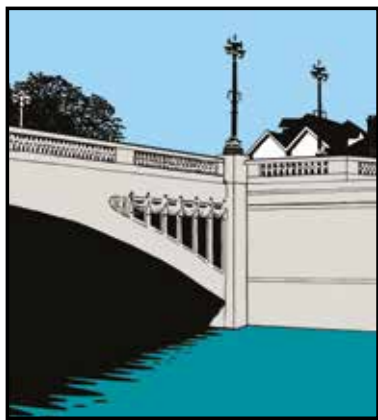




Caversham Bridge

No 726

www.cavershambridge.org

August 2025

Caversham Rallies Around Bakery After Break-In

WHAT STARTED as a heart-sinking moment for one of Caversham's independent businesses quickly became a shining example of community spirit at its very best.

BKRY, the cake shop on Church Street, was recently broken into in the early hours of the morning. For founder Jo Deacon – a former primary school teacher who poured her passion for baking and people into the shop – it was a horrible moment. Glass was smashed, the till was damaged and, with an all-female team, a sense of safety was lost.

Jo posted honestly about the break-in on BKRY's Instagram account, and the response was immediate and overwhelming. Loyal customers and fellow business owners flooded the comments with kindness, encouragement, and promises to pop in for a slice of something sweet and a bit of moral support.

"I couldn't believe it," Jo said. "It was such a horrible thing to wake up to, but the messages, the flowers, the offers to clean up – it just reminded me how special this community is. We really do look out for each other."

And just like that, the story shifted. Instead of a tale of broken glass and dashed plans, it became one of resilience, kindness, and connection – the very values BKRY was built on.

Jo opened the shop in September 2024 and has built it into a thriving little hub where people come for cakes and a friendly face. The break-in didn't just spark sympathy –

Our *Kind* Community

by Caroline Gratix

it spurred action. Sales soared over the weekend and new customers came in after seeing the story.

"There's something really powerful about small acts of kindness," she said. "And in Caversham, they don't stay small for long."

One of Jo's business friends offered a prize for a fundraising raffle... then another, and another. Before long, the brilliantly named *Sweet Justice* campaign was born.

...something full of hope...

Within days, more than 40 prizes had poured in, everything from afternoon teas to yoga sessions, handmade gifts to foodie treats – all donated by local independents and businesses. The community responded in true Caversham style, snapping up hundreds of raffle tickets and turning a moment of heartbreak into something full of hope (and a few lucky wins). Whilst many people would be tied up with additional admin that a huge raffle brings, Jo was busy baking a box of personalised 'thank you' cakes for each of the businesses who offered prizes.



Jo is a business owner with a big heart who believes in giving back. She is working with Brighter Futures for Children to make sure that children who might not get one, DO get a birthday cake.

Jo's motto has always been, "Together we rise," and this moment proved just how true that is.

To see what Jo and the team are baking next, visit www.bkry.co.uk or follow them on Instagram @bkry.co

The Heat Is On

by Phil Chatfield

THE RECENT HOT weather has left lawns and parks the colour of biscuit and gardeners trying to keep plants alive. But it has been good news for those with solar panels, and a new scheme to help householders install them is now available (p13).

Several of our articles this month have their roots in the past. We report on the 60th anniversary celebrations of both Emmer Green Preschool (p10) and Caversham Good Neighbours (p11), and take a look at our own archive from 50 years ago (p15). Happy Wanderer reveals the history of View Island for us (p7), and we preview the events for the Heritage Open Day 2025 programme in

Caversham this September (p13). We also look back at the life of Linda Dudley, which was celebrated in a memorial service in June (p17).

Creativity in our community is highlighted in our *Local Scene* painting of Vegivores in the Precinct (p12), and by our *Creative Caversham* article on Andrew Field, whose art reflects his close relationship with nature and water (p9). We also include some creative writing, inspired by a well-known local pub (p15). Another local pub, *The Last Crumb*, has been in the news recently, having been recognised as the best in Berkshire in the National Pub and Bar of the Year 2025 awards (p8).

Our *Talking Point* suggests we make a special effort to be civil to those we meet this month

(p2), and the role of volunteers in community endeavours is at the centre of an article about the Churches Together in Caversham Summer Holiday Club (p4). Finally, our lead article (above) demonstrates the depth of kindness which can be found in our community.

Whatever your plans for August, we hope you have a relaxing and enjoyable time.

Contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org or by post at Church House, Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX. Please note, it is currently not possible to contact us by phone.

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Civility in Caversham



Talking Point

by
Pastor Colin Baker

AUGUST IS National Civility Month in the United States of America – but why should the Americans have all the fun? Imagine local people setting aside a few weeks to practise kindness, listening and neighbourly love. What difference could that make along our riverbanks, schools, shops, and side streets?

Civility starts in the small stuff. A smile at the bus stop, a wave to let someone merge on Henley Road, a friendly ‘No Worries’ in Waitrose after a bump with a trolley. Tiny things – but they’re the threads that hold our community together. Tug too hard and things fray; treat them with care, and the fabric of our community strengthens.

Jesus once told a story about a man who crossed the road to help someone others had ignored – the Good Samaritan (Luke, Chapter 10, verses 25-37). It wasn’t just about being polite; it was about active, compassionate neighbourliness. For us, that could look like helping a neighbour with their bins on Evesham Road, or calming tensions on the basketball court in Christchurch Meadows. Civility asks, ‘Will I step across and bring peace?’

Some think civility is just about manners – remembering your Ps and Qs – but the Gospel takes it deeper. Colossians Chapter 3, verse 12 urges us to, ‘clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience’. Not just actions, but heart attitudes. You can hold the door open for someone and still be silently judging them. True Christian civility flows from a changed heart.

Think of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians Chapter 5, verses 22-23) as a kind of civility toolkit; love, joy, peace,

patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Together, they shape how we show up in our families, our workplaces, and yes – even on social media.

Our community has so much to celebrate – from food banks and community gardens to litter-picking teams and school volunteers. But, like everywhere, we feel pressure too: parking rows, new developments, and, of course, the never-ending third bridge debate. Online, it’s easy to move from a toddler group post to a local rant in three thumb-swipes.

So, here’s a challenge – what if August became our own local Civility Month? Try these four simple actions:

- **Greet five people** you don’t know each day
- **Invite someone who disagrees with you** (about politics, faith, or even football!) for a friendly chat
- **Be kind** and encouraging to others
- **Pause each evening** for one minute to reflect on kindness – share what you noticed using #CivilityCaversham

Some may say, ‘Nice idea, but I’m too busy.’ But Jesus said, ‘If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?’ (Matthew Chapter 5, verse 46). He showed radical civility – even forgiving His enemies on the cross.

Let’s make August the month we bridge divides, choose gentleness, and rediscover the power of a well-timed thank you or a simple sincere, ‘Help me understand.’ And maybe, just maybe, we’ll see glimpses of the Kingdom of God – right here in our community.

by Pastor Colin Baker – Caversham Baptist Church



Community Connections

Interview with Helen Lambert

text and photo Sarah Stuffins

In May this year Helen Lambert stepped down from the committee of the Caversham and District Residents’ Association after 20 years as Chair. She was immediately elected as President and will remain involved, mainly on heritage projects and planning issues.



THE HERITAGE of the area north of the river is a passion of Helen’s. The start of her tenure as CADRA Chair coincided with the stepping back of a previous generation of local historians. Helen realised that many histories of Reading didn’t include Caversham as it was part of Oxfordshire until 1911. She threw herself enthusiastically into many heritage projects, often liaising with other local organisations, such as the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens and other residents’ associations. These projects include many which residents can see around the local area; the replica wind vane on Caversham Court Gazebo, the heritage map outside the library, the William Marshal board on Caversham Bridge, and the restored village signs in Caversham and Emmer Green.

Helen’s research to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Caversham’s incorporation into Reading in 2011 unearthed a wealth of information, which was gathered together, originally on a centenary website and more recently on the CADRA website. This research also inspired others to contribute, and Helen is very proud of the heritage sections of the website.

In 2023, Reading Bridge celebrated its centenary and, in 2026, the current Caversham Bridge will be 100. Helen is putting her time post-CADRA chair to good use by developing a talk on these Thames

crossing points for Heritage Open Days on 13 September this year, and a leaflet about the history of Caversham Bridge in time for 2026.

How long have you lived in RG4?

Helen originally moved to Reading in 1985 and worked in what is now the Malmaison, at the time the Health Authority HQ. Her daughters were born here, and the family moved away between 1997 and 2001, when her husband’s job took the family to Paris.

Where are your favourite places to eat, drink and shop in our area?

Waitrose for food for the body and Fourbears Books for food for the mind

How do you think we can be eco-friendlier here?

We should make more use of shops like True Food and Nood Stores.

How would you strengthen our sense of community?

Make more use of channels such as Caversham Bridge and CADRA to share information about what is going on.

If you could bring anything here, such as an event, experience or a shop, what would it be?

More spaces, particularly bigger ones, which local organisations could hire to put on events.

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New Urgent Care Centre for Reading

Last month we carried an article by Dr Katy Reay about visiting A&E. This month we report on a new, related facility at the Royal Berkshire Hospital (RBH) by The Editors

ABOUT 18 MONTHS ago I was taken ill and in need of medical attention during a Bank Holiday. With the local surgery closed, I was advised to visit the recently established Urgent Care Centre at the Broad Street Mall. We drove to the Mall, and I was amazed to be seen so quickly. Within less than two hours I was home again with a course of tablets which sorted out my problem.

The Centre had been set up in an effort to cut the number of people turning up at the hospital for treatment and hence to reduce waiting times there.

Patients can still walk in to the facility, but are being urged to **phone 111** or use **111.nhs.uk**, to get advice from medical professionals as to whether or not they should attend.

The Centre is open every day of the year from 10:00 to 22:00. For more information, see www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/services-and-departments/reading-urgent-care-centre

The Broad Street Health Centre, which is also in the Broad Street Mall, will still be open for registered patients.

People with an urgent but not life-threatening condition could receive treatment at the Centre with no booking, but patients could also pre-book appointments.

Although it worked for me, the hoped for reduction in visits to A&E did not happen, and data from the first year showed that even when more people turned up at the Centre for help, there were similar increases at the hospital.

As a result, the service is being moved to the RBH, with access via the Addington Road entrance at the southern end of the hospital site.



A Vintage Event

text and photos George Grubb

WE INCLUDED a short article about the Reading Amateur Regatta and the proposed Regatta Vintage Fayre in Caversham Court Gardens over the weekend of 14 and 15 June in our June edition. The events were blessed with fine weather and were well attended. The traditional fairground games proved popular, as did the food stalls. Plenty of families made the most of the fine weather and the view of the regatta from the gardens.



STOP PRESS RG4 Hosepipe Ban

OUR AREA is included in a temporary hose-pipe ban issued by Thames Water and coming into effect from 22 July.

For more information, see their website at www.thameswater.co.uk/help/water-supply-and-drought-update



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Family Fun at St John's Church

ST JOHN'S CHURCH Caversham hosted a fabulous Community BBQ and Party on the afternoon of 22 June. There were activities in the church, including an inflatable soft play zone, face-painting and crafts, alongside a café offering drinks and homemade cakes. Outdoor fun included skittles and ball games, water fun in the community garden, and a BBQ co-organised and run by the church and 22nd St John's Scouts.

The inflatable play zone was a new activity this year and went down a storm – though only those under 1m tall were allowed to use it. Those just over 1m have requested one for them next year – as did a few adults! A lively football

by Fred Smith

game engaged some of the older young people (and the church youth worker), and people of all ages enjoyed the company of friends in the church café or on picnic rugs in the grounds.

The party is now an annual event in the life of St John's. It takes place on the nearest Sunday to St John's Day (24 June), which is a celebration of the birth of John the Baptist. Associate Vicar, Revd Penny Cuthbert said, "It's like our birthday party, and we love it when people from all over Lower Caversham come and enjoy the food and have

fun with us. We deliberately try to have different activities for people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy together, and we pray that it is an event that builds community and helps people deepen existing friendships and maybe make some new ones."

To find out more about events and activities offered by St John's Church, including christenings, weddings, bereavement ministry and activities for children and youth, visit www.ctmparish.org.uk/st-john



The BBQ team cooking up a treat



Soaking up the atmosphere

both photos P Cuthbert

Behind the scenes at the Holiday Club

Planning starts in January

by Tamsyn Wilson

IT'S 02:34 AND my over-active brain has roused me from sleep for a mental 'to-do-list reminder'. As it did last night at 03:14. And the night before at 04:56. I'm not normally a poor sleeper, but I have a lot on my mind at the moment – it's Churches Together in Caversham Holiday Club week.

I've been involved in the Club for the last twelve years, and overall organiser for the last three years. With 50 volunteer adults from 11 different churches, we are based at St Anne's primary school in Caversham and run activities, drama, games and sports for 150 primary aged children each day from 10:00 to 15:00 in the last week in July. Last summer our theme was *Champions*, to tie in with the Summer Olympic Games. This year, it's *Deep Sea Divers*.

The club is greatly appreciated by parents needing childcare in order to work in the school holidays. We have a Christian ethos, with our stated aims being, 'To create lasting positive memories of Christian community, to build relationships and help children and their families'.

...come together...

For me, it is like being the headteacher of a primary school for a week! So many things must come together to make the week a success, from playground supervision to cleaning toilets! A core team of people from the Caversham churches starts planning in January for the following July.

But as Christians we also rely on God to provide what we need. For example, we have had several generous donations each year, including from The Caversham Bridge. These donations allow us both to run the club and to improve each year. They also help with unforeseen expenses, such as the replacement of two borrowed gazebos wrecked in a storm last year.

The second way God provides for us is with volunteers. About two weeks before the club was due to start last year, three volunteers dropped



Holiday club T-shirt

photo R Wilson

out. This would have left us very short-staffed. But the core team prayed, and within a few days I'd had offers of help which more than covered the gap.

Just before Holiday Club started last year, when I was probably looking a little stressed and short on sleep, a friend asked me, "Tamsyn, why do you plan for months and then give up a week of your summer holiday do this?" I took a few moments to think before answering, "Because I feel called to it. At this time in my life, it has been given to me to do, to make a difference in my community". In other words, this is my 'Frodo-Baggins-taking-the-ring-to-Mordor' moment. But without the giant spider (phew!).

If anyone reading this would like to get involved next year, please get in touch via admin@cavershamholidayclub.org.uk It's incredibly rewarding, and I've made friends for life among the team.

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by Zoe



For your bookshelf...

Hello! My name's Zoe, I'm on work experience this week at Fourbears Bookshop and I've been given the privilege to write this month's book recommendations.

AN ADULT BOOK I would love to recommend is one of Anthony Doerr's most popular hits, *All the Light We Cannot See*. This is a beautiful work of historical fiction, winning the Pulitzer Prize in 2015, and renowned for its lyrical prose and sweeping storyline. It centres around the intersecting lives of two children, Marie-Laure and Werner, navigating both of their worlds during World War 2. It is set both in Paris, under Nazi occupation, and Germany, and the two live miles apart but seem destined for each other, as their paths separate and converge over the years. Through the blind eyes of Marie-Laure and Werner, destined to work in the coal mines, Doerr

crafts a breathtaking tale of love and loss, finding moments of beauty in the midst of survival.

The Princess Bride, a children's classic which inspired the 1987 film adaptation, will catch readers between its pages with William Goldman's hilarious wit and love for the absurd. A thrilling tale of adventure. Goldman claims to have selected only the 'good parts' of a beloved story, making for a fast-paced and completely unique book which reads like a child's imagination. The story considers what were to happen if the most beautiful girl were to marry the most handsome prince, and what if he wasn't really as he seemed? The plot includes a complicated mix of poison, swordfights, revenge, betrayal, love and hate, tied together with clever interjections from the narrator. Goldman guarantees gasps of shock and fits of laughter all around.

Happy reading, and thanks again to Fourbears for welcoming me for a fantastic week!

www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk



Bear seeks life partner

photo A Forbes



Lauren and Hannah

photo H Walker

The Heart of the Matter

by Hannah Walker

MY BEST FRIEND, Caversham mum Lauren Bilton and I, are pushing ourselves beyond anything we have ever attempted to raise funds for Heart Research UK, and to honour the memory of someone taken far too soon.

On 9 August we start by climbing 10 peaks in under 10 hours across the rugged Carneddau Ridge in North Snowdonia, despite both of us being afraid of heights. Less than a week later, starting on 15 August, I will run 20 miles a day for 10 consecutive days, and Lauren will run 10km per day for 10 consecutive days. This is all to raise awareness of the devastating statistic that less than 1 in 10 people survive an out-of-hospital heart attack.

This challenge is deeply personal. Lauren lost her brother, Ali, at the age of just 41 to severe coronary atherosclerosis. His heart attack was at home. His sudden death left an unimaginable hole in the lives of his family and friends, especially his fiancée, who was pregnant with their first child. Their daughter, Saskia, is now four.

...spared this heartbreak...

With every step, every mile, and every peak, we're doing this for Ali, for the people he loved and for the families who might still be spared this heartbreak if more can be done through research and awareness. We may be in our 40s, afraid of heights, and far from elite runners, but we are committed to completing this physically and emotionally demanding journey to help fund the research which can save lives.

We hope that by telling Ali's story and speaking openly about heart health, we can encourage others to act, donate, or even seek out medical advice that might one day make the difference.

Do keep an eye out for Lauren pounding the streets. Her training runs and all but the last run on the challenge will be completed in Caversham.

For more information and to donate if you can, please visit our JustGiving page at www.justgiving.com/team/lauren-hannah-climbforali#supportersList

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What's On

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to whatson@cavershambridge.org
We need to receive these no later than the 10th of the month before the event for inclusion in the printed paper. Later submissions can be included in our online What's On, which is updated regularly. To see what has been added check:
cavershambridge.org/archives/category/around-caversham

Please note, a listing of baby and toddler groups can be found on page 18.

Caversham Library – 09:00-17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00-19:00 Thursday and 10:00-15:00 Saturday. Regular events include:

Rhymetimes for the little ones – popular, so please book first! Every Tuesday at 10:15 and 11:15.

Games Club, Friday mornings 10:30-12:00. All adults welcome – refreshments!

Sit and Stitch 17:30-19:45, on 2nd and 4th Thursdays every month. Refreshments – come and be inspired. Tel: 0118 937 5103 or see reading.gov.uk/leisure/all-libraries/caversham-library

Geo Café – *Artists Against Homelessness*, an ongoing and changing exhibition of art by local artists at Geo Café, Prospect Street. For each sale the artist makes a donation to Launchpad Reading. Open every day.

Mondays – **Caversham Park Bridge Club** – at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start. Phone Lin 0118 334 8195 for further information. bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Tuesdays – **Rivarate Choir** – Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. 19:30 in term time. Enjoy singing together. For details see rivarate.com

Wednesdays – **Caversham Writers** – Welcoming enthusiastic hobbyists and aspiring authors alike. Meeting weekly in person or via Zoom. Free to all. For details: meetup.com/CavershamWriters or [@CavershamWriter](https://twitter.com/CavershamWriter) on Twitter (X)

Wednesdays – **Light on the Hill Café** – 19:30-21:30 at Grace Church, 119 Peppard Road, RG4 8TR. A wellbeing café for adults 18+. Come as you are for tea and a chat. Please see: www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Wednesdays – **The Waltham St Lawrence Silver Band** – Neville Hall in Waltham St Lawrence RG10 0JJ. 20:00-22:00. Free and friendly club for brass instrumentalists. Email: waltham.band@gmail.com

Thursdays – **Friendly Over-60s Social Club** – 10:00-13:00 at Milestone Centre, Caversham Park Village. Hot lunch, quizzes and the chance to chat. Contact Cheryl at 07964 750182 or Trina at 07477 570541

Thursdays – **Weller Centre Craft Group** – 13:00-15:00. Be creative with friends. For details contact Pam Chatfield at pamch32@gmail.com Mobile 07986 905784 or Weller Centre 0118 947 5828

Thursdays – **New Caversham Heights Bridge Club** – 14:00 at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. For details contact Duncan Knight on 0118 947 5544 or email duncan.knight@googlemail.com

Thursdays – **Mapledurham Bridge Club** – 19:15 for 19:30 start. The Pavilion, Mapledurham Playing Fields, Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham RG4 7LB. Email lindasueclark@hotmail.co.uk for further information

Fridays – **Warm Welcome Space** – 10:00-13:30 at Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, RG4 8HY. All welcome, just drop in for free refreshments, including hot soup from 12:00. Tel: 0118 954 5353 www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Saturdays – **Keep Caversham Tidy** – A local charity dedicated to eliminating litter and improving public spaces in Caversham. Free to join and no ongoing commitment. Families welcome! Email Keepcavershamtidy@gmail.com, FB **Keep Caversham Tidy**

Sundays – **Caversham Artisan & Farmers Market** – Caversham Precinct, 10:00-15:00. See www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Sundays – **Nordic Walk (or just walking)**. Free to all. Tel: 07931 754096 or email Pat at Wirralbird@hotmail.com

Sundays – **Readifolk Song and Music Club** – 20:00-22:30 in the Community Hall, Watlington House, RG1 4RA. £8 admission for performances, £3 on singing nights. See www.redifolk.co.uk

Until 29 August – **Our River Thames** – an exhibition exploring our history and interaction with the River Thames – Tuesday-Friday, Royal Berkshire Archives, 9 Coley Avenue See www.royalberkshirearchives.org.uk/whats-going-on for opening times.

Until Saturday 10 August – *Exhibition of works by Andrew Field. Artworks inspired by the world around him; his travels along the Thames in his canoe, beautiful country houses, and walks through nature* – Caversham Picture Framer, Church Road – for details see cavershampictureframer.co.uk/events

Until 6 September – *Don't Rock the Boat, a comedy by Robin Hawdon* – The Mill at Sonning Theatre. See <https://millatsonning.com/shows/dont-rock-the-boat> for details of times and to book.

Thursdays and Fridays in August – *Story Garden Summer Crafts* – 15:00-16:00 FREE drop in crafts at Caversham Library for primary children. Contact Caversham library on 0118 937 5103 for further information.

Sunday 3 August – **Children's Book Group (for ages 5-11)** – 10:00-11:00 - Reading Children's Book Group. Caversham Court Gardens, Church Rd, Reading RG4 7AD. Join them for some summertime fun. If it's wet, it will take place at Fourbears Books, Prospect Street. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Free but pre-booking essential via www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk/event-details or 0118 948 1747

Tuesday 5 August – **Caversham Women's Institute** – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel: 0118 9475176

Wednesday 6 August – **Rosehill Ladies** – 14:00 at St Barnabas Hall, Emmer Green. Tel: Sue 0118 947 7570 or email suegreen@hotmail.com

Friday 8 August – **Chazey Women's Institute** – 14:30 at St Andrew's Church Hall. Tel: 0118 947 0964, or e-mail rowena@primology.com

Friday 8 August – **Bereavement Café** – 14:00-15:30 at St. Barnabas, Emmer Green. A safe place to find others who have had their own loss and can appreciate something of your experience. For further info Tel. Gill at 0118 947 8772

Saturday 9 August – **Reading Abbey Gateway Rooftop Tour** – 11:00 A 45 minute tour of the restored Abbey Gateway. For details see <https://whatsonreading.com/venues/abbey-gateway/whats-on/reading-abbey-gateway-rooftop-tour>

Saturday 16 August – **Moonage, the Best of Bowie Tribute Band** – 20:30 The Flowing Spring, Henley Road, RG4 9RB. See www.theflowingspringpub.co.uk/whatson

Saturday 30 August – **Caversham Horticultural Society Autumn Show** – 14:00-16:00 Exhibitors stage from 9:00, judging 12:00-14:00. There will also be a autumn bulb and plant sale, a seed swap (Reading Food Growing Network), young fruit trees for sale and stalls from the Hedgehog and Canal Trusts. Refreshments (hot and cold drinks and cake) will also be available from 14:00.

Coming up:

Sunday 7 September – **Book Launch, Power Couples of the Tudor Era by Jo Romero** – 10:00-16:00 Angel Bar, 18 Prospect Street, RG4 8JG. Book signing, Tudor Gown reconstructions, Tudor themed cocktails and nibbles available. For details, see www.lovebritishhistory.co.uk

Saturday 13 September – **Artists & Makers Fair** – 10:00-16:00 at Caversham Methodist Hall, Gosbrook Road. Local artists and craftspeople display their work for sale. Free entry. Lobby café. For further information phone Jean at 07808 966928 or visit www.cavershamcrafts.co.uk

Saturday 13 September – **Heritage Open Days** – Caversham Court Gardens and talks at Caversham Baptist Church. See page 13 for details.

Saturday 20 September – **Twisted Halo Garden Party** – 17:00-til late, Caversham Court Gardens. Live music, cocktails, food and more with Angel Bar. Featuring Jewels and the Jacuzzis, Reading based Selina and the Howlin Dogs and blues and jazz with Ma Bessie. See www.angelbar.co.uk/events

CADRA Planning Bulletin

A summary of planning and transport matters affecting the RG4 area, provided by Caversham and District Residents Association www.cadra.org.uk

THE MAJOR development in **South Oxfordshire** next to the border for 70 houses at land west of Kidmore End Road, Emmer Green has attracted numerous objections. Reading Borough Council's Highway Authority said traffic at junctions is already at capacity, even before completion of the current development.

Also in **South Oxfordshire**, next to **Caversham Park and Emmer Green**, Gladman Developments visualises 1200 houses along the border. Not a formal application, the timing coincides with South Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan development and the review of Reading's Local Plan Partial Update by the Government Examiner, who raised initial questions about Reading's housing supply plans and their duty to cooperate with neighbouring councils.

The **Chilterns National Landscape extension review** was cancelled due to budget constraints, causing concern among local organisations about lack of protection from future house building. They will be lobbying for the review to restart.

Applications in Caversham Centre: 1 St Peters Hill (PL/25/0921) for landscaping rectification of the house's parking space to ensure it is in keeping with the building's heritage, **6 Church Street (PL/25/0841)** for refurbishment and improved accommodation to this listed building. **St Martins Precinct (PL/25/0814)** for a 5-storey block on the right-hand side of the precinct for 17 apartments and ground floor restaurant. A similar application already has permission. At **53 Prospect Street (PL/25/0269)** a single-storey extension and loft conversion with Velux and dormer was permitted.

Other Areas: High Ridge, Upper Warren Avenue (PL/25/0752) has amended plans for replacing the derelict dwelling. **1 Gravel Hill Cottages, Blagrave Lane (PL/25/0574)** saw extensions refused due to historic character impact. The digital advertisement screen at the **Thames Valley Service Station, George Street (PL/25/0468)** was refused because of potential driver distraction concerns and its impact on the area around, and an appeal has been made.

See www.cadra.org.uk for links to these planning applications.

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text and photo
Kate Fox

AS AN INDEPENDENT estate agent in Caversham for almost 18 years, I always get excited when I am going to do a market appraisal of a semi-detached house in RG4. It is so interesting to see the different ways people have extended and changed the inside layout of what looks like a standard semi-detached from the outside. It makes my job really interesting.

Caversham and Emmer Green have a wide range of semi-detached houses, making up a large share of our local market. They range from the Victorian era through the 1920s to the 1950s and some, in Caversham Heights, date back to Edwardian times. A good stock of 1930s semi-detached homes is found in some gorgeous locations, such as Balmore Drive - a great example of Haddock-built 1930s pairs of semi-detached houses, complete with a turning circle at the top of the cul-de-sac and even a residents' tennis court!

Other areas like Chiltern Road and Mayfield Drive have slightly different layouts, with Mayfield Drive having five different designs when first built. Henley Road has some



Haddock-built houses in Balmore Drive

larger semi-detached houses with high roof pitches to which owners often add a loft bedroom. In Emmer Green, there is a range of styles with semi-detached houses in lovely locations such as Chalgrove Way, Courtenay Drive and Stuart Close.

Caversham Park Village has many semi-detached homes, with slightly different designs and typically generously sized bedrooms. Built in the 1960s and 1970s, the third bedrooms were bigger than their 1930s counterparts, which have the small box room. This explains why loft conversions are so popular in 1930s houses.

The larger Victorian and Edwardian semis in Caversham have expansive bay windows and period features like high ceilings, fireplaces, cornicing and, sometimes, even the original servants' bells!

Semi-detached homes in the area are always a busy part of the market, ranging in prices from around £450,000 up to a million for a larger home in the Heights. They are popular with both up-sizers and down-sizers, and offer very flexible accommodation, as many properties have been extended on the ground floor, or with two-storey extensions and loft bedrooms.

Stamping butterflies and life-listing lepidopterists

text and photo
Roslyn Weaver



Peacock butterfly, *Aglais io*

DO YOU KNOW – or can you guess – how many insect species are estimated to be in the world? A thousand? Million – billion? What about how many insects there are for every person on the planet – is it a thousand, million, billion? More?

August brings the chance to count a few of them at least. The Big Butterfly Count runs until Sunday 10 August, and gives the opportunity to be a citizen scientist for the day, observing and recording butterflies and daytime moths for 15 minutes, wherever we are. Although bees are the current poster insects for pollinating and rewilding, it turns out butterflies are also important pollinators. And, like annual bird monitoring or other similar activities, the observations help track target species – or lack of them – to gain a better picture of current numbers and help to address declines.

I'm not much of a butterfly watcher, being more of a (very amateur) birder than a butterflyer. (Full disclaimer that butterflyer is not an official description, but seems somewhat catchier than trying to fit lepidopterist or

entomologist into conversations). As it is, I'm more likely to be counting poems and stories about butterflies and moths (Shelley's star-desiring moth – check; Kipling's stamping butterfly – check; Wordsworth, Dickinson – check, check) than species in the garden, but 15 minutes seems doable for swapping words for numbers.

...busying themselves...

As for those questions at the start... If, like me, you are not a very good entomologist, and also fairly dismal at trivia questions on anything at all, then you might need some help. My own guesses to those questions were so far off as to be laughable, so here are the more official answers from the Royal Entomological Society. More than a million species of insect have been described, but as many as 10 million may exist. And apparently, for every one of us there are about 1.4 billion insects busying themselves somewhere in the world around us. Just a few of which can be counted in August and added to the butterflyer's life list.

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Creative CAVERSHAM

A flash of inspiration



Andrew Field produces stunning kingfisher watercolours, captures birds of prey in charcoal and creates fantastical prints inspired by architectural features spotted in historic houses. His work is currently on show in the Caversham Picture Framers gallery. **Elestr Lee** discovers how his earliest childhood experiences have resulted in his artistic output

MY DAD WAS a woodwork teacher, while my mum taught enamelling at night school – my brother and I were always encouraged to draw and to paint, we inherited their genes! At the ages of 3 and 4, we moved from the Midlands to the Lake District and enjoyed such freedom, growing up there. The farms, the dry-stone walls, lakes and woodlands became our playground – and we were always aware of the wildlife.

“An early experience was when a school visitor brought some owls into our primary school. Allowing a group of 5-year-olds to hold and stroke both tawny and barn owls was amazing!”

While growing up Andrew enjoyed outdoor sports and especially canoeing – “When my wife Kathleen and I decided to move down south to Reading as we were

beginning our teaching careers, I took to canoeing on the Thames. I love to see kingfishers – not very often, but when you do, it’s always magical – a flash of gold and green.”

Andrew spent three decades teaching both art and technology in local secondary schools – “but when you teach full-time it’s hard to do your own art, too much of a ‘bus-man’s holiday’!” he joked. During lockdown he made the decision to change direction and now works part-time (as a framer for the Picture Gallery), while canoeing and creating his own works of art during the rest of the week.

“Predominantly I like to draw, often using charcoal. But with colourful birds such as the kingfisher, you need to use colour – I prefer watercolours. When you’re working on a fresh new piece of watercolour paper

there’s pleasure and satisfaction in the white luminosity of the background shining through the layers of paint,” Andrew said. One of his recurrent themes is of a kingfisher overlaid over a map. “I use old maps, which show where I canoe on the River Thames – but this also shows from a bird’s eye view what the kingfishers see.

“I feel that once on the water, paddling away from concrete and bricks you enter another natural realm. Once you are at water level you become immersed in everything from a very different perspective, and your normal viewpoint is transformed. Then sometimes, you catch that flash of gold and turquoise... however fleeting, it leaves a sense of awe.

“I collect old Ordnance Survey maps which I use – it is different from painting on watercolour paper. But the roads, contours and colours on the printed map become part of the outcome, appearing through the transparent media.”



Andrew has retained his love of birds of prey, which he also depicts (frequently using charcoal). But his other inspiration is manmade – he and Kathleen enjoy visiting historic houses, and while she loves learning about the history, Andrew is fascinated by architectural details. “I like the fixtures, the statues, the wooden carving and plasterwork. I sketch them, and they turn into dramatic compositions, either prints or watercolours. The richness of architecture and items of antiquity inspire me whenever I visit historic homes.”

His kingfisher watercolours, charcoal



All images Andrew Field

drawings and architectural prints are regularly on show during local trails. “As an artist I like the atmosphere of the art trails whether it be at Henley or here in Caversham; I like meeting the visitors, discussing the art, and listening to their views in a relaxed environment.

“Although it can get very busy to prepare, display and take part in, there is a buzz to the trails. I love the fact that in Caversham people can walk round to visit all the venues. Between them, Henley and Caversham show a lot of artists!”

And Andrew continues to be inspired by the birdlife he sees while out canoeing; his latest interest is drawing and painting herons. “Here in the Thames Valley and the Chilterns we are so fortunate to have such an amazing array of birdlife – from the swooping kites to the ducks and the geese on the rivers. As an artist I like to explore the grace and fleeting colours of nature. These wonders, small and large, provide inspiration for my watercolour paintings and drawings.”

Find out more:
Andrew Field’s work is on display at
Caversham Picture Framers
July 2 - August 10
cavershampictureframer.co.uk
Work in progress and finished pieces
can be seen on Instagram:
art_by_andrew_field
Andrew is also a member of
Reading Guild of Artists



Preschool at 60 by Elizabeth Arnold



both photos Emmer Green Preschool

Bertie Slippers leading the singing and dancing

ON FRIDAY 25 of June the staff, families and children of Emmer Green Preschool had a garden party to celebrate their 60th Anniversary.

The Preschool was first established in 1965 and was originally based at St Barnabas Hall in Emmer Green. However, since 1990, it has been based at the community centre at Grove Road, opposite Emmer Green Surgery.

At the helm for the last 34 years has been manager Wendy Robins. She commented, "Our preschool is a safe, friendly and happy space where children thrive. There is a large outdoor space for them to explore and learn through play." Wendy is supported in her role by her dedicated team of 'pink ladies', who provide high quality learning opportunities for the children.

The Preschool is a registered charity, and the anniversary event was kindly sponsored by Waitrose, Budgens and Bridges Estate Agents. The children and their families enjoyed eating the sandwiches, scones, cakes and snacks in the glorious sunshine. No party would be complete without dancing, and the marvellous children's entertainer, Bertie Slippers, sang and danced a variety of songs to an enthusiastic audience.

Jessica, a parent with a long-term relationship with the preschool remarked, "We just love Emmer Green Preschool! Our third child to go there is just finishing and our fourth starts next year, so we feel like we've been a small part of its 60-year history! We felt so lucky to find somewhere



Wendy Robbins and her Pink ladies aka preschool staff

that felt just right for our eldest when we moved here back in 2018. Our daughter, who is currently at the preschool, cannot wait to go in every day."

The preschool is proud of its links with the local community and primary schools and fosters a wonderful sense of community which parents and children really value. They take children from two to five years old and have spaces available for September.

Find out more at

www.emmergreenpreschool.org.uk

Emmer Green Pre-School is a registered charity and a non-profit making organisation run by a committee of parents. Elizabeth is the current Chair.

How changes in your 30s affect your skin



by Perry Walker

Owner of
Perry's Beauty,
Caversham
@perrys_beautyroom

AS YOU enter your 30s, your body starts to undergo subtle yet impactful changes. The signs of ageing, environmental stress, and lifestyle choices begin to show in different ways. Understanding how your skin changes during this decade can help you to take proactive steps to maintain a healthy, glowing complexion.

♥ Decreased collagen production

Collagen is a protein that provides structure, firmness and elasticity to your skin. In your 30s collagen production starts to decline; you may notice the first signs of fine lines, particularly around the eyes, forehead, and mouth. The skin may also feel a little less firm and youthful.

Collagen-boosting skincare and treatment can help, as well as a consistent, protective skincare regime.

♥ Slower skin renewal

Skin renewal, or cell turnover, naturally slows with age. As a result, you may notice duller skin, more visible pores, and an increase in breakouts due to the build-up of dead skin cells. Ensure you incorporate exfoliation into your skincare routine.

♥ Decreased skin hydration

As you get older, the skin's ability to retain moisture decreases, partly due to a reduction in the production of natural oils and the slowing of the skin's barrier function. Dehydrated skin can look dull, feel tight, and accentuate fine lines. Restore hydration by drinking lots of water, and boost external hydration with a good moisturiser.

♥ Increased Sensitivity

Your 30s can bring about changes in your skin's sensitivity. Hormonal fluctuations, environmental factors, and lifestyle changes may trigger reactions such as redness, irritation, or dryness. Many people also start noticing that their skin reacts more to products that previously worked well.

♥ More visible signs of sun damage

The effects of sun exposure start to show up in your 30s. If you've spent time in the sun without proper protection, you might notice sun spots, age spots, or a change in skin texture. UV damage accumulates over time, and the signs may only become apparent a decade or two later. It's not too late to start protecting your skin by applying a broad spectrum SPF daily.

♥ Fatigue and Stress

In your 30s, your career, family, or personal life, can cause increased stress, poor sleep, and burnout, affecting your overall health and your skin, leading to breakouts, dullness, or increased wrinkles. Invest in stress management techniques, and get enough sleep – your skin will thank you.

♥ Maintain glowing skin in your 30s

Your 30s are a time of change, and your skin is no exception. By adopting the right skincare routine, you can address the signs of ageing and maintain healthy, glowing skin. Prioritise hydration, invest in collagen-boosting treatments and protect your skin from sun damage.

Remember, consistency is key!



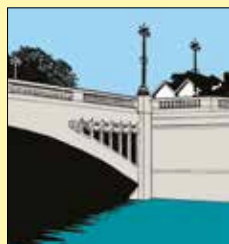
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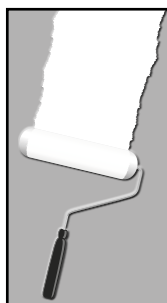
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Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA) *by Sarah Stuffsins*

THE CAVERSHAM and District Residents' Association (CADRA) held its AGM on 13 May at the New Testament Church of God. The meeting was attended by many local residents. Helen Lambert, in her last meeting as Chair, presented her report highlighting the work that CADRA had done during the previous year.

Jill Dibben, Malcolm Pemble and Nick Haskins were successfully nominated to the committee, and Suresh Sukul was co-opted to the committee. Continuing committee members are Sarah Stuffsins, Vice-Chair, Linda Watsham, Adrian Godden, Neil Parker and Neil Tayler. Treasurer Jill Dibben presented the accounts which were accepted by the members, and explained why the membership fees would need to increase slightly to £12 for 3 years (or £5 for one year). This will be introduced later this year. Nick Haskins was announced as the new Chair of CADRA, and he duly proposed Helen Lambert as President of CADRA.

Nick then presented his vision for CADRA's future. This is aimed at 'Keeping Caversham and Emmer Green great places to live' by supporting events which positively promote our community, continuing to help make better outcomes for planning and licensing, and helping tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour, which are so detrimental to our community.

Following the AGM, three members of the Savills planning division gave an excellent and detailed presentation about the way that the current planning system works, and the impact of recent changes to it. Jon Sebbage, Associate Director, supported by Planner Róisín Moyne and Graduate Planner Amy Allen, provided a fascinating insight into a complex topic, and delivered it very clearly. The presentation was followed by questions from the floor.

Helen Lambert's report, Nick Haskin's vision for the future, and Savills' presentation can be viewed on the



Nick Haskins and Helen Lambert

photo S Stuffsins

CADRA website <https://www.cadra.org.uk>

A total of £150 was collected after the AGM meeting, which was donated to Savills' nominated charity, LaunchPad. Thank you to all who donated.

The CADRA committee would also like to thank the New Testament Church of God for its generous donation and gift of the use of the Church for the AGM, and to thank PC Adrianna Bilanska and PC Daniel Mellor for attending the AGM and for speaking to residents before the meeting.



Mayor of Reading, Alice Mpfu-Coles



Leigh Furlonger, the Chairman of CGN

both photos G Lyke

A 60th birthday tea party *by Graham Lyke*

CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS (CGN) celebrated its 60th anniversary on 2 July with an afternoon tea party at The Caversham Golf Club, in the company of the Mayor of Reading, Alice Mpfu-Coles. It was attended by around 50 of its drivers, office staff, former staff and some long standing clients.

Leigh Furlonger, the Chairman of CGN, welcomed everyone to the celebration. She spoke about the founding of CGN in 1965 by a Caversham GP with the vicar of St Andrews. Did they imagine that their service would survive for 60 years?

It nearly didn't!! The Covid-19 lockdown posed an enormous challenge, and CGN might have shut down completely, but somehow it kept going. The service continues to provide assistance where needed, helping 75 different people to get to their medical appointments so far this year, as well as to social activities.

After thanking the Mayor of Reading for taking time out to join the celebration, Leigh finished by thanking our wonderful volunteers, saying she knew how much the people who use our service appreciate their help and hoping that we can continue for another 60 years.

The Mayor responded by saying how honoured she

was to help in the celebration. She said the Council had a vision to safeguard and support the health and wellbeing of Reading's adults and children. Volunteers are key to providing these services. She added her view that volunteers are givers, and volunteering is a way of paying your rent on Earth. You don't give to get a blessing but give to be a blessing. She finished by saying that CGN is a pillar in the community, and being a good neighbour is spreading kindness. She congratulated CGN on its 60th anniversary and wished this expression of kindness would continue its operations.

...turn up on time...

Several of CGN's clients added their comments. For example, Sandra commented, "It is an excellent service with very friendly drivers. The office staff are lovely and all brilliant. It has a good impact on my life, otherwise I'd be stuck at home". Another client, Margaret said, "It has taken away the worry of giving up driving. They always turn up on time and I think they are wonderful".

Thanks to everyone who attended, to all who have contributed to the work of CGN over the years, and to The Caversham for their excellent food and service.

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Vegivores, Caversham



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

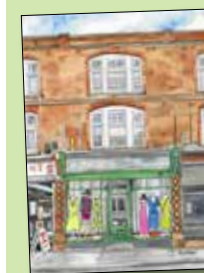
THE TREND for vegan food was once considered eccentric, but today it's mainstream and all part of the rich variety of food and drink that is on offer in St Martin's Precinct. Many of us who are not vegan or even vegetarian enjoy the range of drinks and dishes on offer at Vegivores. Their menu of inspired dishes encourages us to explore new tastes and ideas. The fresh, bright, contemporary décor is inviting, and the staff are welcoming and happy to discuss ingredients and allergies.

The business is owned by Kevin and Sarah, who started off with a food van. They opened the restaurant in Caversham in 2019 and, in 2024, opened a branch in Bournemouth. The space they now occupy used to be two retail units – one was a traditional café which became Vegivores. The other was once an interior decoration shop,

selling wallpaper and paint, before becoming an optician. In more recent times, it was occupied by a variety of short term 'pop up' shops, including the Caversham Emporium, selling antique and vintage items, and later a shop selling interior design products from Bali. When this unit became available, Vegivores took it over and extended their premises to double the size. Now tables spread out into the square, helping to create the vibrant atmosphere that the precinct now enjoys.

St Martin's Precinct (I still want a campaign to change the name to St Martin's Square) was built in the mid-1960s and for many years was rather bland and uninteresting in architecture and atmosphere. More recently it has been revamped, with new signing and shop facias, newly planted trees and seating and now it is a popular meeting place to relax with friends at the heart of Caversham.

The restaurant is described as a 'nature kitchen', and their mission statement is to spread 'the joys of a healthier and more sustainable diet'. The menu is entirely plant based, ingredients are ethically sourced and, where possible, they strive to minimize their environmental impact – all admirable ambitions.



If you would like a print of one of Janina's drawings

please have a look at her website to see the full range:

janinamaher.artweb.com

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SOLAR TOGETHER is open again. This is a scheme arranged through the six Borough Councils in Berkshire for a joint tender for approved contractors to install solar panels and batteries on hundreds of Berkshire roofs. All contractors will be MSC (Microgeneration Certification Scheme) certified, and the guarantees offered will be checked by the councils. The households will get a reasonably priced installation and an assurance that they can sell any surplus energy generated back into the grid. The current end date is 9 August, but the council is trying to extend this deadline.

All adverts tell you the installation of solar panels will

Thinking of Solar Panels?

reduce energy costs, which is perfectly true. However, the payback period for you is entirely dependent on your house aspect, potential shading and your pattern of use of electricity.

Signing up to Solar Together costs nothing and doesn't commit you to progressing with the installation. Just go to www.reading.gov.uk/solartogether and sign up. There is a very comprehensive set of Frequently Asked Questions on the site to answer most questions.

Adding a battery captures surplus electricity generated during the day and allows its use at other times, maybe matching your overall need for electricity in the height of summer. But it means an increased capital cost, so it's worth ticking the battery box on the application to see the cost, and you can reject that option later if necessary.

Provided you put in correct answers to the questions

about your electricity consumption, roof aspect, etc. you will receive a relatively accurate assessment of the cost of installation and the payback period. You can then decide whether to continue with installation.

Happy with those numbers? Then the next stage is a site visit to give a final quote, which will require a non-refundable deposit (£150 last year), although the deposit is returnable if the quote is higher for no rational reason.

Signing up for Solar Together will take longer to install panels than doing this with your own contractor, with installations commencing in the early winter. This will be an average to good installation at a better than average price, with someone else checking the validity of guarantees. However, I'd certainly check that the contractor getting the Solar Together contract has reasonable customer reviews before paying for a site visit and final quote.

Heritage Open Days in Caversham

by Helen Lambert

THE HERITAGE OPEN DAY 2025 local programme starts with a day of events on Saturday 13 September, linked to this year's theme of Architecture: Bridges, Buildings and Beehives, and adding Meteorology. In Caversham Court Gardens there will be drop-in events from 11:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00, with workshops in the vinery for families suitable for children aged 5+, but all are welcome. This is part of the excellent Look, Draw, Build programme. Children are encouraged to look at shapes and patterns, draw their favourite view, and build imaginative structures inspired by what they have seen and drawn. All materials are provided.

From 12:00 there will be events in Caversham Baptist Church. The church, which was designed by Alfred Waterhouse, will be open for visits and tours from 12:00 to 13:00, followed by a series of three talks starting from 13:30. Drawing on material gathered over several heritage projects, Helen Lambert, Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) President will tell the story of Reading Bridge and the old and new Caversham Bridges. This will be followed by a talk organised by Reading Civic Society from the Royal Meteorological Society (RMS), looking at developments in the understanding of weather and climate over the past 175 years - the first public talk by RMS to be held in Reading. The third talk, arranged by CADRA, will be from Reading Beekeepers' Association and will follow the development of beehives with improvements in the understanding of the



Reading Bridge

all photos CADRA



Old Caversham Bridge

biology and behaviour of bees. The afternoon concludes at 16:45. Places for each talk need to be booked separately, and there is more information online. Places are free of charge, but donations would be welcome. Look out for the national website www.heritageopendays.org.uk/whats-on, the Reading programme on whatsonreading.com, or links from the CADRA website www.cadra.org.uk/en/Events



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Les Cooper



An Eye Opener

THE ROSES in our garden have been really gorgeous this year, all thanks to the enthusiasm of Eunice my wife. She loves her roses and is always studying catalogues and watching out for something new on television, particularly during the Chelsea Flower Show. A year or so ago, one of her roses growing in our front garden certainly attracted my attention. It had a number of single salmon-pink flowers with a deep red eye and looked great. When I told Eunice how much I liked it, she informed me it was called 'For your eyes only'.

In June this year, my Royal Horticultural Society magazine *The Garden* arrived, and my attention was immediately drawn to the front cover. It was filled with a picture of a great many colourful single roses. Underneath was written, 'The future of roses: what climate change means for the nation's favourite flower'.

Inside were pictures and an article by Daniel Myhill about *Rosa Persica*. One of the pictures happened to be of *For your eyes only*, but there were many other lovely single roses too. In my ignorance, I had always assumed our rose was an ordinary hybrid rose, but it isn't. It IS a hybrid, but

a special one that has taken many years to evolve. *Rosa Persica* is a rose species found growing in desert areas of Iran, Afghanistan and Russia.

In the 1960s two famous rose growers, Jack Harkness and Alex Cocker, began using *Rosa Persica* for breeding purposes. In the 1980s, Harkness introduced three hybrids which were not robust enough to sell well, but he didn't hide his breeding work. Some amateur growers were able to continue the quest and, in 2004, one of them, Peter James, introduced *For your eyes only*. Since then others have followed and can be easily purchased.

...eye-catching deep red...

The original breeding intention was, I understand, to capture the eye-catching deep red blotch at the centre of each flower. With the origins of *Rosa Persica* being what they are it would seem that, with the looming threat of climate change, their number one merit may well have been transformed with the resistance to hot weather coming to the fore.

We all know how uncertain the future is, but I am certain these lovely roses are worth growing now.



Rosa Persica Four Your Eyes Only

photo E Cooper



Carlos (left) with some of the The Last Crumb team

Best in the County

text and photo Phil Chatfield

CONGRATULATIONS TO The Last Crumb Pub on its recent triumph at the National Pub and Bar of the Year 2025 awards, announced 24 June 2025.

The pub was one of three nominated as the best in Berkshire, and took the award on the day. The awards, organised by trade magazine Pub & Bar, celebrate the 'very best venues, people and service standards across the whole of the UK'. In addition to a UK-wide Top Ten, there are 94 county awards. The Last Crumb (formerly the Prince of Wales) brought the award for Berkshire to Caversham.

...not expecting to win...

Area manager, Olly Brooks, and General Manager, Carlos Cruz, both live in Caversham. They were told about the nomination two months before the date and decided they would go along out of interest, given the ceremony was in London. They were not expecting to win and were amazed when they saw their pub name on the screen!

The Last Crumb is part of a small chain, The Dodo Pub Company, which started in Oxford just over 15

...We aim to be part of our community, a pub where everyone can feel welcome

years ago. The company currently runs nine venues, with another due to open in Newbury shortly. They took over The Prince of Wales and relaunched it as The Last Crumb in October 2019, just as the Covid-19 epidemic started. The pub was very popular at a time when venues could offer only outdoor dining, as it has a large outdoor area, and this helped with making a quick recovery when Covid-19 restrictions were lifted.

Carlos attributes their success to having a good team, including the chef and managers, focused on constant improvement. He commented, "We aim to be part of our community, a pub where everyone can feel welcome". In support of this, they have a Community Notice board and often contribute prizes for school raffles.

To find out more about the pub and upcoming events there, visit www.dodopubs.com/locations/the-last-crumb.

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The Griffin of the Bridge

A short story inspired by a well-known local landmark

THE GRIFFIN of the Bridge likes The Heights, from where she can see her prey at a distance. She knows the way they will travel; there is only one track across the river, just below The Heights. Just one way for her two-legged prey to get food into their den. Their den of wood and stones.

She watches her prey a lot but still she can't really understand them. She has learnt to watch, really closely, for the stragglers. A mistake might be fatal, as it had been for her mate. But no success in the hunt means no food for the hatchlings.

There are only three of them left now.

...scatter and scream...

At first, when she and her mate had built their nest on The Heights, hunting was easy. The prey would scatter and scream as the two of them struck from the skies together. Didn't the prey know they could never hide while making that noise?

And by splitting they were easier to take one by one.

But hunting is getting much harder now. And the hatchlings are getting much hungrier. And this doesn't feel like when the hunting gets thinner with the snow on the ground. This feels like it will never get easier, whilst the snow will always melt in spring. This feels like the circle of nature has been bent forever.

Some of the prey have grown metal fur. So tough on the claws. At times The Griffin had felt hers getting blunted or broken. This is not just painful and tiresome. Those claws are a vital part of her. The hatchlings need them to be working, at least until they grow their own.



The Griffin pub in Caversham

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

by Richard Stephensen

The first time she and her mate had seen the metal fur, her mate had squawked with joy because the fur glistened in sunlight showing where the prey was.

The arrogance of the top carnivore!

That was before they found out how tough those furs were. And now the prey didn't run but grouped together. And suddenly grew their own shiny claws as if from nowhere. What had caused the change?

Sharp sticks seem to fly through the air at her. Unnaturally sharp and painful. That is what had killed her mate. But it was no use giving in to hate. The hunter must strike with precision, not anger.

The Griffin knew that she had been spotted. She could hear their cries, and see them group together, like a wolf pack forming; their many shiny hides reflecting the sun.

Maybe next time, but it had to be soon, for the hatchlings' sake.

Maybe next time she would find enough food to give the hatchlings strength to move to a new hunting ground.

A window on the past



Looking back 50 years at the Caversham Bridge from August 1975

by The Editors

OUR EXPANDING archive of past editions provides a chance to see what has changed in our community – and what has stayed the same! We have just added the August/September 1975 edition.

This edition featured work on the roof of the Baptist Church in the centre of Caversham on the front page. The church is still active and there have been many improvements since, including the new entrance area which we reported on in May 2022.

...has not improved...

A regular Residents' Viewpoint column written by Watchdog focused on traffic problems and the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles. Sadly, something which has not improved in half a century. In the same edition, Katy in Caversham reported on changes in local shops, including a clothes shop and greengrocer, both long gone. Katy also reported on plans for disruptive road works as a new sewer was laid between Westfield Road and Cromwell Road, and Prospect Street was to be closed for resurfacing for up to two months. Whilst

The advertisements in the paper at the time reflect the variety of local shops, including clothing, shoes, butchers, and even a typewriter shop...

many roads in our area are currently the scene of multiple road works as gas pipes are renewed, at least the recent reconstruction of Donkin Hill and Bryants Avenue was completed in just a few days.

The 10th Anniversary of Caversham Park Village was marked, along with the growth in a community spirit, including the formation of the Caversham Park Village Association. The promised Community Centre was still not built and a fete to raise funds for it was held on 28 June. The Milestone Centre is now a well established feature of the local community in the Village.

The advertisements in the paper at the time reflect the variety of local shops, including clothing, shoes, butchers, and even a typewriter shop. There were two sports shops and a carpet shop. But one business is still advertising with the Caversham Bridge after all these years – John Kitcher and Son. See page 3 for their current advert!



Flags of Freedom Fun



Barbados meets Nigeria!

both photos Reading Caribbean Nation

READING CARIBBEAN Nation (RCN) CIC* hosted a community event titled Flags of Freedom Carnival on Sunday 22 June 2025 at Thameside Promenade. Described as a Windrush Celebration, the event celebrated the rich heritage and contributions of the Windrush Generation and their descendants. Although free to attend, it was a ticketed event and was fully booked well in advance.

Despite an unexpected change in the weather

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REAGADE

by Sharon Wickham

from the previous days of the week, many local people came out to attend the event, proudly displaying their country flags. The day featured live music, DJ sets, cultural performances, food stalls, family-friendly activities, and displays of Commonwealth flags representing our diverse communities.

The children's area, which had various games, a climbing wall, and inflatables was a huge hit, and kept the younger children occupied. A selection of Caribbean foods, drinks and music satisfied the appetites of the attendees. It was a chance for people to come together at this family event and celebrate their heritage and the contribution of the Windrush Generation in the Reading community. Overall, the event was a joyful celebration of Reading's diversity, and especially the contribution of the Caribbean nations to the town, and RCN are already planning for a similar event next year.

...foster appreciation...

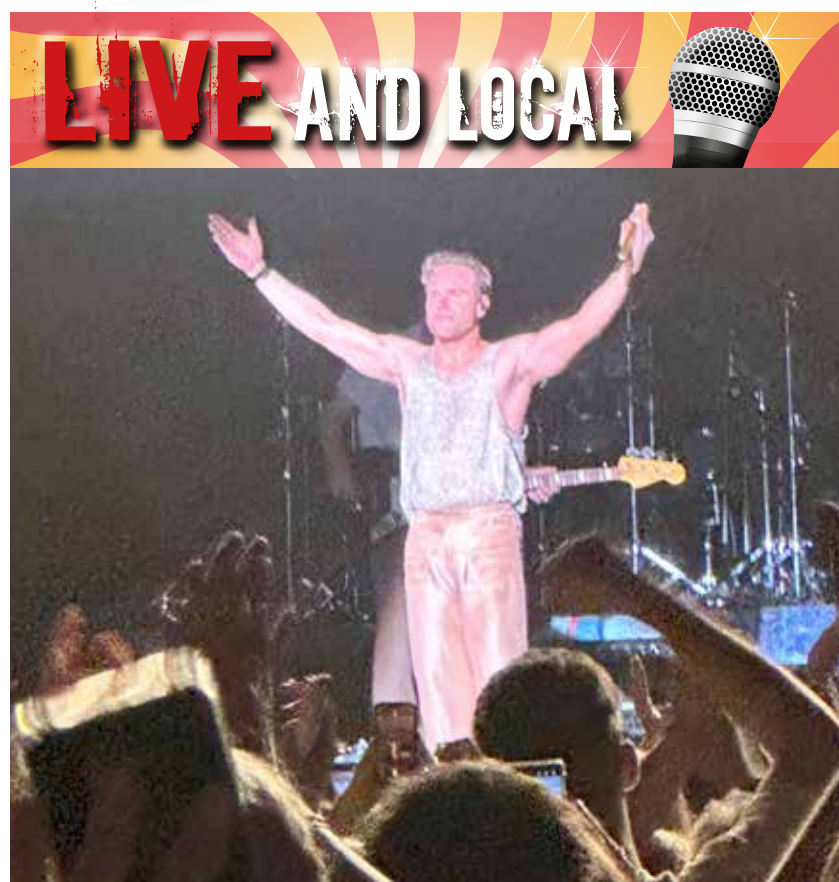
Reading Caribbean Nation CIC is a community organisation committed to celebrating and promoting Caribbean culture and heritage. It organises the annual Reading Carnival and numerous cultural events throughout the year, bringing together diverse communities in the Greater Reading area. The goal of the organisation is to foster appreciation for Caribbean arts and traditions, while providing opportunities for collaboration and engagement.

You can find out more about the organisation on their website, www.readingcaribbeannation.co.uk or follow their Facebook page.

*CIC – Community Interest Company



An afternoon for all



Olly Murs at Palmer Park, 13 June

text and photo Richard Wells

WE WERE BUZZING when we saw the advert for this one! X Factor legend and pop royalty, Olly Murs playing an outdoor show in our home town! We just had to get tickets. The show was part of Olly's 15 Years Of Hits tour, marking 15 years since he first hit our screens on X Factor and the subsequent hit singles since.

The venue at Palmer Park is set up like a mini festival. with a huge, big top tent hosting the show, grass underfoot, bars and street food vendors. The balmy evening with the threat of rain added to the festival vibe! The crowd had clearly got into the festival spirit and dressed for the occasion too, with funky outfits and glowsticks galore!

We had the amazing Funk Soul Orchestral warming up the crowd with a mix of classics from the 60s up to today, followed by DJ Martin 2 Smoove, spinning party classics and hyping up the crowd.

...cheeky demeanour...

Olly hit the stage with his biggest hit, *Troublemaker* and the crowd was immediately enthralled. He is a natural showman with a fun and cheeky demeanour. The heat didn't stop him running, jumping and gyrating all over the stage, with several outfit changes thrown in, all along belting out hit after hit. He slipped in a few covers, with a medley of 80s classics that got everyone singing along.

There was a sombre moment when he dedicated *Dear Darlin* to the late Caroline Flack before closing the show with favourites *Heart Skips A Beat* and *Dance With Me Tonight*.

The forecast storm never materialised, and the heat didn't stop us having a great time. We'll definitely be back next summer to check out the shows at Palmer Park, which have included the Stories In The Park dance music festival and country music festival *Life's A Rodeo*. See you next summer?!

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Linda Dudley: 1947-2025

– in every sense a caregiver

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS Methodist Church (CHMC) was packed for a memorial service led by Rev Rosemary Fletcher, a former minister, to celebrate and honour the life of Linda Dudley on 20 June. That so many people should attend was a mark of the love for Linda of the many people whose lives she had touched in some way.

Linda was born in 1947 and grew up in Maidenhead where she attended a convent school. On leaving school, she spent two years working with The Ockenden Venture, a charity founded to support displaced children and young people, many of them survivors of concentration camps or post-war refugees.

...saw something in her...

Following this, she applied to the Hammersmith Hospital in London to train as a nurse. It was one of the most prestigious teaching hospitals in the country. Gaining a place there was not easy, but they saw something in her – potential.

In 1973, she came to Reading to train as a midwife at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. By 1976 she was an experienced midwife, described by a junior doctor at the time as being “confident, capable, and wonderfully kind”.

In 1977 she met John Dudley, and they were married in 1983. By then, Linda had moved from midwifery into practice nursing, based at Emmer Green Surgery, where she proved to be an important member of the team, turning her hand

to anything that was needed. She had an almost magical ability to make people feel safe – and she did this without being condescending or clinical. She’d explain procedures with clarity, listen carefully, and – at the right moment – drop in a comment to make someone laugh and feel human again.

Her family was her greatest joy. Their daughter Fiona lives close by with husband Andy and their son. Linda loved being involved in caring for her grandson as he was growing up. Outside of work, Linda threw herself into life with a joy and openness that inspired everyone around her. She sang in barbershop harmony groups. She played badminton, walked with friends and swam. For more than 35 years she was part of the Methodist church community, working with children, and later as a steward, and supported husband John in his second career as an Anglican minister. In all of this, she always found time to connect with people.

...she was curious...

Because that, more than anything, is what Linda loved to do; talk, listen, engage. She was curious, she wanted to know people and was interested in their lives. She was, in every sense, a caregiver. Not just by profession, but by nature.

Linda has gone but her legacy lives on. Not just in her family, whom she adored, but in the lives she touched, the patients she comforted, the colleagues she supported, and the friends she made.



Linda Dudley

Support for those who are bereaved

by Penny Cuthbert

CAVERSHAM, THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM PARISH offer some regular events and a bereavement course for those who have experienced the loss of a loved one.

Regular *Meet and Chats* are just that – a chance to meet and chat with others who are on a bereavement journey, knowing you can talk about your loss (or not) with people who understand.

The dates for those this term are:

Tuesday 16 Sep: 11:15-12:15

3Cs Café at St John’s Church, RG4 5AN

Tuesday 21 Oct: 19:30-21:00

Miller & Carter, Kidmore Road, Caversham RG4 7NH

Tuesday 18 Nov: 11:15-12:15

3Cs Café at St John’s Church, RG4 5AN

We also run the *Bereavement Journey Course*, a seven-week course for those who have experienced a loss, no matter

...covers topics such as attachment, separation and loss; pain and responses of grief; anger and guilt; coping with the reactions of others

how long ago. The next course will run on Tuesday evenings beginning 23 September and ending 11 November. It covers topics such as attachment, separation and loss; pain and responses of grief; anger and guilt; coping with the reactions of others; delayed and suppressed grief; adjusting to change and moving forward healthily.

There is also an optional session on questions relating to faith. Each week includes material presented on DVD and an opportunity to share with others in discussion.

For more information or to book a space on the course, contact bereavement@ctmparish.org.uk

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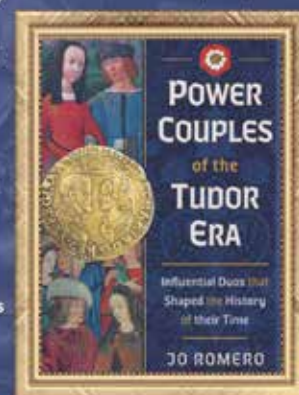
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First Impressions Matter

Five AI prompts which will Ruin Your CV

by Laura Harmsworth



AS ARTIFICIAL intelligence becomes increasingly popular for job applications, I'm seeing more CVs that scream 'robot-written' to recruiters. The wrong prompts are creating generic, lifeless applications that end up in the rejection pile.

'Prompts' are the instructions you give to AI tools. For CV writing, ChatGPT excels at quick edits and keyword recognition, whilst Claude offers better context understanding and maintains a more professional tone.

The most effective approach combines AI efficiency with human insight.

Here are 5 prompts sabotaging job seekers and what to use instead

- 'Write a CV for [job title]'** Creates a template that could apply to anyone. Instead, follow the CRAFT formula – this means:
Context: Provide relevant background information
Role/Requirements: Specify the target role or requirements
Achievements/Attributes: Include your specific experiences and skills
Format: Define the desired output format
Tone: Specify the professional tone you want
- 'Make this sound more professional'** Strips away your authentic voice. Better: 'Help me articulate this achievement more clearly while maintaining my natural tone.'
- 'Write a personal statement for my CV'** Produces instantly recognisable generic content. Use: 'Based on my background in [industry] and my goal to [specific objective], help me craft an opening that highlights my unique value proposition.'
- 'List skills for [industry]'** Creates 'cookie-cutter' skill lists everyone else uses. Try: 'Help me identify how my experience with [specific tools/projects] demonstrates the key competencies required for [target role]'.
- 'Improve my CV'** Too vague to be useful. Instead: 'Review this specific section and suggest improvements for clarity and impact, keeping my authentic voice.'

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right from the top)

king, stick, trill, block, sing, brick, song, **music**, trick, prong, fool, strong, foul, tine, jester.

Once you have AI-generated content, here's how to make it authentically yours:
Watch for telltale AI signs, including overused transitional phrases like 'moreover' or 'furthermore', generic claims without specifics, and unnaturally formal language. Vary sentence lengths and inject personality where appropriate.

Before you start, protect your privacy

Never share your full name, exact employer names, or salary information. Use '[Company A]' or hypothetical phrasing such as 'How would you write a bullet point for someone who increased sales by 25%'?

Finally, run these quality checks

Run a 'would I say this?' test on every bullet point, check for fabrications, verify all metrics match your experience, and ensure consistency throughout.

The key is using AI as a writing assistant, not a replacement writer. Your genuine experiences and personality should always shine through, ensuring your CV authentically represents your unique professional value.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

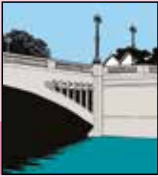
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www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

Website: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email: contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

The Caversham Bridge is a community newspaper produced by Caversham Bridge News Ltd



Future editions:

Contributions for the September issue

should be submitted by 1 August and for the October edition by 1 September. These should be emailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy

are 1 August for the September issue and 1 September for the October issue. These should be emailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org



For the youngest members of our community

LISTED BELOW are regular term-time events for toddlers, babies and their carers.

All are free of charge, although donations towards costs are welcome.

Mondays – Little Lambs and You – Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, Caversham RG4 8HY 10:00-11:30. Baby and toddler group. Numbers are limited, so there is an online booking system. See

www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk/Groups/382970/Little_Lambs.aspx

Tuesdays – Babies and Toddlers – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, RG4 8EB. 10:00 - 11:30. Refreshments available. All welcome.

cavershammethodist.org.uk/baby-toddler-group

Tuesdays – St. John's Baby and Toddler Group – Caversham Hall, St. John's Road, RG4 5AN. 09:30 - 11:00. All welcome.

Thursdays – Toddler Thursday – St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA. 8:45-10:00. Friendly group for preschoolers and parents/carers, refreshments available.

www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

Thursdays – Baby Massage with midwife Katie – 12:15-12:55 at the Weller Centre during term times. Suitable for babies from 6 weeks to crawling. 50p donation towards costs, refreshments available.

Fridays – Tiddlers for Babies and Toddlers – St Andrew's Church, Albert Road. Caversham Heights. RG4 7PL. 9:30-11:00. All are welcome, refreshments available.

www.facebook.com/groups/209815529592564

Fridays – Baby and Toddler Group – Church House, Church Road, Caversham, RG4 8AX. 9:30 – 11:00. Step-free access at the back.

See www.ctmparish.org.uk/stpeter for details



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Staying connected to others using our smartphone, tablet or computer can have huge benefits. By always keeping in touch, we can manage relationships and stay connected with friends and family at the touch of a button. For some of us, this can feel tiring and like we are constantly tasked to keep up with messages, emails, and social media posts.

The subtle reliance we have on this technology has made it difficult for many of us to go even a few hours without using a phone, tablet, or computer.

Thankfully, regularly taking a break from the digital world is an option.

The way you choose to limit or reduce your tech time is completely up to you. Some people completely withdraw from all digital material during a detox.

For others, a technology detox involves limiting time spent on social media and gaming applications. There is a

manual restriction on most smartphones that allows a user to discriminately limit screen time on certain applications. These are useful if you're looking to be more selective about what you spend your time on.

A great way to get the most out of your detox is to spend time outside, in nature, and exercising. Make a note of all the times you would naturally retreat to your phone because you were bored. Add this time up and make a commitment to spend it doing something positive for your mind and body instead.

Experts also offer us a step-by-step program to consider:

- Day 1** Switch off push notifications on your phone, tablet and laptop
- Day 2** Unsubscribe from redundant email lists
- Day 3** Set your email apps to refresh manually not automatically; take emails (or at least work emails) off your phone

- Day 4** Have a device box for meal times - every family member must put theirs in before you all sit down together to eat
- Day 5** Switch off all your electronic devices 90 minutes before bed
- Day 6** Have two one-hour periods during the day where you are device free; see if you can enjoy some special moments without posting them on social media
- Day 7** SCREEN FREE DAY – Live your entire day offline and without screens

Time away from technology has proven benefits for our health. These include improved mental health, better quality of sleep, reduced stress and anxiety, improved relationships, and better productivity.

An instant impact a lot of people see when taking time away from technology is the quality of their sleep improves. This is because the blue light that is used to light up our smartphones and computer screens negatively affects our ability to drift off at night.



Local Clergy and Church Services

ANGLICAN

Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry

St Margaret, St Peter, St John

Rev'd Mike Smith,

The Rectory, 20 Church Rd, Caversham RG4 7AD
Tel: 0118 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810
penny@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Rachel Ross Smith Tel: 07884 371688
rachel@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Dr Catherine Radcliffe Tel: 07740 475697
catherine@ctmparish.org.uk

Contact: admin@ctmparish.org.uk or 0118 996 8836
Correspondence address: Church House,
59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX

Current services

St Margaret's Church

Mapledurham – 11:15. 1st, 2nd, 4th Sunday Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday Service of the Word.

St Peter's Church

1st Sunday of the month: 9.30 All Age Service of the Word, with music group and choir
18.30 Holy Communion with prayers for healing, with choir
2nd and 4th Sundays: 8.00 said BCP Holy Communion
9.30 Holy Communion with choir and activities for young people, primary and secondary age
3rd Sunday: 9.30 All Age Holy Communion in a shorter format, with choir – 18.30 Choral Evensong
Wednesday: 9.30 said Holy Communion
All services live streamed on Zoom. For Zoom details go to www.ctmparish.org.uk/services/online/

St John's Church

Gosbrook Road Sunday services
8:00 Online CTM Youtube channel (stays available to watch anytime)
9:30 1st and 3rd Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd All Age Worship, 4th Service of the Word
Sunday Club for children on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

St Andrew's

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.
Tel: 0118 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current services

St Andrew's weekly services are Sundays at 8:00 and 10:00. The 10:00 is also livestreamed on the St Andrew's YouTube channel. Prayer Book Communion at 11.30 on the first Sunday of each month. More info on the parish website. www.standrewscaversham.org/services
Compline: 8.30 on Mondays during BST (in church)

St Barnabas, Emmer Green and Caversham Park

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk
Church Office Tel: 0118 947 5214

Current Services

Sundays: 8:00 BCP Holy Communion (1st Sunday only)
9:30 Parish Communion (Service of the Word on 2nd Sunday)
11:15 All Age Worship (Café Church or Family Communion)
Wednesdays: 10:30 Midweek Communion
Morning Prayer: Tuesdays 8:30 in church; Mon/Weds/Thurs 8:00. online at
www.facebook.com/StBarnabasEmmerGreen/live_videos
Full details at www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church Caversham

Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592
www.cavershammethodist.org.uk

Current services

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Highmoor Road
Sunday – 10.30 – Also available on YouTube.

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

Current services: Sunday – 10:30

New Testament Church of God

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson
Tel: 0118 946 3009

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

United Reformed Church, Caversham Park

Contact: **Dr Alison Johnston**

Tel: 0118 947 5152 www.cavershamparkurc.com

Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube
Details on their web site at:
<https://cpurc.org.uk/live-stream>

BAPTIST CHURCH

Caversham Baptist Church

Pastor: **Colin Baker**

Church office Tel: 0118 954 5353

Email: secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Current services

Sunday worship 10:30 each week, including groups for children and youth
Sermons are recorded and uploaded to
www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk
Hymn Café 15:00-16:00 on the last Sunday of each month

Grace Church (formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Elders **Nick King** and **David Steed**

Tel: 0118 947 4529 www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk
See their web site for details:

www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Riverside Church (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne

Fr Joe McLoughlin, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue
Tel: 0118 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for services at:
www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

St Michael, Sonning Common

(including Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village)

Fr Colin Blayney, The Presbytery, 18 Peppard Road,
Sonning Common RG4 9SU – Tel: 0118 972 3418
<http://saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk>

For details of the services being held at each of our churches, please visit their respective websites (on this page) or the Churches Together in Caversham website www.cavershamchurch.org



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