

THE RIO SUMMIT:

Money in, God out by John Madeley

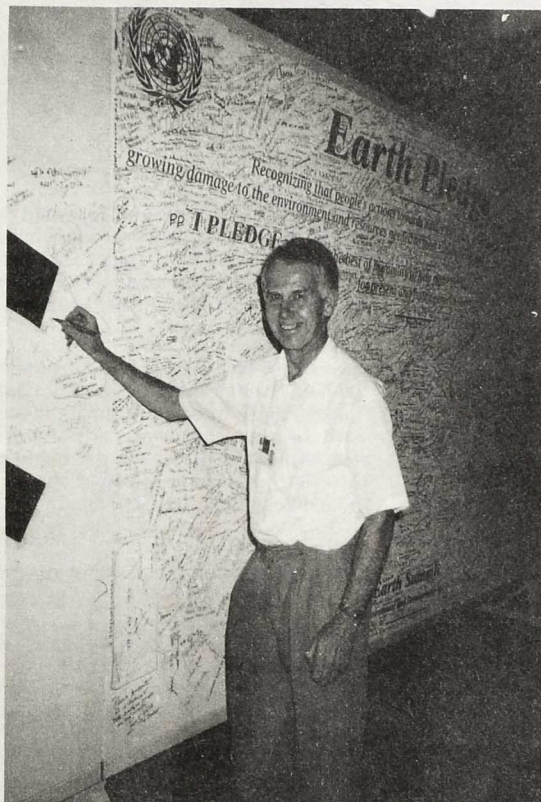
"I pledge to act to the best of my ability to help make the Earth a secure and hospitable home for present and future generations". So reads the wording on the "Earth Pledge" which stood on a large board at the Rio centre where the Earth Summit was held in June. Thousands of us lined up to sign - from world leaders to humble hacks. And yet I had to ask myself - did those of us who signed really mean it?

For the results of the summit did nothing to improve the Earthly home of the present generation of people who live in gross poverty. Leaders of Western nations, all elected by the democratic process, and presumably believing that you and I support them, refused to give more than a token in additional aid to the poor. I was reminded of the verse from Matthew - "you cannot serve God and money". Serving God would have meant a willingness to share. Serving money means we keep all we can. Which is what happened in Rio.

The summit had before it a 600 page document, Agenda 21, a plan of action for sustainable development when the summit was over. It needs \$600 billion a year to be implemented, over the period from 1993 to 2000, of which developing countries would find \$475 billion and donor countries \$125 billion. But the conference ended without any commitment on the part of donors to pay their share.

After some considerable wrangling, industrial nations agreed to reach the long-standing United Nations target and give 0.7 per cent of their national incomes in development aid "as soon as possible". Reaching the target would add an additional \$70 billion to the \$55 billion a year that is now given in aid. But donors only committed about an extra \$3 billion in Rio, the largest amounts coming from Japan and France.

In his speech to the summit, Mr John Major said that Britain would give an additional \$100 million to the World Bank's Global Environment Facility, but there is some doubt over whether this is additional aid or will come from the government's existing aid budget. It was a quite dismal performance. In fact in nearly 20 years of covering North-South conferences, I have rarely witnessed such blatant acts of nationalism as occurred over the summit. We had President Bush's "US jobs before the environment" speech; during the negotiating process in Rio the Arab oil nations tried to remove from the text of Agenda 21 any mention of energy conservation on the grounds that this would be against their interests, while the British government appears to have been among the chief Western countries speaking out against fixing a date to achieve the 0.7 per cent aid target.



John signing the Earth Pledge

John Madeley

It was sad, although hardly surprising, that towards the end of the summit, a group of non-governmental organisations awarded the USA, Saudi Arabia and Britain the "Ostrich Prize" for the most negative performances of the summit.

Our Prime Minister drew on Darwin, Ruskin and Voltaire in his speech. The BBC's Environmental Correspondent, Alex Kirby, said that he was reminded of Shaw's reasonable and unreasonable man. The reasonable man says "let's give more aid as soon as possible". The unreasonable man says "it's scandalous that 40,000 children are dying every day of hunger-related disease; this calls for action now". Unreasonable men - and women - have scarcely been more badly needed.

On two environmental issues there were modest gains. Under the convention on climate change that was signed at the summit, countries will try to limit the emissions of the gases that are causing global warming to their level in 1990 - but, at the insistence of the United States, no date was fixed for this to be reached. Besides the scale of the problem, this is clearly inadequate.

An Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has said that emissions need to be cut by 60 per cent if global warming is to be stopped. Germany has taken the lead among industrial nations in committing itself to a 30 per cent cut by 2005. If a 60 per cent, or even 30 per cent cut, is to be achieved then industry will have to reduce emissions and most of us will have to change our lifestyles, using a cycle or walking, for example, instead of taking out the car. For this is all about the way we live.

A convention on conserving the range of wildlife (biodiversity) was signed and should enable more funds to be made available to help preserve species of wild plants which are vital to our food supplies of the future. Such plants are genetic material for breeding with existing crop varieties - the lack of such genetic material was responsible for the 19 century Irish potato famine. And they have been disappearing at an alarming rate. Developing countries will now be in a better position to claim royalties on them - which is one of the reasons why the US will not sign the convention.

Western leaders were prepared to move on climate change and biodiversity, maybe because they recognised that their own interests are at stake. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that they failed to do anything about the millions who are on the point of death from poverty today, because the poor pose no threat.

The suffering of the poor is not perceived acutely enough for western countries to act. That was the sadness and the scandal of the 1992 Earth Summit. Will Western governments now show that they care more about God than money? Only, I suspect, if you and I make it clear to our politicians that we care enough about this issue for our votes to depend on it. If we act, politicians will act.

A lighter note! I went to Brazil a week before the Earth Summit to attend a conference on land reform at Vitoria, some 300 miles north of Rio. Vitoria is a lovely place, running along the Atlantic Coast with a beautiful bay. The snag for the good people of Vitoria is that the sea is too polluted to swim in because a metal factory just across the bay has discharged waste acids into the water.

Only seconds after taking this picture of Vitoria Bay, I felt a hand on my shoulder. I looked round and 2 burly men in dark glasses were stood there. I froze, suddenly remembering that taking pictures in some countries is just not allowed. As visions of the inside of a South American jail flashed before my eyes, one of them spoke in Portuguese. I replied in English, which for-

TALKING POINT

by
JUNE HARDCASTLE

A CHILD'S PLACE?

SOME LINES FROM LITERATURE

"Speak roughly to your little boy,
And beat him when he sneezes;
He only does it to annoy,
Because he knows it teases." (Alice in Wonderland)

Or is it this?

SOME LINES FROM AN INFANT CLASSROOM

A group of children are engaged in investigations into gravity. One of them is standing on a chair in the corridor, holding up a variety of objects one at a time then letting them go. After a book, a rubber, a fir cone, a jumper and a stone have all dropped swiftly to the floor, a small feather is subjected to the same test. To the delight of the assembled company the feather begins to wing a horizontal path. "Why do you think this has happened," says teacher? A few seconds hush. "I know", cries an enthusiastic five year old, "There is something that's the opposite to gravity".

"Mrs Hardcastle, I've put in my news about when I was bitten in the garden". "Okay, let me have a look. Ah, right, very good but we don't spell it NAT. It's got a silent letter at the beginning." "Oh, I know like knight. It's spell KNAT". "No, actually, it's GNAT". Crestfallen child returns to this table, complaining in a loud voice. "How is anyone expected to learn to spell?"

A six year old, feeling poorly, leans against her teacher. "I love cuddling you Mrs Hardcastle. Your tummy is like a squashy pillow."

"Shall I read you my writing Mrs Hardcastle". "Yes Please". "It says I was very, very sick. I was sick all over the cat." "But you were supposed to be writing about a day at the seaside". "I know, but I thought that was more interesting."

We were writing poems about volcanoes. "I've finished mine Mrs Hardcastle", says a five year old boy. "Great, read it to me."

"Volcano, Volcano
O lovely Volcano
You come down the mountain side and kill all the girls."

"Mrs Hardcastle I like it when you have a stammering day". "Oh, why's that ?" "It makes me giggle."

SOME MORE LINES FROM LITERATURE

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
You may give them your love but not your thoughts.
For they have their own thoughts.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. (K. Gilbran)

SOME LINES FROM JUNIOR PRAYER TIME

Dear God, you know I don't want to visit my old grandad but at least help him to remember to wear his hearing aid. Amen.

Dear God, please get someone to invite me to a birthday party. My brother has just been to two. Amen.

Dear God, thank you for my spiderman outfit. Amen.

SOME LINES FROM THE BIBLE

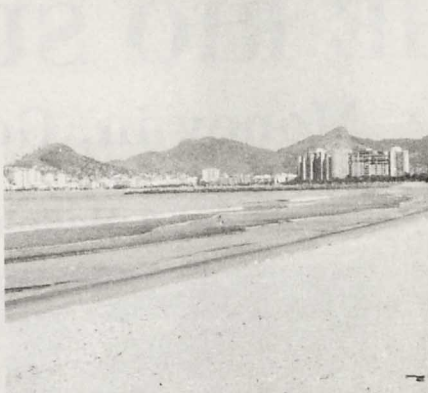
"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and saying, 'Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?' And calling a child to him, he put him in the middle of them and said 'Truly, I say to you, unless you become like children you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.'"

Heavenly father, grant us the freshness, the lack of guile, the honesty and the openness of a childlike spirit knowing that you love us as we are and will lead us on to be everything you intend us to be."

THE RIO SUMMIT:

from page 1

unately he understood. "The sea you see here is not sea", he said, his every word breathing life back into my body, "it is acid". With that he waded into the Ocean,



Vitoria

— John Madeley

scooped up a handful and repeated "acid, acid". He asked what I was doing in Brazil. I said I had come as a journalist. He laid another, altogether more welcome, hand on my shoulder: "tell the world about it", he said. I am telling you.

I give the last word to a distinguished Kenyan environmentalist Wangari Maathai - "unless those who have are willing to share with those who have not, and are willing to stop exploiting those who are exploitable, then there is no hope for all of us. The time to change is now, let us promote justice".

TRAITORS IN THE NIGHT

I stood on our east-facing verandah, the cloud-base was low as I listened to German bombers flying northwards up the valley, on their way to blitz Coventry City.

My father had been in a Royal Flying Corps Squadron, stationed in France during the 1914/18 War, and I was seldom isolated from some reference to aeroplanes and those who flew them. I became absorbed with the "Magic of Biggles" and later, volunteered at sixteen and a half to become a fighter-pilot in W.W.2.

My presence on the verandah that night, however, met with my parents' disapproval, who prompted me to return indoors!

I was about to reluctantly obey, when to my astonishment, an unshielded torch began to flash Morse signals across the valley, from Balmore Park. My own Morse-reading ability being far too slow, I was indoors in an instant, urging my Mother, an ex-telegraphist, to take down the "Message". It seemed probable that the sender was communicating with another collaborator on our side of the valley, who in turn, was in radio-contact with the aircraft overhead.

Once completed, I raced to the Police Station to hand in the details and advise them of the circumstances.

Shortly after, we heard that two "Fifth-Columnists" had been caught, complete with radio-equipment and other paraphernalia, in a house beyond Balmore.

In due course, my Mother received a congratulatory letter from a "Place of High Office", thanking her for her co-operation, and suggesting that her prompt action may well have been responsible for having saved many lives.

My parents, who were married in our Parish Church, have now been deceased for many years. Hopefully, the traitors, if still living, have been "Reformed" long ago!

However, I thought that this incident may well be of some interest to a few "Oldies" like myself, who are still with us, and also help the younger ones to realise that even in Caversham, some of us were certainly not without our "Moments" in W.W.2!

A.G.H.

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The newspaper produced by members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

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All contributions for September issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 5 August.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham by 3 August.

The dates for October will be Monday 31 August and Wednesday 2 September.

The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

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CAVERSHAM REMEMBERED

We have recently been fortunate enough to receive letters concerning life in old Caversham. Mrs. Warren, who now lives at Calcot, writes that she was born at Emmer Green but when she was 9 months old her father was promoted to be head gardener to Miss Emma Noble at 'The Hill', Surley Row, and they moved to No.10. In 1934, when she was married, they had a house built for them by Messrs. Fisher of Emmer Green, at the other end of Surley Row, and they remained in 'the village' for another 11 years when they moved to Cornwall and subsequently to several places in Southern England. She still remembers everyone who lived in Surley Row when she was there; her father died in 1938 but her mother remained at No.10 for several years before joining her daughter in Cornwall. They all returned to Reading in 1959.

She adds: "My brother and I went to the village school and my grandmother lived in the cottage right opposite. Later we transferred to St. Peter's Church School in Caversham.

Working in Old Caversham

A gentleman who does not wish to be identified says he was very taken with an article in the 'Bridge' about Mr. Kent's early days as he was the driver of the vehicle, transferring from the Broad Street Shop to the one in Caversham in 1920. He had a new one-ton Ford van to replace the horse drawn van. The coach house became the garage and the harness and tackle room became, in the last war, and Air Raid Warden's Post.

He goes on to say how he used to sell evening papers, 'The Star' and did good business when meeting the steamers at the riverside after they'd been on day's river trip. To sell papers in those days, you had to be licensed by the local Council and issued with a metal badge of identification to be strapped on the left arm.

He also gives us a lot of information about his father's work originally at a grocer's shop in St. Mary Butts, before transferring the Baylis's Store. He describes how he helped his father take out Mr. Vunberry, the owner of the original shop, in a bath chair, one pushing and one pulling a long handle attached to the wheel at the front — at 2d. a time.

We look forward to receiving more memories in future and will do our best to publish them, as we are sure the stories will strike a chord with our older readers.

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STOP PRESS

NEW CANON

Congratulations to the Rev. Richard Kingsbury, Rector of St. Peter's, Caversham and St. Margaret's Mapledurham on his appointment as an Honorary Canon of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.

GOLDEN WEDDING

JOYCE AND GEORGE BARNES



Joyce and George

Mr and Mrs Barnes do seem rather young to have just celebrated their golden wedding, until you remember they were only 17 and 19 respectively when they married in London in 1942. George, who was actually born in Coley, was at that time in the Royal Marines. When he left school he immediately applied for a job as gardener at Queen Anne's School and it was then that he met Joyce who was then living in Reading. She moved to London for a time to live with her grandmother but they were soon back in Reading.

Their early married life was somewhat peripatetic, living in various places in the district, including a short spell in a caravan at Kidmore End.

Both Joyce and George have turned their

hand to a good many jobs during their married life, though George insists he considers himself to be a gardener and still works part-time as such, as well as keeping his own garden in Chiltern Road in tip-top condition. Joyce herself is still working part-time with a dry-cleaners. It is difficult to think of either of them retiring for, in spite of having to keep an eye on two children, nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, they are very active people. They lived in their present home in Chiltern Road for 27 years, so they celebrated their golden wedding by getting away from it all and enjoying a lovely holiday in Jersey.

We would like to send out best wishes to this very friendly couple for the years to come.

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF ELSIE PLATT AND HER FAMILY

The Platt family were part of my childhood. They lived at 129 Gosbrook Road and my family lived at 173, so I suppose we were almost neighbours.

In those days our mother used to write out a grocery order and wrap up half a crown in it and we would go along to Platts Stores. The prices seemed to stay the same for years; no inflation in those days even though our Dad's wages were pretty poor and times were very hard. We would come home with the goods and perhaps 1¼ or 2½d. change.

Elsie Platt could be quite intimidating to the children but she didn't bother me. The shop had a lovely smell of candies, coffee, spices and salt bacon. Platts cured and salted their own bacon and hams. In the winter there was a smell of paraffin stoves among other things. Elsie's constant dread was that, as children, we might knock over one of the stoves and cause a fire, so we were made to stand still and sometimes, if we were good, we were allowed to choose a broken biscuit from one of the glass-topped Huntley and Palmers biscuit tins in front of the counter. Elsie's father was a genius on the bacon slicer and could cut paper thin rashers at speed and I never once saw him cut himself.

In the different seasons we local children used to play in Mill Road outside Platts Stores with our hoops and spinning tops and also chalk the road and play

hopscotch and similar games. There were no motor cars to worry about then, just the odd bicycle or horse and cart. Elsie suffered us throwing balls up against the shop wall and sometimes told us to go home if we were too noisy.

We loved Christmas, when we went to Platts and bought the ingredients for Christmas cakes and puddings — lovely candied peel with hard sugar inside and almonds to be soaked and skinned and glace cherries.

In the last war Elsie came into her own. She marked off ration books and clipped coupons and I don't think many scored a point over her. Fairness was the name of the game and Elsie stuck to the rules.

Eventually Elsie retired and moved with her sister, Clare, to Mayfield Drive and had quite a long retirement until Clare died of ill health and old age caught up with her. She was happy in Summerfield Rest Home and the last time I saw her she had just had her ninety-eighth birthday. I knocked on the door and said "Elsie, can I come in". We had a little talk about Caversham times which she loved and I left her quietly sleeping.

AUDREY B. VINCE

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POSTBAG

Dear Editors,

In the very unlikely event of the 'Bridge' featuring a financial advice column, it is even more unlikely that it would recommend investing in a company which within twelve months changed a £6.8 million profit before taxation into a £16.7 million loss and which with a loss of 29.9 per share, paid a dividend of 9p per share by transferring £23.7 million for reserves. But when that company is Higgs and Hill, of Bugs Bottom fame, it makes a difference.

Contrary to some reports, we have not given up the battle. We intend to use every possible tactic in the fight and one way is to buy a single share in company (today's price 70p). Quite a lot of us have already done this and so have the information given above and now know that the developers are not the all-powerful big boys we might have thought. Each shareholder also involves the company in considerable trouble and expense in registering the share, posting reports and accounts and sending dividend cheques for a few pence.

But the biggest advantage is that the single share holder has full democratic rights to speak and vote at the A.G.M. The last two meetings have seen a sizeable groups of Bugs Bottom defenders and the other shareholders and the Board have been left in no doubt of the strength of local opposition and they may well question the final profitability of the scheme. But we would be even more effective if a lot more joined us.

Interested? If so contact Molly Casey, 14 Albert Road (472300). The cost will be about £2 per head to include a share of the brokerage fee — much reduced if we buy collectively — a small price to pay for helping to Save Bugs Bottom.

Yours etc.

D.E. Thomas

63 Cromwell Road,
Caversham

Dear Sirs,

I read with interest your article in the June issue of 'Caversham Bridge' about the Park Ranger Service.

The reason for my writing is to bring to your attention the extent of the marvellous practical work carried out at Caversham Court Gardens by the 'Friends of Caversham Court' over the past twelve months.

This was unfortunately overlooked in your article, which I understand was taken from a talk given by ranger Clare Bishop in April. Miss Bishop was unaware that her talk would be reported in your paper, and I'm sure she would have given the 'Friends' more emphasis if she had.

THE LINK GROUP

The Group held its eighteenth AGM in June, so has come of age! Members are drawn from ten different Churches in Caversham, and aim to give personal and practical help locally, usually working through organisations with which individual members have close links.

Reports from them were received at the meeting, and included Sandra Owen talking about SPHERE (for Single parents and babies); Lyn Baker who helps with the Drop-in Centre, and with REAP; May Smith and Susie Robinson giving details of help given and needed by Katesgrove Family Aid; Angela Kingsbury reporting on new plans for the Berkshire Women's Refuge in Reading; Audrey Preston on the Cyrenians' hostel and Peggy Coome on the Caversham Pop-in Centre. Anthea Prescott spoke of volunteers needed at the Sue Ryder Home. In addition, Vera Scott reported on the regular monthly tea parties for housebound people held in members' homes and their Christmas lunch.

Janet Ferguson, the Treasurer, said that gifts had been made to all these organisations throughout the year, as well as practical help given, the money being raised by the Annual Sponsored Knit-in. This had a dual purpose, as squares for blankets made were given to Janet Offord for Save the Children.

In her Chairman's report on a busy year Anthea Prescott spoke of the toys distributed at Christmas in conjunction with Family Aid. She said that the Ecumenical Lunch catered for over one hundred people, the speaker being Jill Pitkeathley from the Carers' National Association.

Great interest had been aroused by this talk, and Brenda Coates gave details of a meeting to be organised by the Link Group for local groups. This would be in October. The aim would be to set up a Cross Roads branch in this area.

Anyone interested in coming to the Link Group's monthly meetings should contact Chairman Anthea Prescott (478865) or Secretary Sonia Higgs (478981). The first meeting of the new session in September will include a House Communion Service. P.S. Many thanks to the kind anonymous person who gave knitted squares and blankets towards the Knit-in. They were much appreciated.

The 'Friends of Caversham Court' have expressed to me their great disappointment that their efforts have apparently gone un-noticed, and I would greatly appreciate it if you would consider mentioning their work in a future issue.

The work carried out in Caversham Court Gardens by the 'Friends' is in areas not covered by the grounds maintenance contract, but which are nevertheless in need of improvement.

The group was formed in July 1991. In October the group cleared out the ornamental pond, cutting back the invasive pond weed and other vegetation which threatened to take over the pond. The unsightly green algae on the waterfalls was also removed. A visit to the pond today to see the extent of this year's regrowth demonstrates just how important the cleaning and pruning work was! Similar work is planned later this year.

Another of the Group's projects was to create a 'dead-hedge' along the grass bank that covers the old wall by the gazebo. This was to prevent people from running up and down the bank, which was rapidly eroding the listed wall. Acacia, cut from the stools on the other side of the gardens, was used to form a frame, around which nettles and brambles could grow, forming a natural barrier, thus preserving the wall.

The most recent, and certainly most ambitious, group project, was the creation, thanks to a grant from English Nature, of a wildlife garden. What was a previously uninspiring and much abused corner of the gardens, has been planted with over forty different kinds of native wildflowers and shrubs. Specialised wildlife habitats, such as a log pile, grass bank and a rock habitat were created to attract as wide a range of insects, birds and animals as possible.

Volunteers from the group worked throughout March and April 1992 to finish the project, which once established, will serve not only a valuable source of food and shelter for wildlife, but also as an important outdoor classroom in which to teach children about their natural environment.

Some areas of grass have been left to grow long. This is to encourage native wildflowers to seed, and to provide shelter for insects, which in turn provide food for birds and bats.

I do hope this work can in some way be acknowledged, and the group given support by local people, since they are endeavouring to conserve and protect one of the most historic and beautiful sites in Caversham, if not in the whole of Reading.

I would also like to take this opportunity to mention a book entitled 'A History of Caversham Court', the only book dealing exclusively with Caversham Court, of which Mr H. Godwin Arnold is co-author.

For more details of the 'Friends' activities, please contact either myself at the address below, or the group secretary, Mr Cliff Bentley, 12 Auburn Court, Church Road, Caversham.

Yours etc.
Richard Haworth
Park Ranger Service

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NOTES FROM NANJING

Harriet Baker writes:
March 3rd. Annabelle's room, The Dawn Garden.

We've had some dramatic changes in the weather recently, from dry but cold days to warm, sunny ones like May or June in England. Then the climax came with a really heavy storm — bright sheet lightning, squally winds, tremendously heavy rain and then the most enormous hailstones, about 2cms. across (no kidding), which fell for about 30 minutes. Now it is damp and cold, but at least it's not so dusty and some leaves and grass are appearing.

We've seen two Chinese Operas recently — one a traditional one and the other a more modern one with a political message. The traditional one lasted 3½ hours and by the end of it our nerves were in shreds and our backsides numb! The music was so loud and so unpleasant (to our ears) to listen to, with very high pitched whining and scraping, claps, bangs, jingles, and plenty of emotional wailing. But the scenery and costumes were amazing and any monotony was relieved by acrobats — performers throwing themselves across the stage with backflips and somersaults in mid-air, and lots of juggling. We got the giggles when things went wrong and people's wigs fell off or the jugglers dropped their flaming sticks. Once the heroine's trapeze failed and instead of soaring gracefully upwards she was jerked off the stage sideways and looked most surprised! The story was of a Chinese folk legend and Confucius had an enormous plastic head (all those brains) and hugely long ears which are a sign of good fortune. When I went down to the front of the auditorium to take photos I met a guy called Wang Wen-Hui. He's studying Chinese Opera in Nanjing and his hoping to go to Hawaii University. He's very interesting and willing to talk about the Cultural Revolution and the Communist Party as he isn't a member. And it was he who invited us to see the modern opera which we enjoyed much more. It had a political theme and was set in the time of the Japanese invasion and occupation of Northern China. These Operas were the only ones allowed during the Cultural Revolution when all other traditional style opera was banned. It told the story of a brave young Communist man and his Communist mother and daughter who, despite kidnap and torture by the Japanese, refused to tell the secret of the 'Red Lantern' which was used to send secret messages to trains passing through this remote area. They triumphed as Communist heroes and although it was difficult to ask Wang much above the blaring music it was good to have



Harriet Baker (St. Peter's and Caversham Heights) and her friend Annabelle at the Plum Blossom Exhibition, Nanjing, China.

him there to explain the story of us. Since that evening Wang has called to see us at the school and left a tape for us to record some English conversation, radio programmes etc. to help him with his English which is not brilliant. We invited him in for a chat but it wasn't easy to get a conversation going but after many awkward silences and blatant hints he finally left. No doubt we shall see him again.

We're being taught some Chinese by Miss Xue at the school and Annabelle is finding it very confusing having had no previous knowledge. The little that I learned in evening classes is useful for shopping, bargaining, and getting simple messages across to Zhang, Wang or Pang Shi Fui all of whom help in the school or the Dawn Garden where we live.

We haven't found anywhere to learn silk painting or calligraphy yet but will keep our eyes and ears open. We have discovered that we both secretly enjoy sketching and painting and have spent one of the rare warm days painting the Purple Mountain and surrounding farms and fields. After visiting the Nanjing Plum Blossom Exhibition we tried copying their very beautiful style of

painting full branches of blossom and discovered how difficult it is. The Exhibition was held on an island in Xuanhu lake. There were displays outside of miniature gardens with plum trees, winter jasmine, bridges, pools and rocks (some real and some cardboard cut-outs). Indoors there were endless flower arrangements submitted for competition. Annabelle and I decided that we weren't sufficiently Chinese to appreciate their idea as to what makes for a beautiful flower arrangement. Four rooms were full of Bonsai trees — a mind boggling quantity. Some were lovely with delicate shapes and fresh blossoms, but others looked so artificially twisted that I pitied them. Most had had bits grafted on to them so that there were different coloured blossoms on a single tree.



On this Saturday coming we have a trip with the school to a neighbouring village called Laoshang — we can't find it on the map but can't wait to see another place. I'll tell you all about it in the next letter. Must dash as it's time for the next lesson with the Senior One drama group — we intend teaching them charades. Should be amusing!.....

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ROOT GROUPS

Since 1980 USPG (United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel) has offered short-term experience for groups of three or four to work together in Anglican parishes. Root Groups are self-funding, but supervised by USPG. **David Allsopp** (St Peter's and St Margaret's) reports from his year with Gloucester Root Group as he prepares to go to Cambridge University.

***** GLOUCESTER: Root Group at St Oswald, Coney Hill

Formed in 1935, this twelve thousand suburban parish has council and private

housing estates. The parish has a reputation of hard grind for clergy and churchpeople. Most of the congregation are from private estates. Most of the pastoral work is in the council estates. Community facilities are minimal. With regular congregation of forty struggling to make ends meet, there are many gaps between church and community. The Root Group seems the only church 'youth' (apart from Sunday School) in church life. We try to bridge the gaps.

A Root Group offers an extra resource to try new ideas in an already fully stretched parish. We visit on behalf of the church. We involve ourselves in community life. Years ago St Oswald's asked for a Root Group. Now, here we are!

LIVING TOGETHER

Since October 1991 we've shared a common purse, renting a house in the parish. Living together as a Group of four has been a key learning point, sharing daily worship, feelings, expectations, reactions. We have a Group Counsellor to keep us on the straight and narrow.

We are 'teaching assistants' in local schools. We feel we've strengthened links with St Oswald's by this, by work with local boys' football club, and the neighbourhood advice centre, which produces and distributes a community magazine to one thousand homes (I am its photographer). We also produce the church magazine. I help the vicar with parish administration. We help with Junior Church, Confirmation classes, and Sunday evening worship. I'd run a music group, but the only other instrumentalist is also a trumpeter!

ROOTS GROUPS ARE GOOD NEWS

Over two selection weekends Group members are selected and we help select each other into a Group for the coming year and decide where we will go. Believe me, these selection weekends were intensive but enjoyable!

I recommend Root Group experience to any (18-30) who want an adventurous year. You don't make or lose money. But you make lasting friendships and widen horizons. If you'd like to know more, drop me a line (c/o 25 Ilkley Rd, RG4 7BD).

David Allsopp



David abseiling with a group of local boys

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

ST BARNABAS NEWS

As readers of this paper will know, the congregation of St Barnabas has recently been involved in the formation of Fellowship Groups. To date four meetings have been held by each of the five groups and enthusiasm among members remains strong. Each group is quite clearly developing its own particular feel and, whilst following a basic format of silence, prayer, buzz groups, discussion and closing prayers. Within that format there has been room for members to give short talks, listen quietly to music and just chat. Some groups, growing in Fellowship, have been busy organising summer barbecues and Sunday lunches.

However, Fellowship for Adults is not the only growth area in the church. The young people have also been enjoying an active programme and have participated in many local events, including the Christian Pop Festival at Rivermead as well as their own guided walk through Bugs Bottom. One wonders which of these youngsters will reminisce in this paper in sixty years time about the beauty of Bugs Bottom as it was! Meanwhile much work needs to be done to keep the young people in the Church, particularly as they approach their teenage years. The Fellowship groups will be tackling this problem in the months to come and it is hoped that much may be achieved.

DEANERY EUCHARIST
AT THE
LEISURE CENTRE

On Sunday 21st June fleets of cars and two double decker buses, borrowed for the occasion from the Reading bus preservation society, converged on the Leisure Centre, not to indulge in sporting activities, but to take part in the Deanery Eucharist.

Hymns were played by the orchestra, conducted by Sara Brown, Director of Music at Greyfriars Church, and led by last year's Mayor, Robert Dimmick, before the service began, and enthusiastically sung by those patiently waiting.

The Eucharist followed the usual pattern after an introduction by the Rural Dean. The Bishop of Reading celebrated, and the Revd David Winter, Bishop's Officer for Evangelism, preached. He used the analogy of the garage's check list for servicing a car to point out that to live a Christian life we needed a check list for our actions, and that there are plenty of New Testament examples of what are the Christian standards for living and spreading the Gospel.

The actual Communion took place at strategic points round the Hall, and it was interesting to note that last year's Mayoress, Margaret Dimmick, who is a Reader, assisted at one of the points.

A highlight at this part of the proceedings was the re-entry of the Bishop, carrying his crook, leading a child and followed by a 'flock' of children, joined together by holding a large rope.

To more rousing hymns the service ended, and the congregation departed leaving some of the very enthusiastic party still singing and clapping choruses.

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ST ANNE'S
NEWS

Confirmation at the Church of
Our Lady and St Anne, Caversham

It was a great occasion at the Church of Our Lady and St Anne on 6th May when twenty-six girls and boys received the sacrament of Confirmation from His Grace the Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville of the Birmingham Archdiocese. He confirmed each child with chrism of Holy Oil and prayed for the gifts of the Holy Spirit over all the children.

His wise words and encouragement reached out to all the congregation. He especially praised the parents for helping and supporting their children, including the team of Catechists who dedicated their

time to instruct them. He thanked Revd Fr Meagher for all hard work and was generous in his comments and praise of the beauty of the church and its furnishings which was always maintained to a very high standard.

Throughout the ceremony of the Confirmation Mass the church choir sang beautifully and was supported by the children's choir of St Anne's School. After the ceremony Revd Fr Meagher invited the families and parishioners for refreshments in the church hall, where the Archbishop presented each child with a Confirmation Certificate.



His Grace the Archbishop Maurice Couve de Murville with a candidate at the Confirmation Mass at the Church of Our Lady and St Anne.

YOU WHO HAVE EARS

Someone once said that God gave us two ears and one mouth and that therefore we were meant to use our ears twice as much as our mouth! Dietrich Bonhoeffer said 'Many people are looking for an ear that will listen. They do not find it among Christians, because Christians are talking when they should be listening. He who no longer listens to his brother or sister will soon no longer be listening to God either...'

If you find yourself agreeing with these statements and would like to improve your listening skills there are several opportunities to do so in Caversham this Autumn at a variety of levels.

LISTENING TO OTHERS a teaching day at The Vine, 4 The Mount, will be held on Thursday 17 September from 10am to 3.30pm. Cost, including lunch, £5. To book phone Fi Radford on 483965.

A MINI COURSE IN CHRISTIAN LISTENING aimed at increasing the awareness of listening among Christians so that they might listen better at home at work and within the church. The course will run for four consecutive Friday evenings from 25th September to 16th October from 7.30pm to 10pm, and will be held

at St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road. Cost £5. Tutor Rosemary Carpenter tel. 472788.

BASIC (FULL) COURSE IN CHRISTIAN LISTENING intended for those who, having satisfactorily completed the course, would be prepared to offer themselves to be used in a ministry of listening to others in the community. For this reason the written recommendation of your Minister is needed to come on the course, which comprises 11 evening sessions and 2 Saturday Workshops, with a commitment to ongoing monthly meetings for support, supervision and further training. The course will be held at Caversham Baptist Free Church starting on Wednesday 16 September and will cost £30. Tutors Sheila Goldsmith (475303) or Pat Antell (474787).

If you would like to learn more about this course or any of the others listed before there will be an opportunity to meet all the course tutors **THURSDAY 3 SEPTEMBER AT 7.30pm** at Caversham Baptist Free Church.

Do come along and find out more. Listening is foundational to all good counselling and to improved family and other relationships. But be warned — listening can seriously change your outlook on life!

F.R.

RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

By Watchdog

BUGS BOTTOM — WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here is a list of restrictions attached to the planning consent for building in Bugs Bottom. There are others of which infringement will be less apparent, but the following can be detected by anyone keeping an eye on the valley and its immediate environs.

1. No fires of any kind are to be lit on the site
2. No parking of any vehicles connected with the site (workers', delivery or construction) permitted on public roads or verges.
3. No unloading of building materials from public roads.
4. No mud to be left on the public highway.
5. Protecting hoarding round the site to be maintained in good condition.
6. Existing rights of way to be preserved during construction.
7. No excessive noise to be permitted (Decibel measures have been set).
8. Work to take place only between 8.00 and 18.00 hours Monday to Friday and 8.00 and 13.00 hours Saturdays. No Sunday nor Bank Holiday working.
9. No deliveries to site before 9.30 or after 15.30 Monday to Friday. None at weekends or Bank Holidays.
10. TREES. About half the trees are to be retained and the rest are to be replaced. Those to be retained must be protected from damage. Hand excavation only to be permitted in root areas of trees to be retained. No root over 5cm to be severed. Pipes and cables to be inserted under roots. No tree work to be carried out between March and July inclusive. Trees dying within a year to be replaced.

Note Trees along the lynchet in Phase I and by the access road to Tredegar Road will be particularly vulnerable.

If you see anything during working hours, ring Stuart Hylton, Planning and Environmental Health Manager, in the Department of Leisure and Environmental Services and whose 'phone number is 390444 and he will pass on messages where appropriate. Outside working hours call to Reading 472300 or 472864 will be passed on to the appropriate number at the earliest possible moment.

Work could start any time from now onwards. If you see anything, try to gather a few friends or neighbours together and go stand there, preferably with posters, and do anything you feel appropriate. Illegal actions, such as damaging property, cannot be supported (even though the builders themselves will be permanently damaging the valley) but there is still quite a lot of scope for legal action that will register disapproval.

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ROAD SAFETY

It would be a rash person who would assert that preliminary construction would not start before September when Higgs and Hill have very specifically stated they intend to start in July. It has however also been stated that no building can start before the access road and junction at Kidmore Road have been satisfactorily constructed, as it is on that side that the first phase of building will start.

The Highway Engineering section of the Borough Council has taken the view that as the Appeal Inspector said that was where the access road should go, it was their job to make it fit road regulations as well as possible. However, with a dip and a bend in the road at that point and no footpath for a considerable length on one side, any one familiar with it knows that it is not suitable to take any more traffic than it already does. An extra road leading in there would be an accident waiting to happen.

At the Transport Committee Meeting held to pass these plans, after concern had been expressed by local councillors, it was agreed to defer a decision until the next Committee Meeting in September, whilst the possibility of providing a footpath was explored. This would seem to mean that work on the junction cannot start before September, though attempts have been made to interpret the decision differently. Local Councillors and residents at an on-site meeting were in no doubt that a lot more work needed doing if that junction was to be in any way satisfactory.

ROAD UPHEAVAL

Meanwhile residents on the opposite side of the valley, where the need for a decision is less immediate as building there will only take place in later phases, have been getting increasingly concerned as details about what is proposed have become more widely known. The position there is much more complex, as the Inspector in his report of 1987 laid down that roads and junctions from Bugs Bottom to Buckingham Drive will all need changes to take the increased traffic.

At a well attended meeting organised by Emmer Green Residents' Association, the many people who would be affected made it clear that they did not see why their lives should be disrupted, their journey lengths increased, their safety threatened and the character of their roads destroyed to accommodate a development they have never wanted and which will bring them no benefits whatsoever. They were not prepared to accept either one or the other of the two proposals on offer, or failing that, to find themselves, through the community charge, having to pay for any later so-called improvements if the building went ahead using the existing road lay-out, and this became inadequate to cope with the traffic increase. The message to the Borough Traffic Department was to come up with something more satisfactory and not allow themselves to be pressurised by the builders into agreeing to unsatisfactory solutions.

NEW BROOMS

With the departure of Michael Kenworthy, the former Director of Planning and Technical Services, to take up a post in the north of England, the opportunity was taken to re-organise these services by disbanding its functions amongst other departments, chiefly that of Leisure and Environmental Services. Caversham and District Residents' association was only one of a number of organisations which found this news somewhat disturbing.

Reading comes under heavy pressure (ie somewhat reduced in the present recession)

from developers for schemes that are not always in the best interests of the town, and it seemed to many that what was required was a separate department with its own director to be able to deal with them on equal terms. To amalgamate two departments, each of them an amalgamation of two other departments, did not seem the best way of doing this.

The Association approached Mrs Sylvie Pierce, the new Chief Executive of the Borough, with their concern. She wrote them a detailed reply, explaining that these steps had been taken to make savings and at the same time maintain and improve services.

Planning will now go off to Environmental Health and Stuart Hylton will head this section. He is a qualified planner and well known to Caversham people for championing the cause of Bugs Bottom. The valuers have moved to the Chief Executive's Department where they will work with the legal section, and the surveyors are now in the Housing Department, where most of their work had always been done.

Inquirers will have to re-learn how to find the service they require. Councillors will be keeping a watching brief to see how well the new system works, as will the Residents' Association and others.

BLOOD AND THUNDER

As Caversham's summer calendar follows its familiar course, only this year graced by much more favourable weather than usual, it was pleasing to welcome the return of Shakespeare to Caversham Court. Those with a long memory will recall that open air performances by Berkshire Shakespeare Players used to be an annual event before they moved off to the Abbey Ruins, which they also had to leave when these became unsafe.

This year another company, Fourth Wall Productions, locally based with many of its members graduates of Reading University, put on a week's performances of King Lear in mid-June with warm dry weather all the time. They are a young talented company. The Fool, who doubled as Cordelia (much food for thought here) was excellent, her Commedia del Arte experience standing her in good stead. The

part of Lear requires a lot of stamina, not easy for an actor who is portraying 'a very foolish, fond old man, four score and upwards'. This Lear did not even attempt to look the part. There was none of the white hair so often referred to. His was a good thick crop of brown curls, and he was clearly in the prime of life, but all the same he was in complete control of a demanding part.

The play is not for the squeamish. The blinding of Gloucester and the fights, produced audible gasps and shudders from the audience. The storm sounded so realistic, one expected to find oneself getting soaked to the skin.

The performance was in the round, which in the open air meant it was sometimes difficult to hear what was being said. On the other hand, it gave a freedom of movement of which the players took full advantage. A return visit next summer might restart a welcome tradition.

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WHITSUN VISIT TO DÜSSELDORF

by

PETE LITTLEWOOD

On Friday 5th June members of the Reading Düsseldorf Association left Heathrow for the short trip across the North Sea to touch down at Düsseldorf's airport in the early afternoon to be the guests of that town's Anglo German Club for the Whit weekend.

Our hosts, led by Margret and Herman Benninghoff, the Chairperson and Secretary of the Club, whisked us away to the Rubezahl restaurant in the centre of town for a welcoming drink followed by a tour of the remainder of the building above the restaurant, the building being the House of East Germany, on the top floor of which the Anglo German Club holds its regular Wednesday evening meetings. Then it was back to the homes of our hosts for the evening meal, and a chance to get to know our hosts better.

Saturday saw us embark on the Public Transport tour with rides on buses, trams, trolleybuses, and three types of railways — underground, overhead, and S Bahn suburban. Journeys on all these services were covered by a special group ticket, recently introduced on the 1st June. For the price of DM 10 you can buy a one day ticket for five persons allowing them to travel on any or all of these different types of transport from Duisburg in the North to Dormegan in the South, and Willich in the West to Wuppertal in the East, an area virtually equivalent in size to that of Greater London. At DM 2, or 66p per person this is superb value for money — British Rail and Bus Companies please note!!!

In Wuppertal we stopped at a delightfully picturesque village where the roofs and walls were tiled in black slate. Then it was on to the village of Burg, via Solingen, for the chairlift up to Oberburg. Being privately owned the chairlift was not covered by the "Rover" ticket. As the chairlift ascended it passed over the river before rising up the mountain side to Schloss Burg. On landing we entered a restaurant to partake of a meal which was the equivalent of the English country cream tea, one of the courses being a large waffle topped with a mixture of boiled short grain rice, whipped cream and icing sugar, all covered with a sprinkling of cinnamon — delicious!

After a tour round the Schloss Burg (a medieval castle which had been recently restored) it was time to descend in the chair-lift in the pouring rain — an unforgettable experience! A short walk took us to the trolleybus turntable terminus when we returned to Düsseldorf, again via Solingen. In the evening we all came together for a meal at the Weinkruger in Balkenstrasse where both the food and the conversation were excellent.

On Whit Sunday we split into two groups. One, under Hermann Benninghoff, for a tour of Düsseldorf, while the other, under Hermann's wife, Margret, took the Schnellzug, or Intercity train, to Cologne for a visit to the Cathedral, and the new Roman Museum whose many artifacts, from statues to terrazzo floors, were only discovered after World War 2 during excavations for the foundations of the new buildings.

Before returning to Düsseldorf we took lunch in a brewery-restaurant where we sampled sauerkraut washed down with a glass of "altbier", or "old beer".

The evening meal was taken in the "Top 180" restaurant at the top of the Rheinturm (the equivalent of London's Post Office Tower) one hundred and eighty metres above ground whilst its spire soars up a further seventeen and half metres. The "Top 180" revolves through three hundred and sixty degrees every hour giving a superb panoramic view of the Rhein, the town, and its surrounding countryside.

Monday morning started with an inspection of the Rheinüferstrasse construction. This is a huge length of tunnelling which will take traffic under the East bank of the Rhein from the Oberkassler Bridge in the North to way past the Rheinknie Bridge in the South, parts being wide enough for traffic flow in both directions on the same level whilst at other parts it is necessary to build two tunnels, one on top of the other, because of the proximity of buildings. This is a gigantic undertaking which is estimated will cost four hundred and eighty-five Deutchmarks (\$167 million), and is expected to be finished by December 1993.

A visit to the Stadtmuseum followed. This is a combination of an old building and a large new extension. Two things forcibly struck me here. One was a painting of the town seen from the West bank of the Rhine during a night-time bombing raid in World War 2 with the sky being a lurid red sea of flame, whilst the other was a modern art sculpture — a supermarket trolley loaded with groceries, next to an old wooden handcraft.

On this, our last day, we all took lunch at the Frankenheim, another brewery-restaurant, before returning to the airport at the height of a very severe thunderstorm for the flight back to Heathrow.

So ended our third visit to our twin town as guests of their Anglo German Club, and we sincerely thank all their members for making our stay such a resounding success.

SUE RYDER SUPPORT GROUP CAVERSHAM

The quizzes are now ready and in the hands of distributors — if you are willing to sell some please contact Mrs. A. Deane — 473798 or Miss G. Wolters — 472605 who will gladly oblige. They should be in all the churches and Church House, Caversham.

The group wish to thank people who give regularly to keep us going but would still like to hear from anybody who is willing to make cakes or any other handcraft for us to sell at our events like the two fast approaching — The Swallowfield Show on the first Sunday in September and The Mayor's Market, on the last Thursday in November.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

As mentioned in an earlier issue of the 'Bridge', Joan Dils has recently been conducting a course of classes during which, with the aid of old census returns, efforts have been made to work out in some detail the build up of Caversham in the last century. All the results are now being put together in a way which should interest our readers and it is hoped they will eventually be published in the 'Bridge'.

BERKSHIRE FIELD RESEARCH GROUP

The Group was founded over 30 years ago as the practical arm of the Berkshire Archaeological Society which has enjoyed Royal patronage for over 120 years. Every decade or so new blood joins the Committee and decide that this is the time for a membership drive. Over 200 people attended recent Town Hall lectures, showing great public interest in heritage subjects.

The Group plans to tap this interest with a series of visits to sites in Berkshire and adjoining counties, including Lightwater, Surrey, where the young archaeologists' Club has its largest branch. Members are surveying Barkham, a little-known parish near Arborfield, and helping the Imperial War Museum in a national survey of war memorials. Like all societies, the group's future depends on an enthusiastic and expanding membership, many being recruited from extra-mural classes.

Many Caversham residents are already members of the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group and Friends of Reading Abbey; details of other societies (not always up-to-date) can be found on the Berkshire view data in the library.

The BFRG Membership Secretary is: Mrs Anne Harrison, 2 Murdoch Road, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 2DA.

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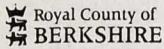
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YOUTH ROADSHOW



Hi there!

News has come in from the Milestone Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme that two young people have gained their Bronze Awards — the first ever Awards for Milestone — so we offer **MARK BAKER** and **DARREN WHITE** our warmest congratulations. We understand that they are fully into their Silver Award Training, and wish them well.

At each stage of Duke of Edinburgh bronze, silver or gold — participants have to achieve a certain standard in: Community Service; A Skill (such as a pastime or hobby); Physical Fitness and Expedition Work. Obviously the standards are higher at each level, but often those who achieve Gold end up with good jobs. This is not necessarily because of the work they have done — though this is very important — but it is what it does for them as people, giving them confidence and quality in their lives.



If you would like to know more about the Milestone D of E Award Scheme then contact **MIKE PONTING** on Reading 483129.

If however you have more general enquiries, would like information leaflets, or to know of schemes in a different area, please contact: Roger Street at the D of E Office, Watlington House, Watlington Street, Reading, on Reading 587554.

Well, the summer holidays are upon us yet again and we wonder what you will be doing with your time. The following is a list of some activities we have been told about:

—EMMER GREEN CENTRE & MILESTONE

YOUTH WING will have their Senior Youth Clubs operating for much of the time. For further details ring **ROY** on 461329 or **GILL** on 476794.

—**PLAYSCHEME**. Free admission for 5-11 year olds only, at MILESTONE YOUTH WING Northbrook Road, Caversham Park Village, from 3rd August — 28th August, 10.00am — 4.00pm. Loads of fun and activities.

—**PLAYCLUBS**. EMMER GREEN CENTRE, Grove Road, Emmer Green and MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS 22nd July to 4th September from 8.30am — 5.30pm. Places must be booked in advance by ringing **SUE HOCKHAM** on 390636. Cost per session:

Using Passport to Leisure B - £1.15

Using Passport to Leisure A - £2.40

Without Passport to Leisure - \$6.55

—**MOBILE SCHEMES**. IAN MIKARDO WAY — Amersham Road Caversham 'Moby' the mobile playscheme will be there for 5-11 year olds on the following dates: Tuesday 4th/11th/18th/25th August 11-12.30, Wed 5th/12th/19th/26th August 2-3.30 (Weather permitting) Admission Free. Loads of outdoor fun.

—**ONE-OFF SCHEMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE OF ALL AGES** Mon 27th July. Free admission 11-3pm at IAN MIKARDO WAY Amersham Road, Caversham.

- Mon. 3rd August. Free Admission 11-3pm at The Common, Grove Road, Emmer Green

- Mon. 17th August. Fun bus and Action Van 2-4pm at Ian Mikardo Way, Amersham Road, Caversham. Free

- Tuesday 1st Sept. Fun bus and Action Van 2-4pm Christchurch Meadows. Free Admission.

- Wed. 2nd Sept. Fun Bus and Action Van 2-4pm Ian Mikardo Way, Amersham Road, Cav. Free.

Have a good time.

Have fun and keep safe. And finally...

We have just been reminded that we are over half way to next Christmas!!!

It's a long way off in some ways but we are giving advance warning of the fact that we are to hold a mass youth Carol Concert nearer that time. We hope to have a music group and so if you can play a musical instrument to accompany hymns and choruses, please let us know. We are also hoping to ask a Christian personality to speak at the evening. More info nearer the time. Best wishes from Roy and Gill PS Despite rumours to that effect the picture of Anthea Prescott's knitting circle (next to last month's Youth Roadshow) is NOT one of our Youth Club activities!!

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BIRDS v. MAN

As the persistent cacophony of petrol and electric motor, supplemented by modern music, daily pervade one's home and privacy, I find it beneficial to seek sanctuary down in Hampshire for a few days.

Long ago, one glorious summer, as members of the Anglo-Spanish Society, we were welcome guests of the Duke of Wellington at Stratfield Saye. After tea on that Gentleman's sumptuous lawns, I drove down to Kimbridge where I fished the Mottisfont water, a legacy of my Great Grandfather, a Scottish laird, until nightfall.

Watching rings made by gently rising trout in the reflection of the moon-kissed water, to the accompaniment of nightingale, a distant nightjar, a much nearer grasshopper warbler, and a little owl, made a fitting ending to an unforgettable day.

Often on the Test, as the mayfly come down thick and fast, the song of common sandpiper, redshank, warblers, cuckoo, turtle dove and the mating-call of little grebe form a musical back-drop to this idyllic

setting, whilst swallow, swift and house martin dart erratically overhead.

One may ponder the question, "How adaptable are birds to noise-pollution?"

I recall when kestrels began to breed in Inner London from Suburbia and the adjoining countryside. Years later, I saw the same species, seemingly nesting in the steeple of St. Giles church in Reading.

A flock of golden plover annually, took up residence at the end of a heathrow runway, whilst just down the road at Perry Oaks sewage-farm, (now INSIDE the Airport precincts!), many incredibly rare species of wader occurred.

Three years ago, four waxings frequented trees alongside the A4 at Maidenhead as heavy traffic thundered past each day. The following year a hoopoe stayed nearby, for several weeks.

Nearer home, the story is sadly one of daily noise and disturbance, especially for small migrants seeking to establish their long-standing, nesting sites.

The Hemdean House School's blackcap, again sang valiantly for three weeks, and finally deserted.

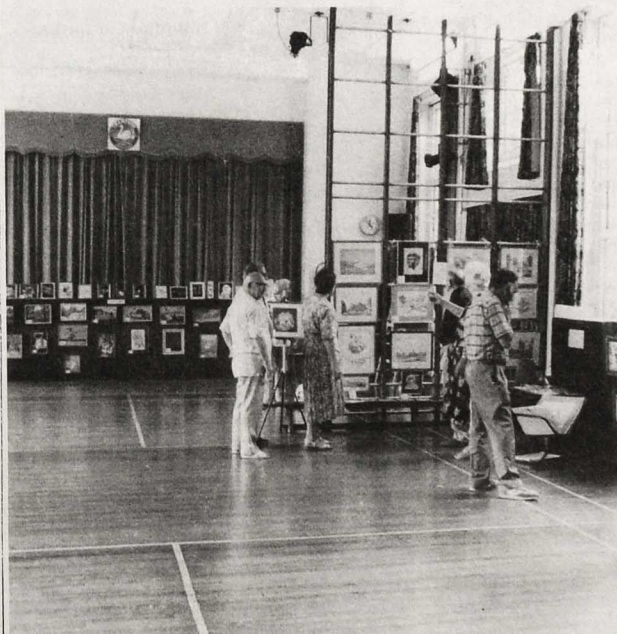
Baltimore's chiffchaff, arrived on April 9th (what better date?!), but soon moved on after "fuelling up" from the local insect population.

Song is vital for attracting a mate and the protection of territory. If unable to make themselves heard, birds can and will desert, and this year, many have done so in this area! Caversham is now NOT so amenable to the birds!

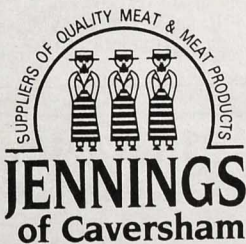
We who prefer God's Handiwork, and more importantly, the birds themselves, — are the losers.

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-E.S. Archer



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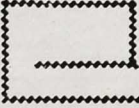
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Caversham W.I.

Members were invited to a Strawberry Supper at the June meeting of the Caversham W.I. The St John's church choir expertly entertained with a variety of songs, poetry and music, and the members enjoyed a delicious supper.

The competition, a poem to Summer, was won by Mrs Mary Jenkins. The Meeting was closed by the Chairman, Mrs Sue Taylor.

Caversham Afternoon Townwomen's Guild

The Guild members have recently decided to renew their interest in seeing how their town works and what it has to offer the visitor and have enjoyed visits to the Police Station and the Mayor's Parlour. Another very successful coffee morning was held this time nearer Emmer Green to give members there a chance to enjoy a social morning while fund raising. It's certainly a cleaner occupation than Jumble Sale sorting!

We have been delighted to see safer play equipment established at the Farnham Drive shops site on Caversham Park and to hear from our monthly speaker that the Emmer green playing field site is soon to be up-graded. Our speaker was in fact Miss Tina Carson, a park ranger based in Caversham Court. She gave us a vivid explanation of her work in and around Reading and how they give education to our children with their work parties and fun days with a suitable tool.

MRS. L. GREY
 It was with the deepest regret that

members learned of the death of Mrs. Linda Grey who joined the Guild in 1963 soon after its formation. She became a committee member in 1966 organising the Social Studies Group and acting as Hostess to welcome visitors and speakers. She organised many outings together with her husband Dick, then a driver with Spiers coaches of Henley. Dick knew exactly how big a space a coach needed and we had many an exciting times exploring. After his retirement he would still come out showing the new drivers a few acceptable by-roads. In 1970 Mrs. Grey also added the task of assistant treasurer, but keeping Social Studies until 1973 when she took over the sales table. This job only lasted a year before 1975 saw her return to outings which she continued to do until 1978.

Arthritis then became a problem but it never dulled her enthusiasm and in 1987 she was made the Guild President a honour that she truly treasured and did so well, holding the Honour until 1990.

During her time on committee she also represented the Guild at federation meetings. Linda had always baked the Birthday cake and also with her husband ran superb raffles at all our parties.

Maplewood W.I.

The June meeting heard a lively and detailed report from the delegate to the NFWI intermediate general meeting at Bournemouth, which members found very interesting.

This was followed by a demonstration of flower arranging by Mrs Rose Painter. Her first display was of copper leaves and berberis with flags, iris, foxglove

and pink carnations to harmonise with the holder, a tall pink and blue lampstand. Next she made a green and creamy yellow arrangement with carnations and scabious on a silver stand, and finally she made a pretty decoration in a tea caddy. Her lovely displays were much admired by her audience.

The flower of the month competition was won by Mrs V. Moodie with a philadelphus blossom.

Caversham Ladies Club

Mrs Harwood the Chairman opened the meeting with a warm welcome to members, and then explained about the cancellation of the May meeting. Club business was soon dispensed with and the Speaker for the afternoon, Mrs Joan Blackall was then introduced. She was going to demonstrate the art of making flowers from coloured nylon tights etc., and judging from the beautiful display set out on a long table, members were in for a very interesting afternoon.

From single flowers to small elegant arrangements and gradually moving up to beautiful table centre displays, members were shown how to make these delicate flowers which looked so easily put together in Mrs Blackall's hands, and small single kits were purchased by members keen to have a go. All too soon time caught up; Mrs Harwood thanked Mrs Blackall for a very enjoyable and interesting afternoon and members showed their appreciation in the usual way.

Refreshment time also completed, it was time for closure with a reminder that the July meeting was a talk with slides of the Kennet and Avon Canal by Mr Crosier.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

In June the ladies of Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild met to be delighted with a visit from Mrs Barbara Simpson who

decorates eggs, Fabergé style. She explained that the first decorated eggs were thought to date from 772 BC and were found in China, Persia and in tombs of the Pharaohs. Eggs have also been discovered in Germany and dated as early as the fourth century AD and were owned by Edward the Second and Louis the Fourteenth amongst others, making this an extremely popular and valued craft consistently through the ages. The American Egg Craft Guild is just over twelve years old and is growing world-wide. Mrs Simpson herself started in the early nineteen eighties when she saw a friend's Ruby Wedding gift and became fascinated. She explained the mechanics of blowing and cutting eggs and lining and decorating them, showing the tools and methods she uses. The smallest eggs are those of the budgerigar and the ostrich egg being the largest. Goose eggs are the most widely used but chicken's eggs are unreliable as the thickness of the shell varies enormously from egg to egg. Mrs Simpson always uses farmed eggs as stressed that those in the wild should not be gathered. The display Mrs Simpson brought

to show members was breathtaking and very beautiful. Many eggs were hinged, opening to display exquisite linings or lovely little scenes. One ostrich egg had a small orchestra inside, all hand made, and another opened at the front and both sides revealing a wonderful Japanese panorama. Although members had seen the plain undecorated eggs and had the methods of decoration demonstrated to them it was still hard to believe that the beautiful objects on display had started from such humble beginnings. Many could well become collectors items of the future. Mrs L. Nicholson gave the vote of thanks.

Members were shocked and saddened to hear of the sudden and unexpected death of Mrs E. Swaine. A Guild member for many years she had recently spent a week with a Guild on a walking holiday in the Isle of Arran. Condolences had been sent to her family and a collection will be made in her memory.

The Arts and Craft group are thriving with visits to the various exhibits during Reading's

Turn to page 11

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the CLUBS

from page 10

Visual Arts Week, several members having items on display, and a garden visit. The new Words and Music group is also proving popular with poetry of a wide variety being read and discussed at the last meeting, and Diaries to be the theme of the next one. The Ramblers' fortnightly walks are well attended with walks round Nuffield and Woodcote having taken place, and a sponsored walk around Hambleton for the MacMillan Nurses, all receiving their "Mac-Million" sticker at the end.

The report from the Federation stated that there is £22,000 left from the money raised to provide new woodlands in Britain and this will enable a fifth wood to be planted probably in the Midlands. Also the Dhaka fund at present stands at £600,000 — money raised solely by the Townswomen's Movement and administered on their behalf by the Save the Children Charity, providing a Mother and Baby Clinic. It does not appear to be widely known of the tremendous work the Townswomen's Guilds undertake raising thousands of pounds for worthy causes, the provision of a new ward at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, the building and funding of the Dhaka Clinic and the funding of five new woodlands in the British Isles, just

to mention a few over the last ten years. The effort and ingenuity of guild members and their families is amazing and it is very satisfying to know that the hard work and fun adds to such worthwhile rewards.

STAR Reading Branch of the University of the Third Age

JUNE ACITIVITIES

The Books group continued their study of the 19th Century novel with readings from the works of Smollett and Sterne. Some members found Smollett unattractive but enjoyed the gentle humour of 'The Sentimental Journey'. The Playreaders have been relishing Shavian wit by reading 'You Never Can Tell'. Early in the month Jean Thompson held a Coffee Morning at her home; the weather precluded sunbathing on the roof but there was a large attendance and Star benefitted by £38.

The Open Meeting in the Kennet Room at the Civic Centre consisted of a talk by Dennis Lester entitled 'Elderly by Design'. He told of how The Centre for Applied Gerontology at Birmingham University is concerned with possible improvements in the design of all types of manufactured goods used by older people. The Centre needs help in the form of market

research and the meeting concluded with members being invited to participate. Members were invited to accept on application form to join the panel of market researchers known as 'The Thousand Elders'.

The Classical Music Group was given a lecture recital by Rachel Porter on the oboe and its music; she was accompanied by her husband on the piano and the violin.

The Scrabble Group is flourishing and meets three times each month. Anyone interested in joining should phone 478672. The Writers Group had a very amusing meeting, each member contributing on the theme 'My Life by a Reading pigeon'. The Travel Discussion Group consisted of a talk on Egypt and a report on Star's recent trip to Paris. The Debating Group met to debate 'That selective schools should become the norm' which was overwhelmingly defeated. The new Astronomy Group had an interesting talk on the planets. The Walkers walked along the towpath from Aldermaston to Theale and visited the small Heritage Centre by the side of the canal.

New members are always welcome at STAR; please ring the Membership Secretary, Mrs Grace McGregor, Reading 866037 for details.

Caversham Community Association

On the first of June the members were asked to bring items of special interest to them and to explain the reason why to the club. Monica Suggett commenced by displaying an ornamental lamp she bought on a recent holiday in Tunisia. Monica described the horse riding displays, her ride on a camel to an oasis and meals with local delicacies on the menu. Ted Howard showed a beautifully engraved woodblock that had belonged to his uncle and must have been at least 100 years old. Ted had made a fine print from it in his printing days. It depicted a fully laden coach and horses and was much admired. Olive Howard brought photographs of places she visited on an enjoyable holiday made

this year to Norfolk. Olive described the guided tour around Norwich, seeing the fine cathedral and the Colman's mustard original shop. Memorable visits were made to the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham and Ely cathedral. Betty Petherbridge handed round a treasured possession - a bookmark from her mother's diary. It had been in the last entry that her sick mother had made when she wrote that she would not see her little girl grow up and left her in God's hands. Betty's mother died when Betty was two and a half years old. Dorothy Osborne brought a pair of tiny binoculars belonging to her husband. These were decorated with mother of pearl and had pictures of Paris, dated 1908, inserted in the lens. Maida Feast had pictures on view of the Dutch bulb fields brought home from a holiday with her husband George. They also visited the colourful Koukenhof gardens and a cheese market. Margaret Cameron showed the members photographs of her mother's family. Margaret's aunt, who had died recently at the age of ninety six, had amongst her belongings a charming photograph of her brothers and sisters. Portrayed with them was her brother Claud who died at five years of age. His Sunday School prize was due to be presented on a day in January 1899 when, sadly instead, his funeral took place. Evelyn Cook was the final speaker. She brought her discharge papers she received at the end of the Second Great War, when she served in the Royal Air Force for fourteen shillings for two weeks work. Evelyn was an ambulance driver and said 56,000 men were killed in Bomber Command. She saw many men who had been badly burned and some whose nerves were shattered. As a Christian she did not believe in glorifying war but appreciated the subsequent forty seven years of comparative freedom from a great war and would always remember her comrades. Evelyn reminded her listeners that there is good and bad in all nations. Beryl Latham, the Chairman then thanked all the speakers for their interesting recollection. A Beate drive was

held the following week, Elsie Prett was the winner.

On the 15th June, a Bring and Buy evening in aid of club funds was a successful occasion. A good selection of goods was auctioned raising a total of £36.

Mrs. Lis Rout was the visiting speaker on the 22nd June. Her subject was 'Healthy Eating and Gentle Exercise'. Mrs. Rout had attended courses held by the Health Education Authority and given an excellent talk on the subject of how to 'Look after yourself'. After giving advice on a sensible life style, including diet, she asked the members to take part in easy exercises which would help everyone to keep fit. Mrs. Rout distributed useful leaflets including a booklet on 'Looking forward to Retirement'. George Feast, the Vice-Chairman, thanked Mrs. Rout for all the helpful information she had given during her visit to the club.

An evening coach trip took place on the 29th June. The fine weather showed the countryside to its advantage, the trip was via Pangbourne and Stratley passing through Blewbury and on to Wantage, then heading off on the road to Oxford. The return journey was made through Nuneham Courtney, Beninsfield, through Dorchester and Wallingford, down through Ipsden to Cane End where a stop was made for refreshments. A lovely evening enjoyed by all.

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