1703. Email: parishoffice@stpetercaversham.idps.co.uk
ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: Mrs Sarah Loble, 15 Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7AN. Tel: 377 3020. Email: sarah.lobley@hemscoff.net
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mr M. Staunton, 23 Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7AN. Tel: 947 2389.
COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr H. Pilgrim, 64 Highmoor Road, Caversham RG4 7BG. Tel: 947 4017.
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The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am Holy Communion
9.45am Parish Communion
6.30pm Evensong

St John's, Gosbrook Road

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

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

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

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

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

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

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

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

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11.00am Divine Worship
6.00pm Evening Service

SCHOOLS

NEWS FROM ST ANNE'S

LEAVERS' MASS & PRIZEGIVING

For the children of St Anne's school, this year Leavers' Mass was a very special one: it was the last school Mass that Father Tony Jones would celebrate as Parish Priest. The Mass was held in Church because school numbers are now getting too big to be contained in the hall for a ceremony that a large number of parents and others also want to attend.

The Mass started as the Year Six children carried in lighted candles and placed them on tables at each side of the sanctuary. The leavers played a significant part in the Mass, reading the scripture excerpts, bidding prayers and other readings. During his homily, Father Tony took one of the lighted candles and used it to show how all that the children have learned and experienced in their years at St Anne's could be encapsulated in the flame. All the candles were different as were all the children but all had a common light with which to go out into the world.

At the offertory, representatives of each class took up gifts of their work for Father Tony and placed them at the foot of the altar.

The prizegiving which followed the Mass was particularly poignant since it was the last time that Father Tony would present the bibles, cups and shields to St Anne's children.

Mrs Nash, the headteacher, presented Father Tony with a school photograph as a memento of the school. In a somewhat emotional speech, she thanked him for his help, support and ministrations over the past ten years. She also thanked the children, staff and parents for their efforts and was in turn thanked for her work as headteacher. Special thanks were given to Mrs Christine Bradbury who was playing the organ for the last school Mass before her retirement.

All in all the occasion lived up to what Father Tony had promised in his introduction to the Mass – a time of celebration tinged with sadness and tears of sorrow mixed with tears of pride.

Report by Jane Shaw

NEWS FROM ST MARTIN'S



Father Chris with the leavers.

- Jane Shaw

This year's Leavers' Mass at St Martin's School was the first Mass celebrated at school by Father Chris Bester, the new Parish Priest of St Michael's Church.

The Year Six pupils prepared the Mass by selecting the readings and readers and they chose the hymns. All the leavers took part in the service, some doing readings, whilst some took part in the Offertory Procession. Items which represented their time in Year Six were brought up and laid on the altar along with the bread and wine.

During the Mass, Father Chris anointed the hands of the leavers with Holy Oil, as a sign that they were to use them in the service of God in their secondary schools and then in whatever vocation they followed. He first blessed the oil then used it to make the sign of the cross on both hands of each pupil, saying a little prayer for each child such as, "May Jesus strengthen you to carry out the tasks he has for you".

Continued on page 7

MRS BRADBURY
RETIRES FROM
ST ANNE'S SCHOOL

Having taught at St Anne's for thirty-one years, Mrs Christine Bradbury retired at the end of the school year on 22 July. She joined the staff in 1974, initially to teach music, and over the years has been responsible for the musical content of many School plays and other entertainments, mostly at Christmas time. When specialist music teachers were phased out of primary schools, she assumed the responsibility of general class teaching, and for the final few years has taught Class 2, which has involved the supervision and assessment of Key Stage 1 Special Assessment Tests (SATs), in which the children have reached a very high average standard. She has also served as a school governor for a number of years.

During the afternoon of 21 July there was an assembly in the school hall which was attended by all the children and teachers and other well-wishers.

The children gave a performance with each year contributing a song or a poem. The tunes were ones which the children associated with Mrs Bradbury and to which they had put their own words. The grand climax was a rousing rendition, including arm-waving and jumping up and down, of "Reach for the stars". Mrs Bradbury was presented with garden seats and a bouquet from the Parents' Association and, as the children left the hall, many of them handed Mrs Bradbury a hand-made farewell card. As she passed a handful of cards to a bystander, she was heard to remark, "Now I know why the queen has a lady-in-waiting".

Mrs Nash and Father Tony paid tribute to Mrs Bradbury, citing her contribution to education in general and to St Anne's school in particular.

Following the assembly there was a tea in the convent garden which was attended by staff past and present, including two previous head teachers, and other friends. Mrs Bradbury was able to circulate and chat to them. Mrs Nash, on behalf of the staff, made another presentation, this time of a combined bird bath and sundial, and Mrs Bradbury made her third speech of the week, reportedly without repeating herself.

Report by Norman Shaw



- Jane Shaw

Mrs Bradbury with her bird bath and sundial.

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What is the population of Reading? What proportion of land in the South East is built-up? By how much is Reading set to grow over the next few years?

THE FUTURE OF CAVERSHAM

Ten questions of this sort greeted us at the meeting organised at the Arthur Legge Centre by Reading Borough Council. And, by the way, this was the last official meeting to be held at this venue. One person scored an excellent 8/10. Well done Cllr Sue Stainthorpe. The rest of us managed about 6/10. A group of Reading planners were at hand to explain the problems facing any future planning of our town, answer our questions and help us understand the main issues. The evening focused on the consultation document called CORE STRATEGY DOCUMENT ISSUES AND OPTIONS. It is available at the Library and well worth while picking up. It is a purple fold-over booklet which presents various possibilities on the future development of Reading. I won't even attempt to explain it all here, but I do urge everyone to take the trouble to look through it. The council is attempting to gather information and opinions, so please let's ensure Caversham views are well represented. Many of the readers of this page have lived in Reading a lot longer than the planners. Although they are experts in town planning, population growth, employment structures etc, they would like the input of more personal observations from the main factor that makes one community different from another, its residents.

Strangely enough it was a fun evening. One doesn't associate planning with fun but the presentation was in the form of quizzes and small group workshops. We were asked to identify problem areas, to give opinions on what has succeeded and what has failed in the past and, by using maps provided, say how we would like to see the town evolve.

At one point each group was asked to identify what it considered to be the five most important and the five least important objectives in appraising plans for sustainable benefits. For example, would you prefer to see development of leisure spaces having greater priority over encouraging inward investment in employment? Perhaps you think reducing non recycled waste more important than improving public transport. In short, it became very clear, as the evening went on, that even a small group of us couldn't agree on a very simple choice of priorities. It became clearer that, with limited economic resources, hard decisions will have to be made. Only one thing is certain; whatever is decided, a very large number of us will not agree with it. So the choice is yours. The planners are asking us for our input. Their decisions are difficult enough but if you do want to influence the process then please pick up the leaflet and contact the planners. All the details are in the leaflet.

As for the questions above: the population of Reading is about 144,000; only 13% of land is built on and growth is expected to be between 2 and 4%.

If you are really keen on having a say on our futures, please also look at the NORTH AREA ACCESS STUDY. I have mentioned this before but I do think we should keep an eye on what is being planned for our own back yard. Transport and housing are intimately tied in with how Caversham is viewed as part of Reading. Do we want Caversham to become a night-life centre north of the river? Do we want to lose our 'villageness'? What if the Westfield Road - Prospect Street one way system were to re-appear on a plan? Would this mean that no buses could come down into Caversham from the Peppard Road area? Would it mean that all transport, certainly buses, would go down Westfield Road, turn left into Gosbrook Road, and so into Reading? Would this lead to an ever greater decline in Caversham as a shopping centre? All questions, not facts; but we have been here before and, with the nature of our modern mobile society, perhaps these are new issues to many readers.

LONGER DRINKING HOURS

Over the last few weeks Reading Borough Council has been deluged with licensing applications. This is the consequence of new national legislation which demands that all licensed premises have to re-apply for their licences. Linked in with the government's belief that extending drinking hours will reduce 'closing time' yobbish behaviour, we in Caversham have been faced with the problem of licensed premises asking, not only for the new licences but, in accordance with government thinking, for longer hours. There are four criteria which the Council may consider in looking at a licensing proposal. They are: public safety, prevention of crime and disorder, protection of children from harm, and public nuisance. A council officer explained to Ex Libris how the new system was working and also gave the assurance that even though the rules are nation wide, locality does play a role in coming to a decision. It was on the basis of some of these criteria that residents and CADRA were able to raise successful objections to the proposed extension of hours for the 'Grosvenor' on Kidmore Road. However we have heard that the owners are likely to appeal, in which case we shall have to go to the Magistrates' Court.

A 'SORRY', A 'THANK YOU' AND TWO 'PLEAS'

I am sorry I haven't been able to write about people in our community this month but as you can see there are several very important issues at stake and

space determines content. However I would like to thank one reader for her letter and kind comments about this column - much appreciated.

I shall certainly pursue the matter of the No 9 bus and Sunday running. I phoned the Council today (late July) and they say there are no plans to let it run through Caversham on Sundays. This is a very serious omission in our transport network as it is the only way for anyone without a car living in some western parts of Caversham to visit the hospital, let alone get into town. If the demand is there then the Council needs to know, otherwise nothing will happen.

If you are concerned with these or any other issues concerning our village please contact CADRA. There is a yearly membership fee of only £2.00 per household. Leaflets may be found in Caversham Library.

NEW CHAIRMAN FOR CADRA

As was mentioned in the Caversham Bridge June issue, Tom Chadwick retired as Chairman of the Caversham and District Residents Association at its Annual General Meeting in April. His successor is Helen Lambert, who is also a welcome contributor to this paper.

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COMMUNITY

Caversham Festival set to be village's event of the year

The Third Caversham Festival, to be held on Westfield Green on Gosbrook Road, on Saturday, September 10, is shaping up to be the village's major event of the year. What started out several years ago as a comparatively modest fete has grown remarkably in size and stature. Sponsored by the Rotary Club of Caversham and organised by a group of local enthusiasts on behalf of the people of Caversham, this entirely free event is expected to attract over 5,000 visitors, given good weather on the day.

Considering the relatively small size of Westfield Green, the fitting in of such a large festival in a restricted area has proved a challenge. Central to the programme is a show within a show... the Caversham Horticultural Society's annual show with its impressive display of flowers and garden produce. The Festival has previously been noted for its emphasis on song and dance, and this year is no

exception. The programme, once again headed up by the Radio Days Big Band, features some 20 separate acts and displays. Several local schools, both primary and nursery, are taking part and there is a whole raft of amusing competitions and games to keep young people happy.

Well over 20 local organisations and individuals are mounting displays or providing demonstrations. And if you have money to spend, then there will be lots of opportunity to purchase arts and crafts, books, toys and much more besides. As usual, local charity organisations will be well represented.

If the Festival proves a tiring experience, then visitors can refresh themselves at an amazing range of food and drink stalls and tents, including outlets manned by Prospect Street restaurants.

Make a date in your diary for a major village happening – with easy access. The event is open from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm.

SAFETY STREET – TEACHING CHILDREN HOW TO BE SAFE INDOORS AND OUTSIDE

It is with great regret and disappointment that I have to write about the closure of 'Safety Street' after 11 years and when about 50,000 children and others have passed through the doors. Apart from primary school children, many cub, brownie etc packs, those with special needs, nursing trainees (including Japanese), participants in Duke of Edinburgh courses and many others have benefited. Many letters of appreciation were received from the children and the teachers.

It was always the Trustees' aim that no charge should be made for visitors and this was maintained to the end. The necessary finance came from various sponsorships and supporters, Local and District Authorities, the Reading Crime Prevention Panel and The Earley Charity, to name but a few.

Visiting schools helped when budgets allowed. However the various Authorities are no longer contributing although our work has been teaching children how to stay safe both outdoors and in the home. We will never know what accidents may have been prevented by visits to Safety Street but if only a single child's life has been saved it was well worth it.

As for the volunteers, I can safely say we have all enjoyed our time there, gained very much satisfaction and also learned a lot to our own benefit. We will miss the work, companionship and camaraderie.

Finally, I must give thanks to all who have supported us over the years and attended our open days. Maybe we will be able to open again somewhere, possibly in another guise and under a different name.

Cyril Kirby

Rescued at Last

Like other local people who have lived in the area for a long time I still visit the old Caversham cemetery off Hemdean Road where several of my family are buried. I don't go often but in 2004 I was delighted to see that the red brick Victorian house where the superintendent used to live is at last to be used again. It had been empty for several years and was vandalised until the windows were boarded up and the building made secure.

When the burial ground was opened in 1885 the little house was well built and beside it was quite a large building for official use, probably a store for planks and implements used by the gravediggers and tools for maintenance of the cemetery. Now the whole complex is being transformed into 3 or 4 very pleasant small dwellings, it is to be hoped for first-time buyers.

There may be people who would not fancy living beside a cemetery, however, the location has several advantages. There is a local school just opposite, a bus stop for Caversham centre and Reading just across the road, and shops and a Post Office not far away. The new homes have pocket-sized gardens but for those who want to grow vegetables there are allotments close at hand.

The greatest plus for a natural history enthusiast could be that there is a

ready-made nature reserve on the doorstep. The old cemetery is a peaceful place full of large, old trees. In Spring it is carpeted with primroses, violets, wild crocus, bluebells and celandines and it provides a haven for wild life.

It is wonderful to see these Victorian buildings put to such good use. Whoever lives there I hope they will be very happy.

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Photo courtesy MK

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CAVERSHAM, READING RG4 0JF**AROUND THE CHURCHES****METHODIST RULING BODY****ELECTION OF VICE-PRESIDENT
DESIGNATE 2006**

Methodists in Caversham are delighted by the election of a former member of Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Dudley Coates, as Vice-President of the Methodist Conference for 2006 at the 2005 Methodist Conference in Torquay. Now living in Dorset near Dorchester, Dudley will start his year of office when the Conference meets in Edinburgh in 2006.

Dudley and his wife, Jean, and family lived in Earley from 1973 to 1979 and then at Crays Pond (near Woodcote) from 1979 to 1996. Jean taught in the Agriculture Department of Reading University and was involved in the Anglican Churches of the Langtree Team which includes Woodcote. She trained for the Anglican Ministry on the part-time course based in Oxford. During their time at Crays Pond, Dudley was a member, first of Woodcote Methodist Church, then of Caversham Heights Methodist Church. Their two daughters, Mary Ann and Hannah, were members of the young people's group 'Squash' and were successively secretary of the group. Jean and Dudley moved to Wallingford in 1996, where Jean served her curacy, and then to Dorset in 1999 where Jean is now the Rector of five parishes and the Diocese of Salisbury's Rural Officer for Dorset.

Dudley is a retired civil servant, ending his career as head of the Environment Group for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. Since retiring in 2001 he has been able to give even more time to his work within the Church.

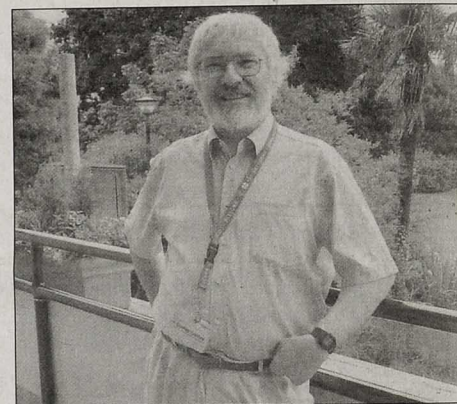
Dudley is a local preacher and was a member of Conference from 1993-2004. He has been chairman of Methodist Publishing House, is a member of the Methodist Council and the Strategy and Resources Committee, and is the Methodist Ecumenical Representative on the General Synod of the Church of England.

"It's a delight and a great honour to be able to serve the Church as Vice President of the Conference," says Dudley. "In my year I want to stress the importance of worship and the need constantly to boost its quality. I want to explore ecumenism, and to encourage good government in both state and Church. And following on from my professional work, I want to continue to address environmental issues and rural affairs."

In his free time, Dudley is a keen singer and cyclist. Dudley hopes that Methodists from Caversham will travel to Edinburgh in June 2006 to support him at his induction as Vice-President.

**FORMER READING
MINISTER BECOMES
PRESIDENT 2005**

Local Methodists are joyfully celebrating the induction of the Chairman of their District, the Revd Tom Stuckey, as the President of the Methodist Conference for the year 2005, beginning on 1st July. Before becoming Chair of the Southampton District, Tom was the Superintendent of the Reading and Silchester Circuit based at Wesley Church, Queen's Road. Tom was educated at Yeovil Grammar School and City, London and Edinburgh Universities. The keynotes of his Presidential address were confidence in evangelism and talking of God; fresh expressions of church; the Holy Spirit at work; prayer (including the 24/7 Year of Prayer in Methodism which began on 1st July), and the reclamation of our Methodist heritage as a missionary movement of the Spirit with a particular concern for the marginalised.



Dudley Coates – Vice President in 2006

**READING MALE VOICE CHOIR –
FIRST CONCERT OF NEW
SEASON IN CAVERSHAM**

Caversham Heights Methodist Church will host Reading Male Voice Choir's first performance of their 2005-2006 season on Saturday, October 15th

The charity concert is in aid of Plan UK, who sponsor individual children in developing countries for £15 a month. The money goes directly to their villages where parents decide how best it should be spent - such as education, health or development projects.

Choir secretary Allen Appleby says: "We have had a long and warm association with the Caversham Heights church, and with Britain in the forefront of increasing international aid to Africa, we couldn't have a more appropriate start to our new concert programme."

This is the choir's 35th season and once again they are fully booked with 15 or so charity concerts in churches across the UK from now until next July.

And this year they're launching a search for new members. The choir already has a healthy membership of 70 plus, but three of its old hands are moving out of the area - one of them to undertake missionary work in Nepal.

The choir meet for rehearsals at 7.30pm every Friday during term time at Rivermead Primary School, Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley. Their first meeting is on September 9th.

Anyone with an interest in choral singing who'd like to give it a try can contact Allen on 0118 940 3837 or e-mail aappleby_oxon@yahoo.com. There are no auditions and newcomers will be assured of a warm welcome. The choir website is www.rmvc.ukgateway.net

**NEW LAY CHAIRMAN FOR
READING DEANERY SYNOD**

The first meeting of the newly elected Anglican Deanery Synod saw the retirement of Lt Col Mary Harwood who had been its Lay Chair for the past nine years. At the meeting, thanks and a presentation were made to her by Canon Brian Shenton, Area Dean. Mary has relinquished the Chair to continue her training for the ordained ministry in the Church of England, the first year of which she has completed on the St Albans and Oxford Ministry Course. The Synod elected Mr Peter Jeal of St Nicholas Earley as the new Lay Chairman.



The Anglican Deanery officers: Peter Jeal (Lay Chairman), Mrs Daphne Jeffries (Secretary), Canon Brian Shenton (Arch Dean) and John Scoble (Treasurer).

**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN
CAVERSHAM**

The Executive Committee includes all the clergy in Caversham together with lay representatives of the churches and allied community interests. Their next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th October at St Barnabas, Emmer Green, at 7.30pm.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT FOR MERCY SHIPS

Each year the Women's Network of the Methodist Church supports a specific project. In 2005 the Network in the Southampton District, of which the Reading Circuit is a part, is supporting the charity Mercy Ships. In early July, George Face, a speaker from Mercy Ships, addressed a 76 strong combined meeting of the Reading Circuit Methodist Network and Christian Women Together in Caversham about the work of the charity.

In 1978, an American, Don Stephens, had a dream and a prayer that someday ships might carry medical care and relief cargo to help the poor. He and his wife Deyon and a group of friends bought an old passenger liner and after a four-year refit this was launched as the hospital ship *Anastasis*, the Greek word for resurrection. In the early years it was used to go to disaster areas but since 1990 it has been used full time around the west coast of Africa between Sierra Leone, Benin and Togo. The aim of this and other ships the charity now has is to bring hope and healing to the poor and to serve all people without regard for race, gender or religion. It treats people as a whole: physically, emotionally, psychologically and spiritually. The ship will put into a port and remain there for six to seven months. News of its coming precedes it so that on arrival a queue of people soon forms on the quayside where names of those who can be treated are taken together with some details of the patient's history. Subsequently those whom it is possible to treat are medically examined on board prior to actual treatment.

The *Anastasis* is fitted out with up to date medical equipment, four operating theatres and a 38 bed ward. There is a crew of 400 including 80 medical staff. The doctors sign up to join the ship often as much as a year in advance; they give their services free and actually pay to live on the ship. George Face gave an illustrated talk showing the type of cases that present themselves including orthopaedic cases as a consequence of war in Sierra Leone. The ethos of the work is to follow the model of Jesus whereby the blind see (cataract operations), the lame walk (orthopaedic operations), the mute

speak (cleft-lip and palate operations), and good news is proclaimed to the poor by these and other services such as tumour removal, the treatment of polio victims, dentistry and women's reproductive health. When in port even a school is run on board giving Christian teaching.



George and Maggie Face with Mary Prior (centre) in front of the Mercy Ships' display.

O. Jewiss

theatres and a 78 bed ward it will be the largest non-government owned hospital ship; it will sail to Ghana and stay up to 10 months in any one port.

This was a moving account of work done in Jesus' name. Many have their health restored or their disfigurement removed and through it they may also come to know Jesus. In prompting this event Women's Network was certainly fulfilling part of its aim to encourage, enable and equip women to participate fully in the life of society. The profit on the afternoon, which included an enjoyable cream tea and a bring and buy stall, was £470; this will go towards the £25,000 the Southampton District Network aims to raise to equip an operating theatre and crew cabin on *African Mercy*. The afternoon began with a short devotional service with relevant hymns thoughtfully chosen by Mrs Mary Prior who, as Secretary of the Reading Circuit Women's Network, led the service. More information may be found on the Mercy Ships website (www.mercyships.org.uk) or by phoning 01438 347487.

A rare silver chalice at Mapledurham

It is always a happy occasion when members of the two churches of the parish of Caversham meet together, so it was good to have friends from St Peter's at the Patronal Festival of St Margaret's Mapledurham for their celebration on July 20th.

As it so often is, it was a perfect summer evening and Mapledurham looked at its most peaceful as the sun began to set; indeed just as it must have been down through the ages, an ancient village in an ancient landscape.

The highlight of the evening was the Savill flagon, a rare piece of Church plate, which is only used on very special occasions. This beautiful piece of silver was given by Lady Savill, the wife of the Provost of Eton, to be used by the incumbent of St Margaret's Mapledurham, he being a past Fellow of the College and having the benefice of Mapledurham. She bequeathed it in or after 1604, Sir Henry Savill having been knighted at that date. It is hallmarked 1598 and contains 28 pounds of silver and is the only silver "round-bellied" Elizabethan chalice belonging to a church in Oxfordshire, according to Baker in his booklet on Mapledurham Village and Church. Several years ago it went to New York as part of an exhibition of rare English silver. It is now cared for and insured by Eton College.



The new ship *African Mercy* at Newcastle.

Courtesy Mercy Ships

continued from page 3

NEWS FROM ST MARTINS

At the end of Mass, he presented the leavers with their certificates which included a class photograph and, on the back, the signatures of all the children who were leaving. Father Chris also commented on the fact that he had never been in a school where the children were so quiet during a service.

Mrs Hogg, the Headteacher, said that the children could compare the pictures with those taken in their first year at school.

After the rest of the school had gone back to their classrooms, the hall was rearranged and the leavers were able to wait on parents, other relations and friends as they enjoyed a drink and biscuits and a short time for conversation before it was time for school to resume again.

As Mrs Hogg said - it was a very prayerful and fitting end to their time at St Martin's. In September a new Year Six will start to assume the responsibilities and develop the qualities of leadership that the 2005 leavers demonstrated in their last year.

Report by Jane Shaw

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

REGENERATE READING

The Annual General Meeting of Churches Together in Reading (CTR) earlier in the summer provided an opportunity for a preliminary discussion of an initiative that will involve the whole spectrum of the Christian Churches in Greater Reading over the next two and a half years. In a joint presentation the Revd Nigel Hardcastle of St Luke's and Pastor Yinka Oyekan of Grovelands Christian Fellowship explained that this will be known as "Regenerate" and will culminate in a Mission to Reading during 2007, the purpose of which is to create a new missionary mind-set in the church across Greater Reading.

Bishop of Reading to launch initiative

This is an opportunity for renewal within the churches so that evangelism becomes a natural and on-going part of the life of each church. To facilitate this the Reading churches will be encouraged to explore during 2006 a variety of mission resources and ways of doing evangelism for which there will be appropriate training.

This will enable them to be a more effective part of the "Mission" in 2007 when every congregation in Reading is being invited to be involved in one new outreach initiative. To these ends the Bishop of Reading will launch "Regenerate" by communicating the vision at a major Churches Together Meeting at the Globe, 12 Portman Road, on Sunday 25 September at 6 pm. The Globe is the home of the Church of God World Wide Mission and the invitation to the meeting is open to all.

Additionally "Regenerate" will

be a local focus for prayer during the week of prayer for Christian Unity in 2006. A Resources Fair is planned for the spring and practical training assistance will follow later. All this is likely to culminate in a Celebration of Faith / Commissioning for Future Mission in the early summer 2007. Although all of this is still in the planning stage there was warm support for the proposal at the CTR AGM. The intervening time is to be spent in preparation, prayer and training.

New Chairman for CTR and other matters

At the CTR AGM the Revd Nigel Hardcastle became Chairman, succeeding Major Samuel Edgar, who now becomes a Vice-Chairman alongside the Revd Elizabeth Jackson. Presentations were made to Doreen Woods, the retiring Secretary, whose post remains temporarily unfilled, and to Geoff Havers, the previous Treasurer. Graham Fuller continues as Treasurer. The meeting also heard about the work of the Mustard Tree Foundation, an

offshoot of Tilehurst Free Church, that is doing a wide range of social action in the Dee Road area of Tilehurst. This Christian community development charity is assisting in the mental, physical, practical and spiritual community development of the area and is bringing the Kingdom to the community. The Coffee Shop hosts workers from the TEA (Training Employment Advice) Shop and promotes craft activities, literacy and numeracy courses. Youth work similar to that by the Youth and Families Initiative of Churches Together in Caversham is being undertaken.



O Jewiss

The officers of Churches Together in Reading were photographed at the Annual General Meeting. They are (from the left) Major Samuel Edgar (Vice-Chairman), Doreen Woods (retiring Secretary), The Revd Nigel Hardcastle (Chairman), the Revd Elizabeth Jackson (Vice-Chairman) and Graham Fuller (Treasurer).

CHURCHES TOGETHER LEARN ABOUT FAITH

At their July meeting the Executive of Churches Together in Caversham were informed about the work of Reading's FAITH Christian Group by Chris Milton, the lead part-time staff member.

The work of this group should be known more widely. It has a two pronged approach in its work with those on the margins of society through outreach to those on the streets and support for those in accommodation.

The outreach on Tuesday and Friday nights is through walking round the streets of Reading with flasks of soup and sandwiches meeting people where they are. On Thursday nights it operates a drop-in at Greyfriars. A Candle Tea Bar operates on Sunday afternoons near the former Chatham Street car park. These times of activity complement those of CIRDIC (Churches in Reading Drop-in-Centre).

Support for those in accommodation is by visiting people all over Reading in response to personal calls, or requests from Social Services, the Borough Council or Health Visitors. This is achieved by taking a food parcel to the church in the locality of the person in need and asking that church to make the visit with the parcel, thus forging a link between that church and the person. As a result those visited often become Christians. The whole ethos is to build relationships and be a witness to the love, life and grace of Jesus.

FAITH is a charity that relies on three part-time paid staff, about 25 volunteers and donations of food and money from the churches. Further information may be obtained from their website (www.faith-reading.org.uk) or from 0118 950 9693.



O Jewiss

Chris Milton with the FAITH Christian Group display at the Churches Together in Caversham meeting.

NEWS FROM OUR LADY AND ST ANNE'S PARISH

The Summer Fete was held this year in the hall and front playground of St Anne's School and the change of venue was obviously a good idea since a record amount was raised for the Gateway Appeal. Deacon Michael Walker opened the fete in the absence of Father Tony.

Apart from the usual raffle, there were, among others, stalls selling toys, hand-made goods, plants, fancy goods and cakes. A barbecue and beer stall did a roaring trade and a very summery note was provided by the Pimms and Strawberries stall. Those who preferred a cup of tea were also catered for. The children were able to paint their own little models and soon a row of these was left drying in the sun. Two young ladies offered manicures and a beauty tombola and one of their first customers was Deacon Michael but he decided that he had better not have his nails painted shortly before he would be assisting at Mass.

Just before the fete opened there was a great deal of puffing to blow up balloons to fill a Mini for the "Guess how many balloons in the Mini" competition and after the fete closed great fun was had in popping them all.

At the end of the afternoon, Deacon Michael pluckily volunteered to take a turn in the stocks and finished up very wet. Fortunately the sun shone all afternoon, so he quickly dried out.

At masses a week later, it was announced that the replacement for Father Tony as Parish Priest of Our Lady and St Anne's will be Father Giles Goward. He will be coming in the middle of September from the parish of Our Lady of Peace, Worcester. Our prayers will be with him as he joins the parish and with Father Tony as he sets off on his long pilgrimage walk and then goes to his new parish of Leamington Spa in October.

Report by Jane Shaw



Organiser, Lex, regrets setting up the pillory.

Kath Turner

ENVIRONMENT

Poisonous, and Rather Rare

This was part of the description of the Thorn-Apple
in *I-Spy Wild Fruits and Fungi*.

I can remember coveting this little book at the age of about eight, with my nose pressed to the newsagent's window.

The *I-Spy* books, published by the now-defunct News Chronicle newspaper, were an important part of my introduction to nature study. They were very cheap – one-and-sixpence, I think – but in those days of post-war austerity, any money for non-essentials was hard to come by. Each book had illustrations and descriptions of things to look out for – rose-hips, crab-apples, fly agaric toadstools and horns-of-plenty in the title under consideration.

And there, among the wild fruits, was this plant with the long white trumpet-shaped flowers, and very spiny green fruits, each about the size and shape of a very small apple.

When you'd seen everything in the book, and marked when and where you saw it, you could have it signed by a teacher to say that the entries in it were genuine, as far as anyone could tell,

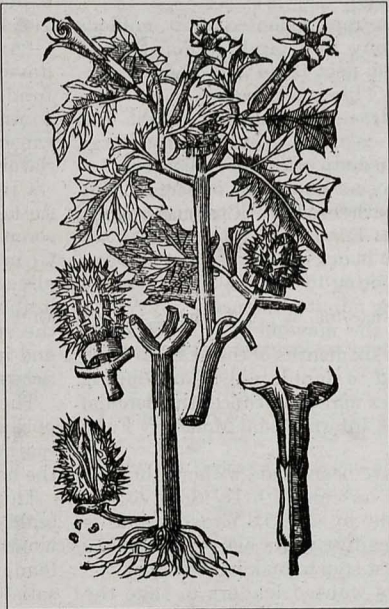
and then send the book off to Big Chief I-Spy at The Wigwam, Bouverie Street, London (i.e. the newspaper office), for a prize.

I never got a prize for this book, because I never saw the Thorn-Apple, described as "poisonous and rather rare."

When I moved to Caversham, however, the plant turned out to be a fairly common garden weed, typically infesting people's potato patches. Each "apple" contains between 400 and 800 seeds, which can lie dormant in the earth for at least a hundred years, coming into growth when the earth is broken, for cultivation or construction. A good book for amazing facts like these is Sir Edward Salisbury's *Weeds and Aliens*, published in the *New Naturalist* series. Sir Edward saw a plant with over 100 "apples" on it, which must have developed around three quarters of a million seeds!

Almost needless to say, I have now obtained a seed or two, and have a few plants in the garden as a curiosity. I hope they don't get out of control!

Happy Wanderer



CLAYFIELD COPSE ATTRACTS VOLUNTEERS AND SCHOOLS

Less than two weeks after the Woodland Day in June Clayfield Copse was once again the scene of frenzied activity. Under the auspices of the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) a 57-strong international group of American Express employees arrived to construct a path from the car park to Blackhouse Woods. This voluntary work which was under the direction of Andrew Noyes, local woodcraftsman and member of BTCV, was an exercise in team building as far as American Express was concerned. The young men and women volunteers were drawn from across Europe and beyond and enjoyed an invigorating day's activity maintaining this important open space. During the lunch break they had a conducted tour of the ancient woodland.

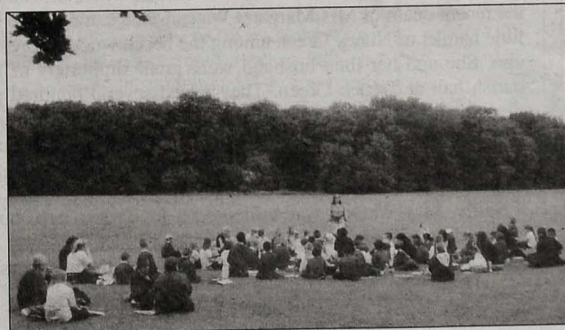
Coincidental with this event was the arrival of a double-decker bus full of pupils, teachers, parents and assistants from Moorlands Primary School in Tilehurst. Head Teacher Dr Alice Norman explained that their visit was part of a course on 'Art in the Environment' that included visits to the Forbury Gardens among other sites in Reading. Clayfield Copse seemed to have a threefold attraction: the opportunity to examine the carved waymarks in the woodland, to participate in some

orienteering and a pleasant place in which to have a picnic lunch. What is clear from both these events is the importance of Clayfield Copse in providing a green lung not only for the local residents, but also to those living elsewhere in Reading and far beyond. Caversham and Emmer Green are right to value it.

Tom Flood, the Chief Executive of BTCV, in his Foreword to the Trust's Strategic Plan, points out the unique nature of this international volunteering organisation that provides the bridge between global environmental ideals and local reality in the UK and overseas. It has as its philosophy Inspiring People and Improving Places. BTCV works with people and communities to take practical action to protect and improve the environment of their place – their street, neighbourhood, locality or region – wherever they live in the UK or overseas. Its approach is to help people to build healthy and safe communities, and increase their life skills. The aim is to inspire young people of today who will be the policy makers of tomorrow. From the activities in Clayfield Copse on one warm June day BTCV in collaboration with the Friends of Clayfield Copse, is going a long way to achieve these goals.



Amex volunteers at Clayfield Copse.



Q. Jewiss

Moorlands Primary School at Clayfield Copse.

O. Jewiss

[illegible]

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The People Roar; The G8 Whispers

by John Madeley

"The people have roared, the G8 responded with a whisper." This was the verdict on the Gleneagles summit of the world's eight most powerful leaders by Kumi Naidoo of South Africa, who chairs the Global Call to Action against Poverty. MakePovertyHistory is the UK arm of this international campaign.

The people certainly roared. In an unprecedented effort, millions wore the white band, wrote to Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, campaigned for more and better aid, debt relief and trade justice. The media reported on global poverty like never before.

And 250,000 people took to the streets of Edinburgh on the first Saturday of July in a wonderful carnival atmosphere to urge leaders to take substantial and immediate action to end poverty.

The number was twice as many as had been expected. The marchers started at midday, mostly dressed in white, and a white band was soon to ring the centre of Edinburgh. So great was the number that it took many of us two hours to start! But at 3.00pm, whether people were walking or waiting to start, a siren sounded and everyone stood for a very moving minute's silence.

Marchers were encouraged by the movement that Western governments had shown in the first six months of the year. In May, European Union countries agreed to double aid to developing countries. In June, finance ministers agreed to cancel the debts of 18 countries to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the African Development Fund.

These commitments would not have been made without the roar of our campaign. But they are not enough to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. These goals – unanimously agreed by all countries five years ago – include the halving of poverty by 2015 as the first step to making it history.

At the G8 summit, campaigners wanted leaders to take the measures that are needed to meet those goals. But leaders had little new to say.

"Aid for developing countries" says their communique "will increase, according to the OECD – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – by around \$50 billion a year by 2010".

The clause 'according to the OECD' is significant. Aid from the G8 countries and other donors was already predicted to increase by \$50 billion a year – from \$79 billion in 2004 to around \$130 billion in 2010.

"A substantial increase in official development assistance is required in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015", said the leaders.

But the aid was not given. The United Nations estimates that \$180 billion a year is needed by 2010 if the goals are to be reached. An additional \$100 billion a year, not \$50 billion, is therefore called for.

Leadership could have seen two things. It could have seen the eight leaders going beyond existing commitments and announcing an increase in aid to \$180 billion a year. And it could have seen them announce that the additional aid will start immediately, rather than in five years time.

If the \$50 billion had kicked in immediately, it could have lifted 300 million out of poverty in the next five years, according to Jo Leadbeater of Oxfam.

On debt there was again nothing new. The debts owed by 18 countries will be cancelled, but there are strings with countries expected in return to open up markets to foreign companies. Such a condition seems to contradict the notion of poor countries deciding their own plans.

On trade, there was one bright spot – fair trade made it into the G8 communique. "We welcome the growing market for fair-trade

goods and their positive effect in supporting livelihoods", it says.

On climate change there was nothing; no connection was made between poverty, especially in Africa, and the impact of global warming.

"Any progress made on African development at the G8 summit will be fundamentally undermined by failure to commit to urgent action to address the causes and effects of climate change," said Sarah La Trobe of Tearfund.

Climate change is already having a devastating impact on many African countries and communities, says Tearfund. Climate change will worsen Africa's already critical water crisis, it warns, put millions more at risk of hunger, increase the spread of malaria and other diseases and increase the frequency and severity of floods and droughts.

The biggest failure of the summit was perhaps the failure of leaders to tell the truth about how climate change will put the halving of poverty by 2015 out of reach.

Thus the G8 missed an opportunity to build on the progress made in the first six months of this year. We need now to urge leaders to raise their sights and not be satisfied with any policies that fall short of ending the scandal of a child dying of poverty every three seconds. It is vital that our campaign goes on.

John Madeley's latest book, "100 Ways to Make Poverty History", published by Canterbury Press, is now available.

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TRIBUTE

Mrs Margaret Watson

Those in Mapledurham who make up the now dwindling but long standing members of the rural part of the parish will be saddened to hear of the recent death of Mrs Margaret Watson. She came to live in the peaceful little hamlet of Nuney Green among the beech woods more than fifty years ago. She and her then husband were great supporters of the parish and parish hall at Trench Green. They raised several hundred pounds selling plants outside their home to walkers enjoying this lovely part of Oxfordshire. The money raised was mostly donated to the maintenance of the parish hall but some was also generously given to St Margaret's Church.

Sadly, Mrs Watson was widowed a few years ago, but she and her husband loved their life in the little hidden hamlet.

We send our deepest and sincere sympathy to the members of her family.

the CLUBS

Caversham Women's Institute

A rather sticky evening for members when Miss Rosina Marsh showed us how to make gift boxes. Some members proved a little more "crafty" in their efforts but all were pleased with final results.

Business was conducted after tea break and the speaker judged the competition- a pretty box. Mrs Sylvia Myszor was declared the winner with Mrs Nora Coates coming second. Members were reminded the next meeting will be in September with two coffee mornings to look forward to in August.

Caversham Community Association

July proved to be a busy month for some as the club's belongings had to be packed and stored prior to the move to Church House. We began with the usual games evening followed by another informal session, "Knit and natter," popular in holiday time.

Everyone wore red, white and blue the following week when members celebrated the VE/VJ 60th anniversary. A "Vera Lynn" tape put everyone in the right mood for a sing-song and all enjoyed the delicious bring and share supper. Various memories of war-time days were shared with an exhibition of photos.

The month ended with a popular bingo session with prizes for the lucky winners. Everyone is looking forward to the new beginning at Church House, Mondays at 7.30pm. Details tel: 947 9331.

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

Mrs E Manning, Chairman, welcomed members to the July meeting and gave apologies on behalf of two members. Birthday greetings were given to appropriate members.

Mrs Ann Deane, Secretary, gave her report of the National Council meeting in Cardiff. Among the speakers were HRH Princess Anne and Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, whose speeches, she said, were both thoroughly enjoyed.

A list of names for the Carol Service at Exeter Cathedral on December 14th was invited. There would be no Handicraft meetings until September. An auction of tinned goods provided great interest and support. A Quiz "Cryptic Confections" was then enjoyed with great amusement and won by Mrs Durden.

Poems were read by Mrs Trixie Kirby and Mrs E Manning. Childhood photographs were on view for members to "Guess Who", as the monthly competition. This was won by Mrs B Dobson. This ended our very enjoyable "Members Meeting".

Next meeting is 15th September in Church House, Caversham. New members welcome.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

Caversham and Chiltern Flower Club is having a Creativity Evening at its next meeting, Wednesday 14th September. This is an evening where members and visitors will get the chance to create a floral design with friends, and help and advice will be on hand. All materials will be provided, so come along and let your imagination flow! Its great fun. The venue is Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road, Caversham, and

begins at 7.30pm, doors open 6.45pm Entrance fee £4.00 for visitors, £3.00 Senior Citizens. Refreshments available. For more information contact Berna Macdonald on 0118 947 7400.

Reading and District Probus Club

"It wasn't my fault, officer"

After an illustrated talk on "Driving Standards" given by John Riley of the Standards Agency, the members drove away from their meeting with a different approach to their own driving and probably even more critical of the driving of others on the road.

The driving test started 70 years ago. Many remembered their own, but were not familiar with the "Driving Test Booklet" used in today's "Oral Test". There are now far more drivers over the age of 65 than there were twenty five years ago, and criticism is often made of the older driver. However, figures show that the majority only drive in daylight and on familiar routes.

John Riley said that 1 in 3 accidents can be related to alcohol or medication. Many questions and observations were made. For example, having passed the driving test without going on a Motorway how can a new driver get experience? The reply was that there is now a "Test Plus" course which can be taken, which can reduce "Probation Drivers" car insurance.

After the "refresher course", announcements were made about future activities; a Garden Party in August, an outing to Wilton House and factory, a Carol Concert in December. Any you are interested in? To find out more about PROBUS give Ray Head a ring on 0118-941-1445. Go on, drive him mad with your calls if you are retired and could do with one day a month without a spade or a paint brush

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

Neither Members nor potential new members were deterred by the hot evening from attending the July meeting. The speaker, Mrs Janice Tattersdill brought flowers with her which later in the evening she built into several delightful arrangements whilst entertaining the Guild with stories of her experiences working for a top London Florist, including work at the Palace and for the Royal Family generally over many years. Mrs Julia Perry, who appropriately had won the Nora Pollard Vase for her contribution to the Single Stem competition gave the vote of thanks.

Mrs Margaret Pocock reported on her visit to the Federation National Council Meeting at Cardiff International Arena. Subjects covered were children's play areas (local observations by members were welcomed), disabled children and a Family Planning discussion on the current rise in sexual problems. Urgent consideration was made of the recent cut-backs in further education and representations will be made to Government.

Emmer Green Guild look forward to their Garden Party to be held at 2 Highdown Avenue on Tuesday, 6th September at 2pm. Friends and anyone interested in membership will be welcome.

Caversham Ladies Club

The Chairman, Mrs Brenda Strong, welcomed all to the July meeting and thanked everyone for attending on a very hot day. Cards were handed to those who celebrate birthdays in July and August. This was followed by business matters and a reminder that the September meeting will include the Harvest sale; members were asked to bring produce.

The afternoon ended with members playing a variety of board games followed by a cup of tea served by the Committee.

New members are always welcome on the second Thursday of each month (not August) at 2pm in Caversham Baptist Church in Prospect Street.

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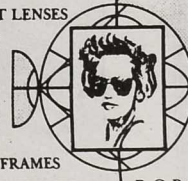
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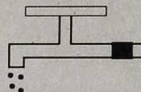
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