

GIRL GUIDING ROCKS AT CENTENARY CELEBRATION



Photos: courtesy C. Sharman

If you were anywhere near Rivermead Leisure Centre on a Sunday in March, your toes would have started tapping to the sound of the well-known tunes from the hit show Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. If you had looked into the large hall there, you would have witnessed over 150 members of Girlguiding in Berkshire, aged from only just six to 60 plus, giving their all in two performances, playing to audiences totalling well over 1300. There was dancing on stage, dancing in the aisles, and there's no doubt that the audience's toes were well and truly tapping. The place was filled with Rainbows, Brownies and Guides from across the whole of Berkshire.

It all started about a year ago, when thoughts were turning to what spectacular events could be put together to make Girlguiding's Centenary Year 2010 a truly memorable one. Our County Commissioner, Sue Kidd, had the idea of putting on a show - one in which as many people as wanted to could perform. Joseph was chosen because it lends itself so well to large numbers in chorus and dance. The number of girls who wanted to take part was overwhelming and the auditions were as closely fought as any professional ones.

Girls from Caversham Brownie and Guide units were well represented, being selected for some of the key parts, including Joseph himself, some of the brothers and the essential role of narrator. For some, their training in our church choirs (St Andrew's and St Peter's were certainly represented) definitely paid dividends. Other girls from Caversham took part in the chorus, as dancers, in the band, and as stage hands and Catharine Sharman, a member of St Peter's Choir, directed the 100 strong chorus!

So, after five months hard work in rehearsals, which had gradually become longer and more frequent, the whole show finally came together. Everyone knew her part and every aspect of the performances was slick and professional. The staging was simple, but effective, allowing the music and performers to shine through. The chorus was decked out in specially printed T-shirts in all the colours of the rainbow and more besides. All in all, it was a truly spectacular, colourful and memorable event and a fantastic experience for those who took part.

None of this would have been possible without the help of a willing band of volunteers, not all of whom are members of Girlguiding.

If you have skills you would like to share, or could give a little time to Girlguiding, please contact us at cavershamguides@hotmail.co.uk Catharine Sharman

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Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,
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Rev'd Alveen Thoresen, 25 Ilkley Road, Caversham,
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Rev'd Keith Kneeb-Robinson, 8 Hewett Close,
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TALKING POINT

by

Colin Ferguson

ELECTION TIME

Well here we are again! Election time is upon us and our trust level in politicians is at an all time low. Thankfully in Reading we have not been so sullied by the expenses scandal as we have been served by two good local members. You might not be aware of the fact that they are amongst the majority who did nothing wrong, as it is the wrongdoers who make the news. The trouble was that a genuine and newsworthy problem soon became more like a witch hunt and the newshounds were in full cry. Sadly some have been more interested in making news rather than just reporting it.

The most distressing thing about this furore is that people are beginning to think it is not worth voting. My Christian conscience however has always told me it is my right and duty to vote. So in spite of all the invective that has been spread about I will vote, not against anyone but for what I believe and for the local candidate who will best represent me.

There are those who say Christianity should not mix with politics but the whole Christian message is intensely political even though Christians have a wide and honest view about which party to support. Whichever one it is we must try to ensure that we have a just and ethical parliament which is based on truth, honesty and a genuine care for the whole of our community and do so through our own elected member. Neither the members of parliament whose greed has appalled us nor the newspapers which have revelled in this have done us any favours. They have undermined our willingness to vote and as such are no friend to the electorate or to the truth.

When I see nations that have been deprived of the freedom to vote for so long standing, at risk to their very life, to have that freedom, then I despair at our negativity. The great South African election where it took three days for everyone to vote still stands as a landmark in international history. We sometimes forget that our ancestors suffered and died to get us the right to vote. We owe it to our history and to our future to use that vote, whomever we vote for.

The greatest triumph of any terrorist group is to deprive people of the right to choose.

The negativity of some newspapers could yet be as destructive as any act of terrorism if it stops us from using our right to vote. Making people think that it is not worth voting is the first step to power being in the hands of those we would not want.

We have a good system of government, though it can always be improved, but we elect human beings and not saints. There will always be those who do not measure up to its highest standards as parliament must operate with our human frailty and weakness as well as with honour.

As such I dislike the inference that we should vote for the party leader or focus on the main parties as if other views are unimportant, our government has never been and never should be some sham beauty contest or a gamble on a winner. We vote for parties to reflect our views and not for some pseudo presidential exercise.

With all its problems we need a government and our vote is all we have to show what we feel. If you don't like the big parties then the little ones will enjoy your support. Whatever we do, we cannot do nothing. Our vote is a symbol of our freedom.

Colin Ferguson is a lay preacher of the United Reformed Church

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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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Email:
parishoffice@stpetercaversham.idps.co.uk

Advertising copy for the June 2010 issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 30th April 2010**. The date for the July 2010 issue is **Friday June 4th 2010**.



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May Be

Following the success of last year's art exhibition, three local artists (members of St Andrew's) have invited three more to put on a second exciting show called May Be at St Andrew's Church, Caversham on April 30th, 7-9pm and May 1st-3rd, 3-7pm.

Just like last year's family event on the May Day bank holiday weekend, this is a contemporary art exhibition in a religious space, and not a religious art exhibition. However the church does provide a very special and reflective setting in which to share some thoughts about art and life.

"We are so lucky to have this beautiful church, which should be here for the benefit of the whole community, not just regular churchgoers, so it's been great to be able to host such an exciting and interesting exhibition." said Revd Nigel Jones about last year's event.

The variety of artwork includes photography, etchings, sculptures, drawings and installations as well as some interactive work. There will also be a range of activities and events throughout the weekend as well as a café (open daily). Entrance is free.

A line of colour

You are invited to take part in the exhibition by bringing a potted plant (not specially bought). These will be placed on the wall outside the church creating a line of colour. At the end of the exhibition you may leave your plant for another visitor to the church, choosing another plant to take home or collect your original plant. We hope to create a living wall reflecting the local community and richness of nature at the start of May.

SUE RYDER CARE - CHILTERN CHALLENGE

The Chiltern Challenge Walk on Sunday 6th June is a sponsored walk consisting of two circular, off road walks, starting and finishing at Nettlebed Hospice.

The routes have been redesigned for this year, with the five mile and thirteen mile routes following footpaths around the Chilterns, providing walkers with some spectacular views!

If you have a love for walking and like a challenge or just want a fun and active family day out, you are sure to have a wonderful time, while raising much needed funds for a very worthy cause.

Entry fee in advance is £5 for adults & £2 for children (under

16). Entry on the day will be £10 for adults and £5 for children or £25 for a family of two adults and up to three children.

To register go to: www.suerydercare.org/chilternchallengewalk or for more information please contact the Fundraising Dept. on: 01491 641070.

The 2010 Sue Ryder Care Midnight Walk will be taking place on Sat 8th May and will be bigger and better than ever! For more information please contact the Fundraising Dept on: 01491 641070

or email:

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Langtree Sinfonia Spring Concert

The spring concert of the Langtree Sinfonia, conducted by Paul Cox, will be held in Dorchester Abbey, Dorchester-on-Thames on Sunday May 9th at 7.00pm.

The evening starts with Sibelius's tone poem *The Swan of Tuonela* and then Nils Franke will perform Schumann's Piano Concerto in A minor. The evening will be rounded off with Schumann's evocative 3rd Symphony, the so-called Rhenish Symphony. Tickets, costing £8.50 (adults), £7.50 (patrons), £4.00 (students) are available at the door, from 'Inspiration' The Arcade, Goring or 0118 941 5498.

Open Day at Caversham Croquet Club

Come and try this traditional way of spending an English afternoon at Albert Park

If you thought croquet was for the upper crust, Caversham Croquet Club will disillusion you!

If you want to find out more about croquet or just want to try it, the club invites you and your friends to come to Albert Road Park on Monday 31st May from 10 am to sundown (£1 entrance charge).

It is a game combining physical skills and mental cunning.

Mallets and balls are provided and advice and coaching will be available. Try a short game and then sit under the walnut tree sipping tea and eating [your own] cucumber sandwiches. Flat shoes are advised. Children over 10 are welcome to play.

CAVERSHAM BOWLING CLUB

Looking for some gentle exercise? Or perhaps the opportunity to play a sport enjoyed by both men and women of all ages, and make new friends?

Throughout the summer, starting on 21st May, each Friday evening from 6.00 pm, Caversham Bowling Club will be open to anyone who would like to come along and try their hand. The only requirements are flat-soled shoes and enthusiasm. Our members will be on hand to offer advice and instruction.

The club has a friendly atmosphere with a licensed bar, and organises social events throughout the year. Come along and try your hand, you may be pleasantly surprised.

Ample free parking is available next to the green in the Recreation Ground, Albert Road.

For more information, contact Sue Reeves on 947 5857.

Memorial service for Imogen Martin

Many readers will remember former Caversham resident Imogen Martin (formerly Pravda) who died in February at her home in Kingsbridge South Devon, aged 62. A memorial service to celebrate her life will be held at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Saturday 8th May at 11.30am. Her family (Helen, Tom, Isobel and Georgia) invite all who knew her to join them at this service of remembrance.

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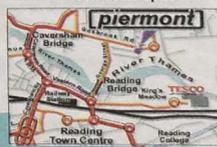
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READING 2030 VISION AND VOICE

Reading has the highest rate of injecting drug misuse in the South East region of the UK. Eleven neighbourhoods are within the 20% most deprived in the country. Reading station is the second busiest interchange in the UK outside London. Over 40% of homes in the private sector fail the government's 'decent homes standard.' Of the adult population in Reading 24% regularly participate in 'volunteering.'

These were some of the facts that confronted delegates at a conference, entitled Vision and Voice, for volunteers in March. It was part of an overall strategy to plan our town for the next 20 years.

The main speaker was Baroness Pitkeathley of Caversham, Chair of the Third Sector (Volunteers) Advisory Body and Deputy Speaker of the House of Lords. Looking at the cynicism towards politicians and our sense of powerlessness, she stressed the importance and role of the voluntary sector in building a sense of community. She underlined the campaigning role of volunteers in expressing local views, in equipping people with life skills so enabling their role of challenge, and to lead in civic renewal. With the recent recession and the inevitable spending cuts the voluntary sector will inevitably assume a greater role in our society.

The conference consisted of a mix of addresses, open forum question and answer sessions and very fluid breakout groups. The 100 plus delegates chose their areas of interest or expertise to draft ideas for analysis and feeding into the programme setting the agenda for the next 20 years. While this is an ambitious project we have to ask whether we want to do something to help our future community or not.

The 24% who regularly volunteer have given their answer. Many reading this paper are in that group. But everyone has a skill that can be used whether related to career or lifelong hobby. It may be practical, organisational, supportive, lecturing, writing, accounting, in short 'living.'

After the 'years of plenty' 25% of the children and 11% of the population in Reading live in some of the most deprived areas of our country while 25% of our children live in its richest areas. What will be the effect of the 'years of famine' that most politicians threaten us with?

A practical example

Looking at the statistics for free school meals in Reading schools which are the main statistic (not an absolute measure) used to assess societal deprivation from those benefits that most of us consider give life a quality of well-being and happiness, how are we doing in Reading? Here is an extract from those figures of free school meals. Judge for yourselves:

Number of children with free school meals:
Caversham Wards - 199 out of a population of about 31 000
Whitley Ward - 603 of a population of about 10 000
The disparity between the two areas is clear.

How are our selective schools fulfilling this crucial role in advancing the betterment of children from our disadvantaged groups? At Reading School one pupil has free school meals and at Kendrick there are two.

If one suggested that educational attainment was linked to race it would be considered an unfounded, bigoted and racially prejudiced statement. However I do hear the comment that these underachieving areas 'bring it on themselves' in that the people are somehow intellectually inferior and so find themselves in a life cycle of social inadequacy. These are the same arguments used by racists and do not bear scrutiny. However what does bear scrutiny is the fact that if this is the state of Reading now, what will it be like after several years of financial cuts.

No single solution

The voluntary sector is not just about filling in the shortfall through a free workforce. It should also be a pressure group to challenge the politicians and raise the profile and impact of community involvement. If you want a contact then look up www.strongertogether.org.uk

This is a really interesting website

WORDPLAY

Our shops are at the centre of the community. The character of our village is both determined by and determines the character of our community. So when one of our pivotal shops changes hands it is of interest to us all who are interested in 'community.'

WordPlay is the book and toyshop on Prospect Street. The building is one of the oldest shops in Caversham. In fact we are not sure when it started. Somewhere in the middle of the 19th century it was a sweetshop run by the Talbot sisters. These ladies were related to a Caversham dynasty of craftsmen and traders. For instance we know that the family owned boatyards on the river. Prior to that there must

have been some sort of residence or shop there since in the cellar a well, which had been covered over, was discovered in the 1990s. The water in this well, a good 14' deep, never changes its level and probably feeds off an underwater stream.

At one point the building was a bakers with its own oven. This was donated in 1984 to Reading Museum by John and Lindsay Mullaney when they bought the premises from Parslows the bakers and transferred Caversham Bookshop from further up the street.

After 25 years John and Lindsay were succeeded by Chris and Julia at WordPlay and now they have passed the baton on to Deirdre Smith. Deirdre has lived in Caversham since 1997. Both she and her husband commuted to London daily, but as their little boy is growing up (he is now five) Deirdre looked for a change of life style. Chris and Julia were looking to move on themselves after five years during which they built up the toy and bookshop concept. This was ideal timing for Deirdre who has now taken over the business.

Let us hope that Caversham people will support the traders in this historic building which has been at the centre of the Caversham community for well over a century.

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CHRISTIAN AID WEEK

Christian Aid Week 2010 takes place from Sunday 9th May to Saturday 15th May.

The annual Christian Aid Walk is on Saturday 15th May and is as usual over five, 10 or 15 mile courses starting from Bix Village Hall at 8.30am.

Anyone who would like to take part in these pleasant country walks can obtain application forms and all details either from their church Christian Aid representative or direct from Keith Stephen-Evans (947 3619). The walks are

suitable for all ages and can be an enjoyable morning's outing.

The Christian Aid Service this year will be at St John's Church on Sunday 9th May at 6.30pm. Maranda St John Nicolle will be the guest speaker from Christian Aid.

The Caversham street collections have decreased over the last two years, mainly due to a shortage of collectors. Please answer your church representative's plea for help or just volunteer your services even if only to collect from part of a road.

A visit to the Mayor's Parlour

On a gridlocked evening in March the 5th Caversham Brownies visited the Mayor's Parlour in Reading. The Mayoress, Mrs Pugh, was leader of the unit in days past and was very pleased to welcome the girls. The Mayor waited patiently in the Civic Centre foyer while we all battled through the traffic.

The Mayor told the girls a little about his work and introduced them to his mascot Fred Bear. He showed the girls his chain of office and explained that each link was engraved with the name of one of the previous 17 Mayors and that his name would be added at the end of his term of office.

At this point one of the girls went to the toilet and came back and announced that the toilet was 'really cool' which precipitated a rush of children discovering they needed to pay a visit!

The highlight of the evening was trying on the Mayor's robes and hat. Everyone had a go, wearing both the Mayor's robe and the Deputy Mayor's robe with much excitement and giggling. Snowy Owl tried on the chain of office and was rather pleased with the result.

After a squash and chocolate biscuit break, two of the girls, Mia and Aino, made their Brownie Promise. Hopefully they will remember the occasion when they are older.

After signing the visitors' book, receiving a Mayor Bear each and making a quick visit to the council chamber, our evening was over. We would like to thank Mr and Mrs Pugh for being such lovely hosts and giving us a really special evening.

If you have skills you would like to share, or could give a little time to Girlguiding, contact us at cavershamguides@hotmail.co.uk.



Trying on the Robes.



Aino makes her promise.

Photos: C. Smith

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CHURCHES

News from Parish of Our Lady and St Anne

Bishop William Kenney, our Area Bishop, came to the parish of Our Lady and St Anne on Thursday, 25th March to administer the sacrament of Confirmation. Thirty six young people, mostly from St Anne's school, were confirmed.

Bishop Kenney spoke about how sometimes unexpected things happen in our lives (it was the feast of the Annunciation). Sometimes they are good changes and sometimes not, but God is always with us. The bishop used his own unexpected move back from Stockholm to Birmingham as an illustration.

After the ceremony, refreshments were served in the Cenacle, the traditional Confirmation cake was cut and the bishop was able to stay a while to talk to the newly confirmed and their families.



Helyn Collins

Bishop Kenney with some of the newly confirmed.

METHODIST NEWS

It was a Maundy Thursday evening with a difference as the two Methodist Churches in Caversham joined together at Caversham Heights Methodist Church for a Passover style fellowship meal incorporating the sacrament of Holy Communion.

The front part of the church was arranged with tables and chairs, colourful tablecloths, blue napkins, cutlery and glasses. It *looked* different.

The Rev. Jenny Dowding began by explaining why the old Jewish Passover festival had been instituted and the significance of the various symbols. She said it was essentially a family meal to remember the release of their forefathers from captivity in Egypt. It was in that context that we shared our first course of shepherds pie and vegetables with much chatter and laughter. Bible readings and songs linked the story in Exodus with the meal that Jesus shared with the disciples in the Upper Room just before his arrest. Then there was the second course of crumble and ice cream.

Tables cleared, we came to the Holy Communion. This, too, was different as on the communion table were seven chalices and seven plates each with a small loaf of bread. One was given to each table and we served each other. After a time of prayer and a hymn the lights were extinguished and we left the church in silence.

It had been a very different evening.

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CELEBRATING THE FEAST OF ST. PATRICK

On Saturday 13th March St. Anne's Parish Hall was transformed into a Ballroom of Romance to celebrate the feast of St. Patrick. Music was provided by Bartley Coyne and his band and as soon as the first note was played couples took to the beautiful, sprung, maple floor displaying skills that would not look out of place on Strictly Come Dancing.

During the interval, entertainment was provided by dancers from the Dunlop-Munnelly School of Irish Dancing who dazzled with their Riverdance routines. The climax of the cabaret was a display by the award winning senior team from the Feeney School of Irish Dancing who reunited especially for the evening. After the interval, those attending were inspired to have a go at ceili dancing and thoroughly enjoyed an energetic Siege of Ennis. For the rest of the evening the dance floor was full and even those who professed to having two left feet were persuaded to have a go.

The evening was a wonderful social occasion which raised in excess of £900 for the parish Building Fund. Many thanks to all those who worked so hard to make it such an enjoyable and successful evening.

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CHURCHES

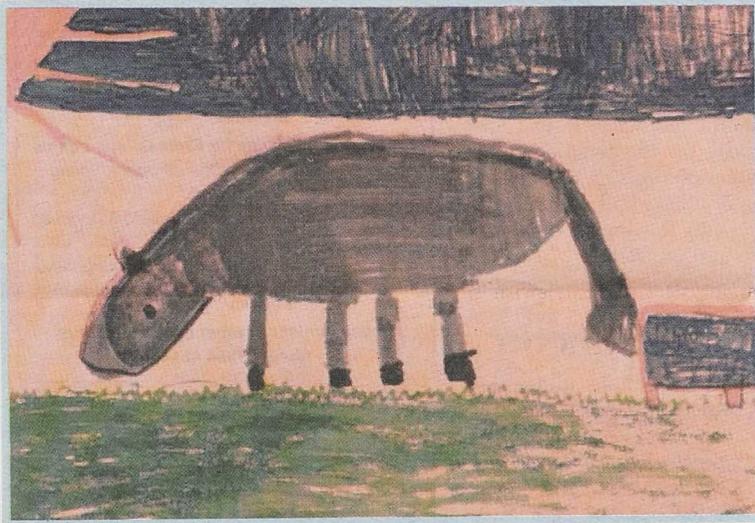
HUNDREDS OBSERVE HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

Large congregations have typified the observance of Easter this year. Certainly that has been the experience at St Barnabas, Emmer Green, where many people have attended various services.

Palm Sunday saw the traditional procession with palms from Hall to Church followed by a dramatised reading of The Passion according to St Luke, whilst The Encouragers presented the Easter Story to the Junior Church. On Maundy Thursday, before the commemoration of the Last Supper around a central nave altar, the Vicar, the Revd Derek Chandler, following Christ's actions of washing his disciples' feet, washed the feet of a token number from the congregation. After the Communion, the altar was stripped and a watch kept until midnight. On Good Friday a series of meditations coincided with the last hour that Jesus hung on the cross.

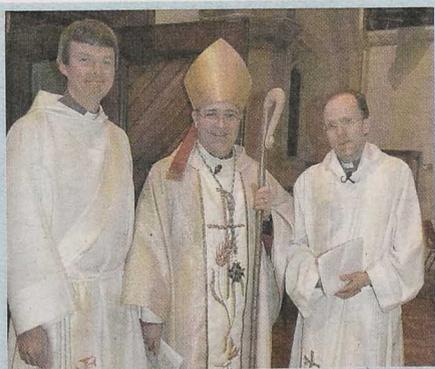
Dawn on Easter Day at St Barnabas is special: 24 people of all ages gathered in the Church at 5.45am in darkness just as the dawn chorus was starting before the new Pascal candle was lit from a fire in the church grounds. The Light of Christ was then processed into the church bringing the light into darkness.

Later in the morning the Church was filled completely with a congregation of over 200 for the Family Communion; extra chairs had to be brought in to prevent the 'house full' signs having to be put up.



O. Jewiss

CAVERSHAM WELCOMES ITS FIRST COMMUNITY PRIEST



Revd Dan Tyndall, the Bishop of Reading, Revd Jeremy Tear.

A large congregation from Caversham and friends from further afield, including Macclesfield (the last parish of the new priest), gathered in St John the Baptist Church on 10 March for the licensing by the Bishop of Reading of the Revd Jeremy Tear as Community Priest in the parishes of St John's and St Peter's with St Margaret's, Mapledurham.

In the Liturgy of Licensing, representatives of the parish of St John the Baptist, the Churches of St Peter and St Margaret and the Ministry Team severally presented to Jeremy Tear symbols of ministry, as did, jointly, Father Giles Goward and Deacon Becky Bawden on behalf of Churches Together in Caversham. After certain legal formalities and expressions of welcome to Jeremy, the service moved on to the Liturgy of the Sacrament in the form of Holy Communion. Finally the congregation was sent out with God's blessing to proclaim the Gospel to the world, after being fortified by refreshment in Caversham Hall.

EASTER EVE WITNESS BY CAVERSHAM CHURCHES



Under the banner of Churches Together in Caversham, members of the various churches gathered in St Martin's Precinct on the morning of Easter Eve to sing seasonal hymns and briefly pray together. This act of witness demonstrated the wish to celebrate and show deeper unity in Christ; to remind people of the true meaning of Easter; to share the love of God with the people of Caversham, to spread a little happiness and to share the good news that Jesus, having died for us so that we might know forgiveness and new life, had conquered evil and death, once, for all, and for ever.

This act of witness was organised thanks to the enthusiasm of Heather Wilson and the Revd Margaret Dimmick of Caversham Park Church. The singing, with violin and guitar accompaniment, attracted the attention of passers by - several of whom joined in. Even the hollow Easter eggs that were given out were a symbol, reminding people of the tomb in which Jesus was placed by his friends and which was found empty on the first Easter morning because Jesus is risen!

THE ENCOURAGERS SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF EASTER

On 22 and 23 March over 400 Year 1, 2 and Reception children from Emmer Green and The Hill Primary Schools, and Emmer Green Pre-School heard and saw The Encouragers (the St Barnabas puppet group) tell the Easter Story. What happened is best told through the lovely thank-you note from one of the children.

Rebecca wrote: The man and the donkey told a story of Jesus. A King was on the donkey's back. We sang a song and here it is: A king rode on a donkey, a king rode on a donkey, a king rode on a donkey and his name is Jesus. Jesus said this is the last time I will be with you. He took them to a quiet place. Some guards took Jesus and killed him. They took the body and kept it. Two days later it had gone. Two angels said Jesus is not dead. He is alive they told the people.

The donkey was obviously the star of the show as can be seen on this thank-you card from Emmer Green Primary School!

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CHURCHES

Let everything that has breath praise God



This was the theme of the service for the Women's World Day of Prayer prepared by the women of the Cameroon. The service was held at St Andrew's Church in Caversham and it was indeed a service of praise, well attended by a congregation of men, women and young people.

In his welcome, Rev Nigel Jones, vicar of St Andrew's, said he ensured he knew about the background of this world wide annual event by googling it! Then the service began with a procession of the ladies of the Caversham committee carrying banners from their various churches as we sang "We are marching in the light of God".

The organist and members of St Andrew's choir led the joyful singing. It was really encouraging to have some younger people taking part both in the singing and the reading during the service.

The speaker, Rev Caroline Wilson, recalled Mary's song of praise on receiving the news that she was to be the mother of Jesus. She also helped everyone to focus prayerfully on the people of the Cameroon by showing colourful and vibrant pictures on the screen.

As the service ended with the singing of "You shall go out with joy" all present felt uplifted and filled with the joy of the Lord having taken part in this time of worship and praise.

Dorothy Abrey, Caversham Co-ordinator

PARENTHESIS CHOIR in Concert

The day before Palm Sunday the Parenthesis choir, under the musical direction of Valerie Hoppé, performed Mozart's Mass in C minor at St Andrew's Church.

The choir, supported by four young soloists Rebecca Gresson, John Lee, Alison Underwood and Gareth Moss, not only approached the piece with verve and stamina but put their own stamp of conviction and accessibility on a most demanding piece. The work itself, at once lyrical and fugal, is permeated with a spirit of joyful thanksgiving. It was written in thanksgiving for the safe delivery of Mozart's first child.

Although originally written for two choirs this adaptation, whereby the soloists replaced one of the choirs, in no way diminished its impact. Any loss of majesty, due to lack of an orchestra and a full second choir, was overcome by the subtlety of expression afforded through the solo voices and by the keyboard playing of Martin Jones, the choir's resident accompanist.

Before the interval the soloists presented four short pieces which maintained the spiritual tone of the evening. The choice of works by Bach, Handel, Caccini and Mozart was not only complementary to the main work but a thoughtful introduction to it.

I have attended many Parenthesis choir events and this must rank amongst their finest. Under Valerie Hoppé's direction the choir continues to move forward and I would strongly recommend you ensure you hear their next performance. If you would like to find out more about the choir then visit their website www.parenthesis.org.uk

J.M.

BISHOP OF READING TO BE NEXT BISHOP OF CHELMSFORD

Many of us who heard that the Bishop of Reading, the Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, had been nominated by the Queen to be the next Bishop of Chelmsford, received the news with joy and sadness. Joy for Bishop Stephen and Chelmsford as he moves on to the county of his birth to be their Diocesan Bishop: a move that he makes with the congratulations of our readers and every blessing for his future ministry. Sadness as after six happy years we, whatever our denomination, are losing from our midst an inspirational spiritual leader by whom we have been privileged to be guided. Bishop Stephen leaves us in the summer and he and his wife Rebecca and their three sons move with the good wishes of the people of Caversham.

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ENVIRONMENT

The May-flower

Where I grew up, we called them May-flowers. The May-flowers by the local stream were a sign that spring had really arrived, so to a small boy it seemed odd to be told that the doctor was coming in his Mayflower – which turned out to be the kind of car he drove.

May-flowers opened at the beginning of May, or so we thought, though in some seasons it may actually have been April.

In other parts of the country, they were called Cuckoo-flowers, because they were thought to open when the cuckoo arrived. Richard Mabey, in his book "Flora Britannica", gives a table of the dates in 1994 on which people in different parts of the country saw the Cuckoo-flower open, and heard the cuckoo for the first time. In that year, on average, the flower opened about four days before the arrival of the cuckoo, whether the informant was in southern England or northern Scotland.

Geoffrey Grigson, in "The Englishman's Flora", lists no fewer than thirteen spring flowers which have been called "Cuckoo-flower" across the country. Besides the plant in question, there are the Wood Anemone, Red Campion, Ragged Robin, Greater Stitchwort, Wood Sorrel, Meadow Saxifrage, Water Violet, Bluebell, Lords-and-Ladies, and various orchid species.

Major Lowsley, in his "Glossary of Berkshire Words and Phrases", tells us that, in Berkshire, a Cuckoo-flower was what is more usually known as Ragged Robin.

I had long assumed that the name Lady's-smock had been given to the May-flower because of the intricate way

in which its leaves are cut, making a pattern like smocking. Nothing so innocent! Upon further reading, I discover that the outer garment worn by a farm worker was actually a smock-frock, and that a smock was a lady's undergarment. The pale-coloured flowers were thought to look like underwear.

Shakespeare says as much in the spring song near the end of "Love's Labour's Lost", which begins:

When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight.

He goes on to mention some of the other joys of spring, with shepherds piping, ploughmen getting up with the lark, birds mating, cuckoos mocking deceived husbands . . . and maidens bleaching their smocks.

One can imagine our Victorian ancestors having none of this: they would have told you that name was a translation of the French name of the plant, Chemise de Notre Dame, the flowers were a symbol of purity, and that when the old calendar was in force, they would have opened around Lady Day!

Incidentally, regular readers of this column will know that I am by no means averse to trying out those things I describe which are supposed to be edible. The results have been variable. Apparently, the leaves of the May-flower have a hot taste, like watercress, and are good in sandwiches and salads. I may try them – but it seems such a pity to pick such an attractive plant.

Happy Wanderer



Local Conservation Group News

Recently, econet conservation volunteers were at Caversham Court to repair and lay a hedge around the wildlife area on the allotments there, and earlier in the month were cutting willow from the beds along Napier Rd in Kings Meadow for various projects such as local willow weavers, the RISC garden and some school gardens.

Mapledurham playing fields friends continued their work opening up the Chazey Road footpath.

Clayfield Cope Friends asked local botanist Tina Gower to lead the bluebell and woodland flower walk on 18th April and are planning an early morning event for International Dawn Chorus day on 2nd May.

See www.econetreading.org.uk for information on all groups.

National Bean Pole Week 17-25 April

An event promoted by Small Woods Association. Conservation groups in the Reading area have had permission from Reading Parks Department to coppice hazel from certain areas in Reading's woodlands as part of their woodland management plans. These hazel wand make excellent bean poles. [The groups are selling bundles of 11 [approx 7ft long] poles to raise money for their tools fund. The bundles will be £5 each, and there could be pea sticks as a by-product of the coppicing if required.]

Coppiced woodlands have been neglected during the last century, so by reintroducing this traditional product and traditional management we are rejuvenating the woodlands which have been so neglected over the last 70 years, opening them up to allow sunlight and warmth, a boost for woodland flowers like bluebells, and insects such as fritillary butterflies.

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More fascinating info on www.Coppice-Products.co.uk

Another date to note is 19 June when Water Fest and Forbury Fever combine, and where local conservation volunteers will be having a stall.

CAVERSHAM COURT UPDATE

Guided tour

Friends of Caversham Court Gardens' volunteer guides will be offering tours of the gardens on the first Sunday of each month from May to October between 2.30 and 5.00pm to explain about the history of the gardens, the gazebo, the vinery and the houses formerly on the site.

- The kiosk is open again in aid of local charities (Ways and Means Trust, Women's Institute, League of Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital and Duchess of Kent House charity) on afternoons from Thursday to Sunday from 1pm to 5pm and on Bank Holiday Mondays too. Enjoy their wonderful cakes with tea and coffee.

What's new

A new steel structure has been erected which gives the impression of the shape and style of the vinery greenhouse. Plants will be grown over it to give some shade and shelter.

Friends of Caversham Court Gardens AGM.

24 March was a great evening for FCCG when the Mayor, accompanied by the Mayoress, welcomed MP Rob Wilson, and over 100 members and guests to the AGM.

The Mayor said he regarded the re-opening of the refurbished Caversham Court as the most significant event of his year in office, so much so that he will be having it engraved on the reverse of his link in the mayoral chain, following the tradition established by his predecessors. He also said that he would do everything in his power to maintain the funding for Caversham Court so that it could be looked after to the highest possible standards.

The business meeting was followed by a presentation from Giles Pritchard, who was the historic buildings architect responsible for the renovation of the structures in Caversham Court. He talked about how they had worked out what to do with the causeway, combining information from old maps and modern survey techniques with the help of computer aided design. He described the detective work involved in working out the shape of the vinery greenhouse, starting with traces of a gutter in an unexpected place. He showed how it had become clear that the old Tudor striped house had not been completely demolished in the nineteenth century but had been covered with new rendering to make it look like gothic stonework.

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Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The AGM of the Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild took place in March and a working committee was elected. Marion Cooper and Jean Perrin retired from the committee and were warmly thanked for very many years of work and service to the Guild. We look forward to what looks to be a busy year and an extremely interesting and varied programme of speakers. Our finances are in good shape and owing to members' efforts and generosity we are able to donate over £460 to The Alexander Devine Children's Charity.

After tea and delicious cakes the evening proceeded with quizzes and a raffle, with members having the opportunity to catch up with all the news after a difficult start to 2010, both weather and healthwise. We were delighted to welcome back Hilda Russell after a hip replacement operation and are in constant touch with those several members still recovering from operations or with continuing health problems.

With the improving weather we look forward to our next meeting on Tuesday 11th May, 7.30pm at St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green when Bill Port will tell us the history of the Kenton Theatre in Henley. There will be a plant sale and all ladies are welcome to join us.

Rosehill WI

Members met for the AGM at the March meeting. President Mrs Brenda Caborn opened the meeting with the sad news that Mrs Dorothy Gillings had died in February. Although Mrs Gillings had not been able to attend meetings for some time owing to ill health she was a very long serving member and will be especially remembered for her beautiful craft work. Our presidents also wear the silver president's badge that she very kindly donated to Rosehill. Brenda then carried on with the letters and announcements and Mrs Margaret Pyle read the minutes and report in the absence of the secretary Mrs Margaret Seal. Margaret Pyle the treasurer then presented the Financial report and told members our finances were in a very healthy state. The walkers enjoyed some interesting walks and lunches, and the scrabble group had very nice social afternoons. The knitters made 39 blankets, 66 bonnets and 85 cardigans for Buscot Premature Baby ward at the RBH, the Tea and Chat afternoons were also enjoyed. Brenda then thanked committee members for their help and support and non-committee members who very willingly give their help, and above all a thank you went to members for continuing to support the WI. There being no nominations for president or committee members, Mrs Brenda Caborn and the committee were re-elected. A light hearted quiz was entered into and was enjoyed with a cup of tea and a raffle brought the meeting to a close.

The next meeting will be the resolutions put forward by National WI on 6 May as usual at St Barnabas Church Hall Emmer Green at 2 p.m. Visitors are always welcome

St Peter's Wives Group

At the March meeting Jacqueline Kavanagh gave a talk on the BBC Written Archives, which are held at BBC Caversham Park. They constitute the working papers of the organisation from 1922 to the 1980s and are one of the most important sources for the study of British society and culture in the twentieth century.

Jacqueline took us from the very beginning of the BBC, when it was a commercial company selling radio sets, through its first charter in 1927, with John Reith as its first Director General, and the many other facets of the organisation, not least major research and development, radio and television programmes, overseas broadcasting, web sites, etc. All of these activities generate documents, which have to be filed and archived. BBC Monitoring, also at Caversham Park, listens in to the broadcasts of other countries.

Jacqueline brought with her a number of items from the archives, including copies of speeches by Winston Churchill and Neville Chamberlain's speech on the outbreak of the Second World War. Also included was a copy of the front page of the first edition of Radio Times in 1923, the rules of conduct for the Dick Barton series, Alistair Cooke's 'Letter from America' and many others.

Jacqueline also gave us a very interesting history of Caversham Park, from medieval times to the present. She was such an interesting speaker and her depth of knowledge so comprehensive that we could have listened to her for much longer.

Our next meeting will be at Church House on Tuesday, 18 May

at 8.00pm when we will be holding a plant exchange.
New members always welcome.

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

In March, Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild held their Annual General Meeting and successfully elected a full committee.

During the meeting the Chairman and Secretary reviewed a successful and happy year with interesting and varied talks and activities such as the craft group. New members had also been welcomed. Members had attended the Berkshire Federation events, ie Guy Fawkes lunch, an outing to the Tower of London and the Christmas celebration. In spite of inclement weather, a garden party was held in August, to which members of other Guilds and Federations were invited. 2009 ended with a Christmas lunch and also a Christmas tea party. After the business side of the AGM, members, including two visitors, enjoyed a quiz.

On a sad note members learned of the death of Mrs Carole Cotterell who died at the beginning of March. Mrs Cotterell was a new member and she will be sadly missed.

Caversham Afternoon Guild meets every third Thursday at 2pm at Caversham Baptist Hall, South Street, Caversham and visitors will be warmly welcomed.

Caversham WI

The annual meeting brought members and two visitors together. After the normal WI business, the formal proceedings included the presentation and adoption of the financial statement. The president, Miss Cameron, gave her report on the previous year's activities. Existing committee members were re-elected except for Mrs Doreen Stallwood who has resigned. Mrs Mary Lewis was elected to take her place. The election for president resulted in Miss M Cameron continuing in the position.

After tea, a bring and buy raised some funds and the evening ended with a green quiz. Mrs Doreen Beard was the winner with 100% correct.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

On Wednesday 12th May, Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club is holding a demonstration by Jackie Eyre entitled "Summer Medley". Jackie is a National Demonstrator and the evening promises to be a great event, starting at 7.30pm, doors opening at 6.45pm. A £2 supplement for members, and an entrance fee of £6.50 for visitors, will be necessary to cover the extra costs of a National Demonstrator. As usual, there will be a book stall, and plants and refreshments will be available. For further details contact Berna Macdonald on 0118 947 7400.

Caversham Horticultural Society

Caversham Horticultural Society is holding two events in May to which all are invited.

Do you have gaps in your borders due to plants failing to survive this last winter, or do you just need some more plants in the garden? Why not come to the Spring Plant Sale on Saturday 15th May between 10.00 - 11.30am and purchase plants at ridiculously cheap prices. The sale will be held at the Oakley Road allotments near the society's trading shed which will also be open for members to purchase composts and other gardening sundries. Non members who wish to join the society will be able to do so at the plant sale and make use of the trading shed.

Our second event is the May talk when Brian Davis will give an illustrated talk entitled "Madeira - a plant paradise". Brian Davis is a frequent visitor to the island so he is very familiar with the huge range of plants to be found on this beautiful island. This talk will be held at the usual venue, Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road on Wednesday 20th May at 7.45pm.

Caversham Arts Trail

An eclectic mix of Caversham Artists and Makers will be showing their work over a two weekend event at selected Caversham venues on May 8th & 9th and 15th & 16th.

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TRIBUTE

ELIZABETH PATRICIA FIELD (1926-2010)

Elizabeth was born in Birmingham on July 1st 1926 and lived in Hall Green. At the age of three she met Bevan Field, who was born on 5 March in the same year, and maintained a relationship with him all his life. During her teenage years she was a regular worshipper at St Agatha's in Sparkbrook, a noted Anglo-Catholic Church. She maintained her High Church convictions all her life.

When she was 18 she went up to Somerville College to read Greats. It was wartime when Oxford was a very different place. There were few men undergraduates and some Colleges had let rooms to nurses and others involved in the war effort. A fellow undergraduate was Margaret Roberts whom she knew because she was in the same part of the college but did not like! Margaret Roberts was, of course, to become Margaret Thatcher! Elizabeth graduated in 1948 and went to Homerton College in Cambridge for her teacher's diploma.

She taught for a time at Warwick Grammar School for Girls before returning to Birmingham to teach at Edgbaston High School for Girls. While there she married Bevan at St James's Church in Edgbaston on 23 August 1958. Bevan would take her to church but never went inside again after their wedding. On Sundays, after church, they would go out into the countryside for long walks.

In 1961 Bevan, an accountant, was appointed to a post in Reading, and they moved into rented property in Mortimer. Elizabeth applied for and gained the post of Classics mistress at the Abbey School in Reading. When they could afford to move they moved north of the Thames to Caversham. There they remained and Elizabeth still occupied their house there when she died.

Elizabeth retired from her teaching post in 1986 and looked forward to a long and happy retirement. This was not to be as Bevan died when he was 61, after having had to retire at 57 from ill-health. Elizabeth threw herself into a maze of activities concerned with her local church and numerous other things. She became secretary of the PCC at St Andrew's Church where she served at the altar. At the time of her death she was local secretary to the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary. She was also a member of the Deanery Synod. She was an enthusiastic and much loved tour guide for Mapledurham House.

She maintained her classical connections through the Classical Association, taking a whole range of students and teaching young students Greek and Latin up to her final year. A local clergyman, who before ordination was an airline pilot, remembers the patience and enthusiasm with which she tried to teach him the rudiments of Greek and Latin. One of her students was given a lesson in Greek in her hospital ward in early 2009.

Her high church connections took her to Rome on more than one occasion and she was proud of the fact that she saw John Paul II making his last public appearance at a window of the Vatican. She was also a Companion of the Anglican Community of the Resurrection at Mirfield which she visited when she could. Fr Nicolas of the Community said following her death on 13 February, 'I hope she is praying for us, as we pray for her'. Her funeral took place in March, on her beloved Bevan's birthday, at St Andrew's, in a church filled with former pupils and many friends from her various activities.

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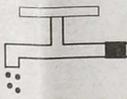

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