



# A CHRISTMAS IN MALLORCA

By Vincent Kelly

IF the reader is familiar with the works of George Sand I make no apologies for pinching the title of her book "A Winter in Mallorca", since I am writing about our experiences in Valldemosa, the self-same mountain village in which she spent the winter of 1838/39 in the company of Frederic Chopin.

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We soon found that the manner of celebration of Christmas on the island as a whole, as in other less "developed" areas of Spain, has a very different emphasis than here at home. Yes, Santa Claus exists but in a very small way compared with England. Christmas Eve is principally a religious feast with present giving held over to the Epiphany when the Three Kings bring the gifts, which is more in keeping with the original event.

Christmas Eve sees the celebration of Midnight Mass as part of an overall ceremony that differs greatly from that to which we are accustomed. Prior to the Mass there is a Carol Service with some familiar carols, but the majority are native Spanish ones. They are enchanting, partly because of the unfamiliar Spanish rhythms and partly, I suppose, because of our not being familiar with the language. Mallorquin is a dialect of Catalan, which, in turn, is very different from the more familiar Castellano.

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Before the Mass there comes the ceremony, called La Sibil·la, which is a very ancient one dating back to the days of the Mozárabes i.e. the Christians who accepted Moorish rule and were thus allowed to practise their religion in relative peace. It was re-introduced in 1971.

After an introductory hymn, "Night of Peace", the Sibil·la, commences, a traditional Mediterranean and Mallorquin chant which begins with a very pessimistic view of the world but in the end expresses our own small hopes and the great hope of the humble Virgin who will give birth to a very special Child.

After the main sermon there is the

narration of the story of the Deluge, drawing our attention to the consequences of man's separation of himself from God.

At this part of the ceremony small groups of children and young people process through the church in sequence bearing gifts which are deposited at the altar. These consist of -

**Bread** to remind us of the starvation caused by injustice, ambition and the struggle for power.

**Wine** which brings strength, energy and warmth to remind us of the coldness caused by indifference and individual ambitions.

**Oranges**, which mature in the winter, and thus remind us that even in what seem to be the most unlikely circumstances there is hope.

An **olive branch**, the universal harbinger of peace.

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Then, with the Church in darkness, lighted candles are brought in to signify the removal of the blindness caused by injustice, the seeking of wealth, drug abuse, etc., and our receiving the fire of life that proceeds from the crib in which lies the Child Jesus.

An offering of flutes and drums on which appropriate Christmas music is played during the procession follows. It is a reminder that, in a sad world, incapable of silence and serenity, it is possible to achieve simple pleasure in the music of the flute and drum. It is an invitation to the fiesta where we can celebrate together in spontaneous joy and with hearts and lives united.

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Then we are reminded of the episodes of the olive branch and the appearance of the rainbow. Lights are once more extinguished whilst the Gloria in Excelsis is sung to the accompaniment of the display of moving patterns of coloured lights projected on a screen.

The normal Midnight Mass follows and at the Offertory gifts and money

are presented for the poor and needy whilst good wishes are exchanged between members of the congregation.

Our first experience of this particular celebration was made even more memorable by the circumstances surrounding it.

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Due to a general power failure in the area we walked across the valley, a matter of twenty minutes or so, with the aid of a torch. When we arrived at the church it was already being lighted by candles and after a while every niche, every possible ledge, and some nearly impossible ones, had its candles burning away. It would be hard to visualize the picture as it is a very big church and I cannot adequately describe the effect of the flickering shadows cast by the candles.

The next problem arose from the lack of electricity for the organ. However, the choir, of some thirty voices ranging from those of small children to the deep tones of the older men, overcame the problem magnificently. In fact, I believe that this performance excelled several I heard later with full benefit of music. In particular, there was a girl of about 18 who sang in a beautifully deep contralto voice, which, combined with the strong arabic intonation produced an effect that I shall probably never experience again.

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On leaving the church at about 1,30 we found that our torch was totally unnecessary as, in a deep black sky filled with thousands of twinkling stars, a full moon had risen. It flooded the whole valley with its strong light, whilst, at the same time there had been a hard frost which covered everything with a glistening white sheen.

Across the valley every building stood out clearly. The white and amber stone walls, the almost orange tiled roofs and the deep black shadows combined to transform the valley into a veritable fairyland - a Christmas Eve never to be forgotten.

## TALKING POINT

by  
THE REV. MIKE HOLMES  
Caversham Hill Chapel



# "BEEFEATER SAVES MARRIAGES"

So said the advertisement that dropped through our door last year from the well-known restaurant chain. 1994 was supposed to be the International Year of the Family.

During 1994 in Britain, 180,000 couples divorced, 10,000 schoolgirls became pregnant, 27,000 children were added to the protection registers, 100,000 children ran away from home and somebody called the Samaritans every 2 minutes. As a nation, we do need to take a serious look at the family.

There was an attempt by the Government to get "back to basics". It began with a call to return to 'moral values' and 'family values', but floundered on the rocks of the hypocritical moral behaviour of some Government ministers.

So, what do we do now, forget about family and move on to something else for 1995? I believe society is at risk and ignores the family at its peril.

Families are the basic unit of society. Too many children are growing up emotionally scarred by families torn apart. The rise in anti-social behaviour, teenage crime, suicide and economic burden is very worrying.

We are beginning to see the symptoms of a post-Christian society. As our nation moves away from Christian morals and teaching we are becoming more materialistic, secular, self-centred, pluralistic and confused. A generation is growing up with a perception of the church as unnecessary, irrelevant, uncertain and boring. According to a major survey, only 7% of the child population of England attend Sunday School. Of the 1000 people leaving the church every week, 40% are under 15 and 30% are older teenagers.

Our country's laws that were once based on Biblical principles are gradually being eroded with devastating results.

It is vital for people to see that the missing piece in society, in the majority of families and in individuals is Jesus Christ himself.

With Christ's power, the selfishness, bitterness and conflicts that split families can be overcome. If the majority of people of our land turned back to God and looked to him for government of their lives we would live in a totally different environment.

God cares about you, your family and our society. He offers us the power of Christ to live in good relationships. We need to invite Christ into the centre of our lives. Then, I am sure, 1995 would be a happier New Year.

## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ANGLICAN

**St Peter's**  
8.00am Holy Communion  
9.15am Parish Communion  
11.15am Matins  
6.30pm Evensong

### St John's

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School  
6.30pm Evensong (1st Sunday)  
6.30pm Informal Worship (3rd Sunday)

### St Andrew's

8.00am The Eucharist  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)  
First Sunday, Family Eucharist  
11.15am The Eucharist (with hymns)  
6.30pm Evening Prayer  
An up to date list of weekday Services will be found on the Church notice boards.

### St Barnabas'

8.00am Holy Communion  
9.30am Family Communion (apart from 2nd Sunday)  
9.30am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

### St Margaret's, Mapledurham

8.00am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)  
11.00am Parish Communion

### CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH

(Caversham Park Primary School)  
11.00am Family Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)  
Morning Worship (2nd Sunday)  
Triple F Family Service (4th Sunday)  
6.30pm Evening Worship (1st Sunday)

### CAVERSHAM BAPTIST FREE CHURCH

10.30am and 6.30pm

### NORTH CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.45am and 6.30pm

### CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL

10.30am (in Chapel)

### METHODIST

Caversham, Gosbrook Road  
10.30am and 6.30pm

### Caversham Heights

9.00am Holy Communion (1st Sunday)  
9.30am Family Service (3rd Sunday)  
11.00am and 6.30pm

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Anne's Saturday 5.30pm, Sunday 10.30am and 6.30pm  
Our Lady of Caversham 9.00am  
St Martin's School 9.15am Mass  
Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

### UNITED REFORMED CHURCH, York Road

11.00am every Sunday

### SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers), Church Street, Reading 10.30am

Caversham Church House - Meeting for Workshop 7.30pm. (last Sunday)  
House study groups Sept-June Tel: 475783.

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

9.30am Sunday School  
11.00am Divine Worship  
7.00pm Evening Service

## CAVERSHAM CLERGY

### ANGLICAN

Canon Richard Kingsbury, Caversham Rectory, Church Road. Tel: 479130.  
(Parish Office: Monday-Thursday 9.30-12.30 Tel: 471703)  
The Rev Bill Carpenter, St Andrew's House, Harrogate Rd. Tel: 472788.  
The Rev Nigel Hardcastle, 20 St. Barnabas Road. Tel: 478239.  
The Revs Stephen & Christine Rowe, The Vicarage, St John's Road. Tel: 471814.  
The Rev Sheila Nunn, 25 Ilkley Road. Tel: 472070.

### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT

The Rev. Philip Abrey, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village. Tel. 475152.

### METHODIST

The Rev David Moody, 72 Highmoor Road. Tel: 472223.  
The Rev John Boakes, 9 Woodlands Grove, Caversham. Tel: 482530.

### CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL

The Rev Chris Justice, 119 Peppard Road. Tel: 474529.  
The Rev Michael Holmes, 13 Carlton Road. Tel: 4744138.

### ROMAN CATHOLIC

The Rev Anthony Jones, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue. Tel: 471787.

### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev. A. N. Lawrence, 6A Hemdean Road. Tel: 470816.

## STREET NAME QUIZ

We are very grateful to Lindsay Mullaney for setting this quiz and she and the editors were disappointed that not more readers submitted answers. We are pleased to announce that Mrs. Daphne Vincent was the winner and will be choosing a book from the Caversham Bookshop as her prize. The questions are printed again below with the answers at the bottom of the column.

1. How the third Gospel was written.
2. No olives on this one.
3. A chancellor who cheated the executioner
4. Where you may hear the wind blow.
5. A manly fisherman.
6. Near to Richelieu.
7. They do this behind the Good Shepherd.
8. Babel is nigh.
9. Remember, remember the first of November.
10. Baptism site.
11. Where you might hear the office chanted.
12. Paul's companion in Antioch.
13. Where we hung up our harps.
14. A holy grandmother.
15. Where the Keys hang on trees?
16. A meadow keeping the sabbath years.
17. The 'right path'.
18. The dishonest one was commended - but this one was royal.
19. Pilgrim's corner.
20. Used to line Solomon's temple.

Copyright - Lindsay Mullaney

## ANSWERS

1. St Luke's Way
2. The Mount
3. Wolsey Road
4. Valley Close
5. St Andrew's Road
6. Cardinal Close
7. Sheep Walk
8. Tower Close
9. All Hallows Road
10. Jordan Close
11. The Cloisters
12. St Barnabas Road
13. The Willows
14. St Anne's Road
15. St Peter's Avenue
16. Falowfield Close
17. Shepherds Lane
18. Stuart Close
19. Chaucer Close
20. Cedar Wood Crescent

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## CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

MONDAY 16TH JANUARY 1995  
7.45pm

The Speaker will be Beverley Dobson, Co-ordinator of Reading Crossroads, who will talk about her role and how the first year in post has developed.

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

EDITORS: Mrs Margaret Baily, Mr Eric Chappell, Mrs Marjorie Tillman, Mr Kevin Corrigan, Mr Bernard Miller, c/o Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham. Tel: 471703

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7PE. Tel: 471816

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mr. M. Staunton, 23 Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7AN. Tel: 472389

COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr H. Pilgrim, 64 Highmoor Road, Caversham, RG4 7BG. Tel: 474017

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER: Miss E. Stark, 14 The Cloisters, Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7HQ. Tel: 473045

All contributions for February issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 4 January

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

The dates for March will be Monday 30 January and Wednesday 1 February

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

Published by Caversham Christian News Ltd, Church Street, Caversham, Reading. Tel: 01734 471703

Typeset by Flight Image Graphics Co Ltd, Unit 1, 151-152 Cardiff Road, Reading. Tel: 01734 393032

Printed by Chiltern Offset, Amersham, Bucks.

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# ROTARY CLUB OF CAVERSHAM

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DISTRICT 1090

## News From Rotary



### WHAT'S A JUMBULANCE?

It's a purpose-built ambulance with eight beds, sixteen seats, washing, cooking, medical facilities, hoists, hydraulic lifts, in fact everything to cater for the needs of severely sick and handicapped people and it takes them on pilgrimages and holidays to resorts all over Europe.

So it was that Eric Hillier, an Across Group Leader and resident of Caversham enlightened the members of the Rotary Club of Caversham at their lunch meeting and to make his point had arranged for a giant Mark 10 Jumbulance with its two drivers to be on show in the forecourt of the Grosvenor House, the Club's meeting venue in Caversham.

Eric had recently returned from leading a pilgrimage to Lourdes and brought to the lunch 36 year old Mark Hiscock who suffers from Brittle Bone Disease, in his electric chair, looking fit and well after his first holiday since he was 10.

The Jumbulance costs £¼ million, it costs £260 to fill the tank and it is staffed by two drivers and a group of volunteer helpers, a doctor, nurses and a chaplain all of whom have paid their own fare for the privilege of looking after these special 'holiday-makers'.

Jumbulance is operated by the Across Trust and after the lunch was



Club President David Harper with Group Leader Eric Hillier, the two Jumbulance drivers and Mark Hiscock in his powered wheelchair.

£1400 the richer when six ex-pupils from Chiltern Edge School in Sonning Common presented Eric with a giant cheque, the result of a sponsored 2,500ft para drop they made in September having just finished their GCSE exams.



Courtesy, Reading Chronicle

Some of the pupils from St. Anne's RC School, Caversham about to board the Across Jumbulance to have a look.

## ST. ANNE'S SCHOOL

On Wednesday, 16th November, the Across Trust's 'Jumbulance' visited St. Anne's School in Washington Road. The Jumbulance is a purpose built coach/ambulance which is hired out to groups in order to take sick and disabled people on holiday. The Jumbulances, of which there are new fourteen, primarily take people on pilgrimages to Lourdes in the south of France, although they also go to places such as Italy and Austria. The prime purpose of the visit to Caversham was to support the fund raising of Eric Hillier and his group, who were later presented with a cheque for £1500 by the Rotary Club.

St Anne's School sports teams are having a mixed season. The footballers are holding their own - winning some, drawing some and losing some! The netball team remains unbeaten up to now.

At the end of this term St Anne's will be saying goodbye to Mrs Mary Hardiman, who has taught at the school for the last three years. We all wish her well in retirement.

## ROTARY HIKE FOR RBH

Hot on the heels of the launch of the Royal Berkshire Hospital Diabetic Centre Appeal by Willie RUSHTON, the Rotary Club of Caversham announced their plans to support this major appeal.

Code named - THE BASILDON HIKE - will take place on Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th June, 1995 - a sponsored walk offering a choice of 5, 10 or 20 mile walks to suit all needs, starting and finishing at BASILDON HOUSE Car Park (by kind permission of the National Trust).

The Caversham Club hope the Walk will attract family groups up to the Pro's to join in a day's outing on a Sponsored Walk in which walkers can keep 50% of their money raised for their own particular charity.

David HARPER, President of the Club says "We hope to encourage some thousands of walkers to take part in this major event; it will be a fun day for everyone, our club will be there with full support and back up with refreshments, marshals and first aid. This is a challenge where Rotary can show the community what we are about and emphasise our support for our community, whatever its needs".

Sponsor forms and full information will be available in the New Year from Stan PEDDLE, Telephone: 01734 471484.

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# RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

## By Watchdog

### POWER TO THE PEOPLE

A good crowd turned out in early November to hear the case for or against emparishment for Caversham. The first two speakers were informative and enthusiastic about the benefits of parish status. They both emphasised how it brought out a sense of responsibility and involvement. Mr Barry Patman is chairman of the Berkshire Association of Local Councils and Mrs Jean Gardner is chairman of Tilehurst Parish Council, the part of Tilehurst that comes within Newbury District Council territory. They both agreed that party politics plays a much smaller part at parish council level than at district or county level.

Cllr. F. Pugh doubted the value of a parish council within an urban area such as Reading. He pointed out that Caversham already has nine councillors to present its views and, even in an enlarged Reading, nowhere would be more than six miles from the seat of local government so there was no danger of remoteness.

Cllr. M. Salter also wondered what benefits parish status could bring when the services administered by a parish council were already supplied by the Borough. However, he also believed that ways ought to be found of involving people more in the process of decision making, something the council was already looking at.

Cllr. I. Fenwick thought that setting up a parish council would be a good way of bringing government closer to the people as many still felt that decisions were taken at a level remote from them.

Physical distance was not the only consideration.

Discussion from the floor revealed considerable interest in pursuing the possibility of emparishment for Caversham although there was a need to explore whether it was administratively possible. A Forum would be a useful substitute or a first step on the way, and this is the path that is being pursued.

Anything that helps break down the barrier between governed and government can only be good.

### MEETINGS GALORE

This was not the only "one-off" or once-a-year meeting in November. Warren Residents' Association held their meeting near the beginning of the month with a busy year to report on. It is in the interests of far more people than those who actually live there to maintain the leafy nature of this area, for it supplies the view of an apparently wooded escarpment that gives so much pleasure to those seeing it from the river or the opposite bank. The Borough's own small part of this land has been renovated and it is also proposed that a hedge of mixed species be planted along the road edge to improve the appearance and give more protection to wild life. Some people dump their garden rubbish here, a completely unnecessary activity as the Borough will collect it with the weekly refuse collection.

Inevitably the Warren is always in the front line for receiving the full force of the noise from the Rock Festival. This year most of the rest of Caversham suffered along with them, and this in spite of more consultation than ever to reduce the scale of the problem. Next year it looks as if all festivals such as this will have to comply with the Code of Practice laid down by the Noise Council, so there is a real chance of a marked improvement at last.

Concern also centred on the increase in traffic on the A4074, up from a daily total of 8,900 vehicles in 1992 to 11,500 in March 1994, of which 750 were HGV's in 1992 and 1,150 in March 1994. A reduction in these numbers is outside the powers of either Berkshire County Council or Reading Borough Council, and can only be achieved with the concurrence of Oxfordshire County Council. They show no sign of playing; after all, there are no votes in it as far as they are concerned.

After the formal business, Therese Lawlor of Reading Borough spoke about local government reorganisation, especially as it concerns areas north of the river. Here there have been hints and rumours that it might all end in the status quo. If so, what a colossal waste of public money.

### SPACE TO LIVE

The two year old Amersham Road Residents' Association organised a public meeting to protest against proposals to build 199 houses on land between Amersham Road and Henley Road. There is the space there, but the resultant high density will add to the problems of an area where the promised facilities did not materialise and where all traffic has to be funnelled through heavily congested local streets. Improvements are now slowly beginning to take shape in the area but these will be annulled if it is overdeveloped. For most residents of Caversham, Amersham Road is rather out on a limb, but its young residents' association is working hard to achieve a sense of community and to bring it into the wider community of the whole of Caversham.

### TRADERS FIGHT BACK

The traders of central Caversham also called a meeting to seek ways of joining together to keep the small shops and businesses alive and well. In that comparatively small central area there are well

over a hundred businesses of one kind and another, either privately owned or branches of national concerns, but all, to no small extent, dependent on the wellbeing of each other. Few of them can feel immune to the forces ranged against them, but without them, Caversham would lose the character it has acquired during the present century and we should all be the poorer for it.

Plans for making Caversham a more attractive place to shop were discussed, ranging from smooth pavements to hanging flower baskets, and including the ever controversial subject of parking. There are a lot of decent hardworking people keeping our shops going in Caversham and they can do without obstacles being placed in their way. Shopping here can be a friendly experience rather than a battle for survival.

### COMPANIONSHIP AND CARE

The last to meet was the Abbeyfield Society which runs a house in St. Peter's Avenue, as well as another in Maitland Road, to provide care and companionship for the elderly who find it difficult to continue in their own homes. Over the years, people have reached this stage later and later, and as a consequence of this, and of a population that is longer lived (centenarians are no longer the rarities they once were) the time comes when they need more help with the everyday business of living. The Abbeyfield Society is now building or opening extra care homes across the country to attend to this need. Reading Abbeyfield Society, at its annual meeting in Caversham, unveiled plans for such a home in Reading at Downshire Square. The land has been acquired and plans drawn up, for an attractive house which will provide care and comfort to its residents. Such things do not come cheap, and an appeal has been launched to get it funded. Until the money is reasonably assured, it cannot be put in hand.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

## TERRY RENN DRIVING SCHOOL

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## 'TALENTED YOUNG SINGER'

Talented 10 year old Jessica Sturt, a pupil at Thameside Primary School, Caversham, was one of three children from 20 Berkshire Schools, selected to sing at the Berkshire's Schools' Festival held at The Hexagon, Reading. Jessica had not sung a solo in front of such a large audience before, and she sang a beautiful Chinese Carol entitled "Shia Bao" (Little Precious). Jessica was also taking part in Thameside School's Christmas production of "A Christmas Carol" in which she plays a ghostly child.



Jessica Sturt.

Picture E. S. Archer

## BAPTIST WEDDING

The wedding took place at Caversham Baptist Free Church on August 27th between Martyn Strong (son of Alan and Shirley) and Helen Ponchaud (daughter of Bob and Carol). Both families have long standing connections with the church where bride and groom are also active members, so the occasion was very much a 'family affair'.

Helen and Martyn share an interest in music and are both members of the established local Christian band "Light Incorporated". It was fitting that music during the wedding ceremony was provided by Pam Chilvers and members of the church music group, with the addition of Light Incorporated's own drummer. The lively musical exit from the Church reflected the tone of the ceremony — one of joy and the celebration of Christian marriage.



## WATCHDOG cont.

Ken and Joan Shield, as well as Abbeyfield House in St. Peter's Avenue, can tell you all about this exciting venture.

### EXTRACTING GRAVEL

A public inquiry hardly comes into the category of a meeting, which has become the theme of this month's column, but at the Public Inquiry into Redland's application to extend its gravel workings at Sonning Eye to the other side of the road linking Henley Road to Sonning, Caversham and District Residents' Association lined itself up with other objectors to this intrusion into otherwise unspoilt countryside, with its resultant noise and lorry movements covering an ever wider area. Redland pleaded the continuing need for gravel for road building and maintenance and promised high quality restoration once the work was completed.

A restored landscape is not the same as the natural landscape. Reading is practically surrounded by gravel workings, several of them

nicely restored, but this is not the Lake District. The time has come to say "No more". Tearing up the landscape and placing the spoils elsewhere, both processes bringing noise, disruption, and damage, must be replaced by an approach showing more concern for the quality of life of people living now and in the future. It can be done.

### NO TO TWENTY-FOUR HOURS

Welcome news that an application to turn the Church Street petrol station into a 24 hours one has been turned down. It is always a relief to find a station open at night when one's petrol gauge reads nearly empty, but this is too near housing. Disturbance from revellers leaving the nightclub is enough without having anything extra to interrupt a night's sleep.

## MAJOR NEW HALL FOR HIGHDOWN SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY

Outline proposals for a £1.5 million investment promised by Berkshire County Council in a major new facility at Highdown School were revealed by the Headteacher, Mr. Andrew Clarke, and the Chairman of the Governing Body, Mr Geoff Mander, in mid-December. By mid-1997 Highdown School will have a new dual purpose sports hall and school hall/auditorium. It is intended that the sports facilities will have sufficient space for 4-5 badminton courts and basketball and be convertible into an auditorium for music and drama productions at an international standard, as well as an examination hall. Not only will this vastly improve the facilities for the 983 pupils now on this 32 acre semi-rural site on the edge of Caversham and Emmer Green, it will also greatly benefit the local community.

Through the encouragement of the school governors, facilities at the school have long been shared with the local community; Reading Borough Council look after the swimming pool and squash courts and have recently spent £67,000 refurbishing the latter and the gymnasium. In accordance with this policy members of the local community interested in using the facilities in the future are invited to comment to Mr Clarke, the Headteacher, at the School (Tel. No: 01734 475022), as soon as possible on what might be included: for example those interested in less traditional sports, such as climbing, might wish to have a climbing wall included. It is intended that the facilities shall be of the highest standard for the intended use; the School is prepared to seek additional funding from the Sports Council, Arts Council, Reading Borough Council, Industry and the community should that be necessary. Feasibility discussions, prior to detailed planning, are now in progress between the Headteacher, Chairman of Governors and Caroline West, Berkshire County Council architect, Mr Alan Furlley, Headteacher designate, Mr George Allen, Governor responsible for site and buildings. It is hoped that building work will start in July 1996.

Owen Jewiss

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

# BILLY GRAHAM IS COMING TO BERKSHIRE

Berkshire will be the recipients of the latest and most ambitious of Billy Graham's Evangelistic Missions next March. "The time is now to stand together in proclaiming hope to a hopeless world" says the publicity literature. So between 16 and 18 March, 1995, Dr Billy Graham will actually be conducting a Global Mission in San Juan, Puerto Rico, but his message is being relayed direct by satellite to 180 counties worldwide and will be translated into 50 languages.

Billy Graham's impact in proclaiming the Christian Gospel has been felt for half a century. The results of his preaching were evident in Reading during Thames Valley *Alive*. Now a further opportunity exists to hear the Gospel preached by him in his own inimitable style. Churches Together in Wokingham have arranged to do this for the whole of Berkshire, to which end they will relay Billy Graham's message at the Loddon Valley Leisure Centre on the evenings of Thursday, Friday, Saturday, 16-18 March. Now is the time to book the dates in your diary, interest your friends and plan to take them to the event. The Decade of Evangelism continues, as do the opportunities to spread the Christian Gospel. This is most effective in one to one contact, which puts a responsibility on all of us who call ourselves Christians. Churches Together in Wokingham look to the support for this event from churches throughout Berkshire through prayer and through people. Such a high technology link is expensive and the Christians of Wokingham would be pleased to receive any contributions to help defray those costs from other Christians and/or church groups. Watch out for further publicity.

## NEWS FROM ST. ANNE'S

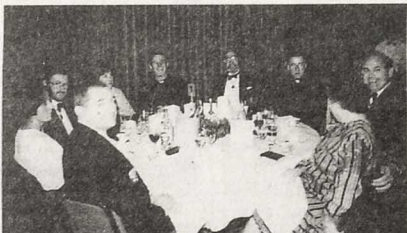
The parish Bazaar and Draw, held on 19th November, attracted a goodly crowd and helped to raise just under £1700. The two Fathers, Christmas and Tony Jones, put in appearances, the latter at his first Parish social occasion though the former had, of course, been there before!

On Friday 25th November, the Parish was honoured with a visit from the Rt Rev Philip Pargeter, Auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham, who was Principal Celebrant at a Mass held at St Anne's to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the Reading Circle of the

Catenian Association. Membership of the Circle is, of course, spread over a number of Reading Parishes but its President, John Criss, is a member of St Anne's and Bishop Pargeter took advantage of this to welcome the numerous members from the Portsmouth Diocese to this, the Southern extremity of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Following Mass, members, their wives and other guests

totalling about 90 people repaired to the Holiday Inn for a celebratory dinner.

News from Great Haywood in Staffordshire is that Fr. Meagher and Bridie are settling in and a party from St. Anne's will be attending Fr. Meagher's formal Induction as Parish Priest at 8pm on Friday 20th January. It is anticipated that a coach will leave St. Anne's at about 4.30pm that day - final details will be posted at the Church.



Bishop Pargeter, John Criss, Father Jones & officers of the Association at dinner.

Photo - Peter Lennon

# CHILDREN'S SOCIETY GIVEN HIGH PROFILE AT SYNOD



Our picture shows the Revd Derek Spears being introduced to Bernard (the bear), through whose help Diana Bailey has discovered many a problem worrying a child.

As the International Year of the Family was drawing to a close it was fitting that the Anglican Deanery Synod should devote its November meeting to the work of the Children's Society. Diana Bailey, Appeals Organiser in this area, reminded her audience of the Society's Christian foundation, Jesus' special place for children, and the need for children today to have a Christian input. The stark facts are that 4 million children are living in poverty in the UK; 100,000 children ran away from home in 1993 to danger, exploitation and abuse. One in 40 people suffer abuse and those abused in the last generation feel that they may be a danger to the next. Most of the children who run away go to the big city where they become prey to the pimps and the drug dealers. However, the workers for the Children's Society are also waiting to pick up the runaways, who are then taken to safe bedsits where they enter into self build schemes. In the Thames and Chiltern Region most of the Children's Society work is community based around six residential units and deals with the consequences of stress and poverty, as well as providing respite care for the parents of mentally and physically handicapped children.

The churches can help by providing a support group in each parish with honorary local secretaries. Voluntary staff members are needed for work in schools, for education for citizenship and for parenting. Resource packs are available to help with some of the work. Prayer and financial support are also needed.

### Former Caversham Clergy in Grand Cathedral Tour

Clerical motor cycling enthusiast the Revd Derek Spears, Vicar of St. Peter's Earley and

one time curate of St. Peter's Caversham, next took the Synod on a whirlwind trip around 48 cathedrals in England and Wales which he had done during a week in July on a motor bike, accompanied by the Revd Peter Sear, Vicar of Thatcham and former priest-in-charge of St Barnabas. During the "Year of the Family" both had decided to put their motorcycling interests to good effect by gaining sponsorship to visit jointly all 48 cathedrals in England and Wales within the space of one week and for which all the proceeds would go to the Children's Society.

Laced with anecdotal comments we sped around the cathedrals with them in our imagination at the rate of up to seven a day. We heard about the Mrs Proudies of the Cathedral Close, balloon races, episcopally approved short cuts down one way streets in the wrong direction, and the tourist who said "Gee! I've never seen a priest in leathers before". Worst of all we learnt of the disappearance at a critical stage of Peter's helmet and jacket (plus credit cards), presumably stolen whilst on a photocall at one cathedral; it was later discovered that they had been taken into safe custody by the diocesan authorities but not until after the loss of the credit cards had been notified and further transactions on them stopped. When we arrived with Derek at Oxford, the last cathedral, some 2722.5 miles later, we were breathless if not exhausted; if we had not already known it, we learnt that some clergy do not eat cucumber sandwiches all the time and that not all bikers beat up old ladies! We wait with interest to hear now much their exploits made for the Children's Society. Further thank offerings for their safe return would always be welcomed by the Children's Society.

## St. Andrew's Fellowship

The large audience at the November Meeting of the Fellowship gave testimony to the popularity of the Speaker, Mrs Meryl Beek, who has visited the Fellowship on several occasions. This time 'Over the Top' was an account, with slides, of her walk in the Yorkshire Dales with her husband, although on several previous occasions she has made walks entirely alone. Her slides, as usual, were lovely and here account was interesting, so every body was surprised at the rapid passage of time.

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Caversham Hill Chapel, Peppard Road

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## OBITUARIES

### PROFESSOR WALTER RUSSELL

One of Emmer Green's distinguished former residents, Professor E. Walter Russell, died in Birmingham on 22 October just five days short of his 90th birthday. He came to Emmer Green in 1964 following his appointment as the first Professor of Soil Science at Reading University, a post which he held until his retirement in 1970. He continued to live locally until in 1993 he moved to be nearer his son, an Anglican priest in Birmingham.

Walter Russell followed in his father's footsteps. After graduating in mathematics at Cambridge University, he was for 18 years a member of the Physics Department at Rothamsted Experimental Station, the premier and oldest agricultural research establishment in Britain, where his father, Sir John Russell, was then Director. Walter Russell moved to Oxford University in 1948 to become Reader in Soil Science; seven years later he was appointed Director of the East African Agriculture and Forestry Research Organisation (EAAFRO), whose headquarters were in Kenya, but which also served Uganda and what was then Tanganyika. He held this post for nine years before moving to Reading.

His career was thus a mixture of research close to practical agriculture and academia; his ability to link basic research with the problems of agriculture made his contributions at EAAFRO and at Reading so successful. The former was recognised by the award of a CMG. His work lives on in his contributions to the scientific literature and not least by three editions of the soil scientists' bible: *Soil Conditions and Plant Growth*, written by his father as long ago as 1912 and subsequently completely rewritten by Walter Russell. It is still in use today in its 11th Edition. He is also fittingly remembered in the Walter Russell Teaching Laboratory in the new Soil Science Building at Reading University.

Colleagues from East Africa and from his Oxford and Reading University days, including three of the Professors who succeeded him, spoke at a Commemoration of Walter Russell's life held at Reading University in mid-November. In an obituary in *The Independent*, Professor Dennis Greenland (another former resident of Emmer Green) encapsulated Walter Russell's infectious enthusiasm for his subject saying that he passed this on readily to those associated with him by talking without reserve to those interested "Often accompanied by waving arms and sometimes body".

Walter Russell was an occasional worshipper at St. Barnabas Church, where his wife Margaret, who predeceased him by three years, will be remembered, among other things, as a former member of the District Committee, Area Organiser for the Bridge Scheme and a member of the Overseas Mission Group. They leave a son and two daughters and several talented grandchildren of whom they were immensely proud. We in Emmer Green and Caversham who have been privileged to have known the Russells, give thanks for their lives and extend our sympathies to their family.

O.J.

### MISS M. CHALLIS

Queen Anne's School has been saddened to hear of the recent death of Miss Challis who was Headmistress from 1958 to 1977. Soon after the school's centenary celebration in May she had suffered a severe stroke from which she never recovered.

Miss Challis's time at the school was a period of gradual modernisation - in dress, in a wider variety of sport and outdoor pursuits, and in greater freedom and increased privileges for older girls. During her time the Sixth form Houses were established with study bedrooms and cooking facilities, encouraging the girls to think of themselves as students.

Miss Challis showed an uncanny knowledge of and enormous care for every girl in the school; anyone in trouble could always rely on her support and she encouraged a family feeling in the Houses and in the school generally - a characteristic inherited from the school's past.

Not long after her retirement Miss Challis suffered a disabling illness which considerably limited her movements, though she courageously remained as independent as possible and always seemed much more concerned with other people's misfortunes than with her own; she kept in touch with countless Old Girls, and her letters were counted in hundreds.

In spite of increasing weakness Miss Challis was determined to take part in the centenary celebrations both at Westminster Abbey and at the school; she had tremendous pleasure in seeing so many Old Girls, as they had in seeing her. It was fitting perhaps that this should have been her last public appearance.

EMML



- E. S. Archer

St. Peter's Wives Christmas Stall in St Martin's Precinct on the 5th November.

## NOBODY SAID 'MYRTLE WARBLER'

**A** lady editor who advised me of the omission of my article from December's issue of Caversham Bridge, due to lack of space, also asked me if I had seen the Yellow-rumped Warbler, (a North American rarity) then frequenting sycamores in a Bristol park. The name had haunted me, it being included in British Field Guides yet NOT seemingly in my American one.

After some deliberation, the penny dropped. I turned to 'Myrtle Warbler' and there, staring out at me was the re-named 'Yellow-rumped Warbler' - (I still prefer 'Myrtle').

Now I highly respect those who enjoy watching and listening to garden birds without becoming further involved - oh that I could be the same. Being thrown in at the deep end, I was never accorded the privilege.

Wide-eyed, I entered a world of folk to whom the study of birds and meteorology was second nature and who even spoke a language of their own. It was a strange, alluring, exciting, competitive, frustrating, expensive and at times, thoroughly disappointing and even unhealthy extension of 'straight' bird-watching. A bug from which, if bitten - one remains 'bit'. It is not so much a hobby but more a way of life.

Just up the road from the Yellow-rumped Warbler, we were enraptured by an even rarer Lesser Scaup at Lechlade. This North American duck has not, to date, been accorded British status.

During the comings and goings of several hundred twitchers, plying between the Bristol and Lechlade venues, I asked a more mature gentleman if he had seen THE Warbler. He confessed that with slightly less keen eye sight, he seldom looks for the 'little-brown-jobs' (lbjs), as he has difficulty in sorting them out. I assured him that despite reasonably good eye sight, they affect me similarly, and wished that I had his disciplined approach to the matter!

### STOP PRESS (for harder-birders)

A third Autumn/Winter visit to Anglia achieved - Pied Wheatear (Landguard Point - first Suffolk record), Bluetail (Suffolk) and Red-breasted Goose (Wells next the Sea)

A week later Landguard again produced the goods with Blyth's Pipit (third British record this century), seized by Kestrel in full view of dismayed birders.

Barely a week later, TWO more Blyth's Pipits discovered on North 'Ron' (Orkneys) and Seasalter (Kent), surely giving the lie to the identity of some Richard's Pipits, a very close, near-identical relative, recorded annually!

The Lesser Scaup and Yellow-rumped Warbler (nee 'Myrtle') were nice to come home to.

SCOPS OWL

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Sunday Jan. 8th  
11am

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Sunday Jan. 15th  
9.30am

All Age Praise - Mr  
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Sunday Jan. 22nd  
11am

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# EPIPHANY IN MALLORCA

On 28th December, La Fiesta de Los Inocentes, the light-hearted pranks which we indulge in on April Fool's Day are perpetrated but with much more enthusiasm and originality. There seems to be a strict unwritten rule that nobody should be frightened, injured or unduly embarrassed by these goings on and even the local authority will, from time to time, join in with proposals for some outlandish legislation, much to the temporary consternation of anyone who has not looked at his calendar. On one occasion the American navy was not amused to

find, in the local newspaper, a large photograph of their pride and joy, the huge aircraft carrier the United States, carrying a large banner stating that it was FOR SALE. The ship was at that time at anchor far out from Palma, surrounded by tight security, because the authorities would not allow it to come close inshore, it being nuclear powered. I wonder if they felt injured or embarrassed – or both?

The origin of the harmless pastime arises from the fact that there was a difference between the number of days in the Arab year and the Christian year and thus there were days that "did not exist". They were, therefore, suitable for all sorts of trickery and, since the days did not exist, nobody could be held accountable for his actions.

New Year passes in much the same manner as ours, although there is one tradition that we do not have. As midnight approaches each party-goer is provided with a bunch of large succulent grapes, not necessarily sweet, and as the strokes of midnight begin on the radio or television, he must start to eat them one by one, one at each stroke of the clock. Easy? Just try it sometime.

Then comes another highlight of the festivities, the Eve of the Epiphany and I shall describe our experience of this in Valldemosa, again on our first visit.

We gathered in the parish church of San Bartolomeo for Mass at 7.00pm and then proceeded to the top of the village to await the arrival of the local band which duly appeared surrounded by clouds of coloured smoke and playing in the way that only small town bands can. I'm sure there is an art in it.

By tradition, they were supposed to have escorted Los Reyes (The Three Kings) all the way from their landing place in the port which is 8 kilometres away and far down below on the coast. Los Reyes rode on horseback, dressed in the most fabulous of costumes and accompanied by about a dozen attendant princes, equally well bedecked, but on foot. The first stop was at the Town Hall where speeches were read by all and sundry announcing the good news and "suitable refreshment" was duly dispensed. All now adjourned downhill to the tiny plaza in front of the church where, after a short service of welcome the serious business of distributing the presents began.

I want you to picture a small village of narrow cobbled streets hanging on the side of a mountain and in nearly every doorway of every street there stand groups of people, especially children who are absolutely spellbound and frantic as they await the arrival of Los Reyes. You see, they come in person to deliver the presents at each and every house. These presents have been wrapped and stored in the Town Hall since before Christmas, ready for distribution. Imagine the excitement when hooves come clattering and slipping to the end of a street. "They are coming this way!" cry the little ones only to find that they are taking another route and don't arrive for another ten minutes or more. However, their

impatience is eventually rewarded and the excitement of parcel opening begins.

All the time Los Reyes keep a stoic silence as they are supposed not to understand the local language. They are so well made up, particularly Baltazar, that it is difficult to recognise them although they are locals, and the children will come up suddenly behind them and shout "Ola! Pedro?" If they catch him unawares and he turns to answer there is great merriment since he is supposed not to understand.

We, who were from outside the village, had been invited by Antonia to join in the festivities at her house, with our grandchildren in attendance. Typical of the hospitality we were to experience in later years, I, as a grandfather, was given a seat of honour, a rocking chair at the front door and I, too, received a present from the Reyes. This created a minor problem as I was armed with a camera and wished to take photographs. However I soon noticed that the horses were very spirited and tended to react rather acrobatically to flash-guns.

When the children have had their fun the adults continue into the early hours partaking of all sorts of local "delicacies" some of which can pose problems for unaccustomed digestive systems.

Having enjoyed these festivities several times I have come to the conclusion that they have it about right. Christmas, with the wonderful event of the Nativity, is kept free of the more "material" distraction of present giving etc., and with the latter reserved for the more appropriate fiesta the whole season is celebrated in a manner more in keeping with the original events.

One cannot write about Christmas without referring to the Crib. In Mallorca, as over the whole of Spain, the Crib (Belén) is the daily focus of the season. Towns, shops, houses, even some offices, vie with one another to provide the most attractive Belén possible and the amount of work put in to them is enormous. Churches, of course, have a head start and it is to be expected that these will be outstanding, as indeed they often are. All through the festive season crowds of people are to be seen going in and out of churches to see the Belén and say a prayer.

Probably the most impressive one that I have seen "in the commercial sector" is the one

continued on page 10

I.D. Collinson C.M.B.I.L.

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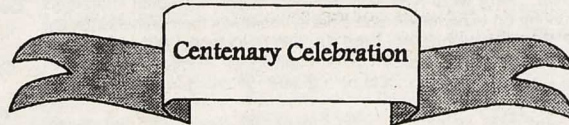
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# POSTBAG



## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD!!

Dear Editors,

I am sure your readers will be interested to know that next year there will be some very special celebrations in Caversham. We will be celebrating one hundred years of education at New Bridge Nursery School, formerly St John's Primary. I hope the following information will give you some background - and obviously you are welcome to any of our events.

The school opened on 4th February 1885 at 9.00am as a "mixed" school, with one hundred and seventeen children admitted (forty-eight from the Infants). The numbers quickly increased. Headmaster Mr Alfred Winkworth was assisted by Miss H. Bobin to begin with, and on 22nd February Miss Holloway was also appointed. Mr Winkworth was Headmaster until 1928 and may well be remembered by local residents.

The land was presented by Rev. A. Molineux on 12th December 1892 and a building fund set up the following year. Subscribers were local people who generously donated towards the building fund.

Families in the area were obviously having a very difficult time when the school opened in 1895 as there is mention in the log book of "free breakfasts for eighty children whose parents couldn't work" from 18th February until 1st March. I wonder what

they would have been given?

St John's remained as a Primary School until 1969, when I think the children transferred to Thameside Primary School. Here we need some help to fill in the missing pieces of the jigsaw puzzle. In September 1970 the school re-opened as New Bridge Nursery School, with children transferring from Bridge Street Nursery in Reading. A unit for hearing impaired children opened on site a couple of years later and is still thriving, as is the mainstream nursery - both under the Local Education Authority.

We are planning an "open day" on Saturday 4th February to begin our celebrations. If anyone would like to lend photos or write down a few memories please send them to the school (Montague Street, Caversham) so that we can add them to the display on the day. In any case we would like as many names and addresses of ex-pupils, staff and Governors as possible so that we can invite them for this special occasion.

Later in the year we will celebrate our "Silver Jubilee" of the nursery school - so a busy and exciting year ahead.

Do join us

Yours etc.

Brenda Grant - Headteacher

New Bridge Nursery School,  
Montague Street, Caversham

### CAVERSHAM COURT - MISSING PARK BENCHES AND MEMORIAL PLAQUES

Dear Editors,

Thanks to the publication of Pete Littlewood's letter in "Postbag" (December Issue), I was able to tell Tina Gower of the Environment Centre at Caversham Court the identity of the other missing bench. This missing bench had been ceremoniously dedicated to "VICTOR EDWIN GODWIN" who was employed at Henley Road Cemetery.

Upon his death Caversham/Mapledurham Branch of The Royal British Legion had been left a small legacy from his estate. It was decided by the Branch to arrange for the park bench to be installed in Caversham Court as a permanent memorial. Unfortunately some hooligan/rogue has taken a different view. God forgive them.

Your etc.

Victor Savin,  
Caversham and Mapledurham Branch,  
The Royal British Legion

13 Rectory Road,  
Caversham

### FOX - OR BADGER?

Dear Sir,

Mr Haigh was asking about foxes in Caversham in your November issue. For several years they have been around, sometimes even in daylight. On April 23rd last year at around 4.45 on the evening of a very wet day I looked out of the window and saw an adult fox walk across my lawn, down beside the rockery and vanish into the vegetable garden.

I live in Darell Road, which is not far from Priest Hill as far as a fox is concerned. Last summer one of my neighbours, who sleeps badly, often saw one cross the Woodcote Road at its junction with Darell Road and jump over my front garden wall or sometimes trot up the road.

However the droppings Mr Haigh finds on his lawn could also be those of a badger. Brock too, frequents my garden, and those of my neighbours. At the moment he (or she) is busy making a couple more holes under my back garden fence. I already have half a dozen. So far the kindly creature does little harm to my precious rockery - just wanders along the top of the bank and scrapes out another get through; but I did object when two years ago he rooted up all my freshly planted leeks to get worms from all the luscious compost I had dug into the patch before planting. The next year I was at the ready. I left the prepared patch for the night and thought Brock could have a good root around before I did the planting and sure enough he really snouted his way through the earth. I left it for him for another night and then put out the leeks (and a little wire fence round them) but I need not have bothered. Having had a good feast and cleaned out all the worms for the time being he kindly moved on to get his midnight meal somewhere else.

Incidentally badgers can sometimes be awfully noisy and set all the dogs barking. My Brock usually sets dogs barking around 10.20pm, though of late he has been quieter. I heard him one September morning at 6.30am and stood at the window in the hope that I should see him, and sure enough he trotted down the edge of the long rockery till he was under my window. As he was not in my good books at the time I yelled at him and he shot off, the way he had come, under my fence!

By the way, fox droppings are grey in colour and a badger's almost black. My rose trees take it in turn to be manured but I don't know if they really appreciate it!

The probable reason for such creatures in our gardens is the nearness to the high overgrown banks of the Lower Warren, an ideal home for both foxes and badgers and a wealth of bird life.

Yours etc., M. Kiff

2 Darell Road

### WILDLIFE

Dear Editors,

With reference to your letter in Postbag last month about foxes in Caversham, we have a regular visit almost nightly of a fox behind Elizabeth House flats in Gosbrook Road. I have seen it many times and my neighbours have also seen it. It has a lovely brush and is very alert.

We also have some squirrels and a selection of birds which come for the nuts and seeds I put out.

Living in a built up area one would not expect to see so much wildlife. I enjoy watching them.

Yours etc.,

(Mrs) M. Feast

90 Gosbrook Road,  
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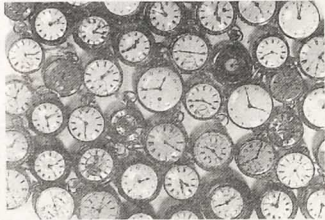
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**EPIPHANY IN MALLORCA**

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

prepared by the Banco de Bilbao in Palma. It occupies the whole of the interior courtyard of the bank which must measure at least 15 metres by 10 and it is surrounded by an arcade, each niche of which is about 2.5 metres wide and 2 metres deep. The whole of this arcade space is given over to a panoramic representation of the Christmas story. There are desert scenes with camels and sheep being tended, the Reyes can be seen in several scenes, all at varying distances, as they approach the Manger. There are village scenes depicting the various tradesmen at work, tending animals, drawing water etc., etc. The detail is fascinating and one could spend hours looking and discovering more and more details.

All of this shows something much more than a passing, commercial interest in Christmas, something which I think is much deserving of appreciation.

These visits to Mallorca were some of our most enjoyable times and it is a matter of considerable regret that our daughter and children now live a stone's throw from the centre of Paris. No doubt there are pleasures to be enjoyed there but I don't believe that they will ever replace those memorable visits to Mallorca where enjoyment came from such simple and unsophisticated people and surroundings.

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**THREE LITTLE MAIDS**

**CHAZEY W.I.**

The members' Evening on December 6th was a night to remember. It started in the usual way - minutes of the last meeting, matters arising, future events. Then there was a report on the first ever Women's Science Night. Three members attended at the Science Museum for a night of fun and education. They took a packed supper and sleeping bags but were still on the go at 1.30am. There were hands-on demonstrations, historical characters actually working on experiments and Chazey members themselves extracted DNA from onions. Everyone managed to sleep (reluctantly) but woke full of enthusiasm. Five hundred women took part and if they all enjoyed themselves as much as Chazey WI there should be a queue for tickets for the next event in March 1995.

After the business meeting, a buffet supper was served with hot punch. Scarcely had the food been finished than intellectual paper party games began. This gave the committee time to prepare for the surprise event - a pantomime. The hall lights were lowered and the spotlights revealed the improvised scenery for "Cinderella, A New Production" with original script. The audience was astounded; well, stunned really; as Prince Charming lisped his dismay at being ordered to find a wife and Dandrufo suggested a ball. This was BREATHTAKING STUFF. Luckily, they recovered enough to enjoy a drippy Cinderella, and two bouncing sisters (into aerobics and swimming) in startling contemporary costume. The Ladies Nausia and Apoplexia were in fine voice too and there was a relaxing of tension as the first of many laughs was heard. Buttons raised an enthusiastic response to the cry of "Hello Chazey" and the entry of the Fairy Godmother was amazing. A loud bang, a puff of smoke, a dazzle of stars, and there she was! The hiking costume was soon explained to Cinder's visible relief and spells cast with almost the expected results. The



- Anthea Prescott

Chazey W.I. Harvest Supper entertainment. "Three Little Maids".

shortage of white mice hindered the supply of a coach and horses but two coachmen managed to escort a delighted Cinders in a rose pink ballgown, to the palace, where, needless to say, Apoplexia and Nausia were stunningly costumed. The pantomime did diverge from the conventional - the perfectly fitting shoe belonged to a rather butch Nausia and Buttons and Cinders were really better suited to each other and, as the Fairy Godmother said, "What do you expect?"

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# the CLUBS

## Rosehill W.I.

Rosehill's November meeting was very interesting on the Sahara and other deserts with slides to illustrate Mr Jessop's talk.

Scrabble is continuing as usual in a member's house in Courtney Drive and the Ramblers have had two walks in November with another planned for December.

The Institute's Denman bursary is being used to pay for a member to attend the College.

Mince pies were enjoyed by all and a raffle and Bring and Buy raised money for various funds and charities.

## St. Peter's Wives' Group Meeting

Canon Richard Kingsbury chaired the Wives' Group Annual General Meeting. The minutes of the 1993 AGM were accepted and the Secretary, Dorothy Churcher, presented her report on the year's activities, with

particular reference to those celebrating the Group's thirtieth anniversary.

The Treasurer's report, given by Muriel Parmee, followed and the accounts were approved. The Chairman thanked both officers and also Owen Clamp who had audited the accounts. He then thanked June Brown for her leadership as Chairman during the preceding year and the two retiring committee members, Muriel Parmee and Vera Piper, for all the work they had done.

New committee members were elected and Sandra Owen and Jean Perry were appointed to serve with the remaining members of last year's committee. Canon Kingsbury then gave a message from the chairman of the 1993 AGM, the Rev. Christine Allsop, who had sent her love and best wishes to the Group. He expressed his gratitude for the help given at the St Peter's Flower Festival and at the Wives' Group service. He had been delighted that the group had commissioned a pulpit frontal for St Peter's, to mark the thirtieth anniversary year,

and looked forward to its presentation.

Following the AGM, Peter Harms provided a pleasant entertainment with slides and music on an autumnal theme. On 25 November forty-eight members and guests enjoyed their Annual Dinner at the Mapledurham Golf Club.

## Caversham Community Association

October started with a popular bingo session with some happy prizewinners. The following week saw the popular return of Pat Snow with plenty of Autumn gardening tips and bulbs to plant for a lovely Spring show.

Doreen Crawley guided members through the next week's Whist Drive. The fourth Monday catered for musical tastes with more old friends, Frank Terry and Freda Clarke, with a selection of songs and duets from the shows. The month ended with the traditional Halloween celebrations. Prize winners in the costume parade were George Feast and Grace Bilsby. Popular games included a lively game of conkers - memories of childhood!

## Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

Members at the November meeting were interested in the report given by the Chairman, Mrs J. Spall, on the Genetics Seminar she and three other members had attended at Bristol. Genetically altered foods, i.e. tomatoes presently on sale in America, paving the way for potatoes, wheat, bananas and corn, have not so far found favour with British supermarket chains. Revolutionary DIY Genetics profiling leading to "health passports" was proffered as a future possibility.

Arrangements were made for the Guild's Christmas party in December and for a visit to a pantomime in January.

This month's Speaker held members' attention with the history of the original Bayeux Tapestry and highlighted during her slide show numerous fascinating details which during a viewing of the Tapestry would not be immediately obvious. Many members proposed a further visit to Reading Museum!

This month's competition for "prettiest brooch" proved a popular one and choices were difficult. Mrs Gale and Mrs Hodgkinson were declared joint winners.

The Guild meets on the third Thursday in each month at Church House at 2pm. Visitors/new members are always welcome.

## Caversham Ladies' Club

Mrs Brenda Strong,

Chairman, opened the meeting with a warm welcome to the members present. She followed this with introducing three new members, and hoped they would enjoy the Ladies' Club as it is always a warm and friendly meeting. Members were reminded of their Christmas lunch, the venue and time, also the Club's Christmas Party.

The Chairman then introduced Major Paxton who was going to talk of the starting of Huntley and Palmers, up until the closure of this well known factory, what an interesting subject it provided for the listeners! The one thing most members present were surprised to know was that the owners were Quakers: other large biscuit manufacturers, like Peek Frean and Jacobs were also Quakers.

Members heard how it started in a small shop, the first engine and how Queen Victoria was approached for permission to have a biscuit named after her but refused, then relented and gave the name 'Osborne' to be used.

Members listened enthralled to the rise and events over the past years of H and P, and were disappointed when time was catching up, but Major Paxton was quite willing to answer questions from members - a lot having worked in the factory, or having relatives who had done so, and he willingly answered and talked to individuals.

A really interesting afternoon, very much enjoyed by all present who are looking forward to meeting in the near future when Major Paxton is bringing along a video of various things to do with Huntley and Palmers.

## Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

ARTS & CRAFTS enjoyed their evening on ideas for Christmas Cards and there were plenty of new ideas.

RAMBLERS had many walks around Sonning/Binfield/Shiplake and a circular walk round Sonning Common.

There was a competition for a Christmas Tree Decoration made by members during the evening. Mr Snailham the speaker for the evening judged the decorations and Mrs Jeanette MacArthur was announced the winner.

The talk for the evening was given by Mr R. Snailham on the "Giant Among Rivers - Down the Zaire". During 1874 and 1877 Henry Morton Stanley sailed down the River Congo (as the river was called then) Mr Snailham told us some very interesting tales concerning the journey. 140 soldiers and scientists set out from Britain in order to travel down the length of the Zaire River. They had only four months to complete the whole expedition.

It was an extremely interesting talk and very humorous at times and

members thoroughly enjoyed all the information and stories of the trip told by Mr Snailham.

On the 22nd November there was an evening of "Fun & Games" and a "Singalong" to records.

## Caversham W.I.

A touch of Christmas was in the air at Caversham W.I.'s November meeting courtesy of the speaker, Mrs Lucy Virtue of "Cake Creations". She demonstrated various ways of making decorative plaques to use on your Christmas cake. The techniques were simple, she assured members, who then were inspired to try some out for themselves.

The President had earlier welcomed four visitors and gave news of the recent successful Autumn Fair and the result - one win, one lost - of the first darts matches of the season.

Members were looking forward to the Christmas dinner at the Travellers' Rest and their party on December 8th. The speaker kindly judged the mince pies competition and Mrs Sue Taylor gave the vote of thanks.

## Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

At November's meeting members of the main guild of Caversham Heights Townswomen learnt about the history and architecture of St Petersburg and Moscow from Mr C. Minchell, a retired historian and architect who comes from the north of England. Having commented with pleasure that his audience seemed more light-hearted than some, Mr Minchell explained how he had visited the former city nine

years ago and has been there four times in all.

A monument in St Petersburg celebrates the defeat of Napoleon in the last century. A convent is still the headquarters of the communist party in that city. Much was learnt also about Peter the Great its founder, and how Lenin preserved tapestries and artistic treasures at the time of the Revolution. He has also made five visits to Moscow, the last being three and a half years ago at the time of Mr Gorbachov's overthrow.

At social studies later in the month some of the story of the verdant island of Sri Lanka, only about half the size of England, was told by Mr R. Goodman. The island's

population has rapidly increased. A British colony before 1948, it is now a member of the Commonwealth. The literacy rate is now 86%. Bullock carts are still well used.

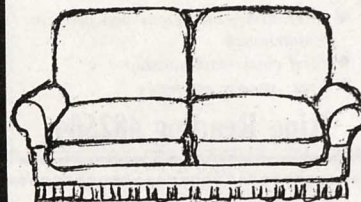
Some of the facts about its little-known civilisation were revealed by Mr Goodman. The coconut palm flourishes round the coast. Abundant small fish are caught. Jewels are still mined in the ancient central rocks. Thus rice, tea, rubber and coconuts, together with the famous old spices such as cinnamon and various native vegetables cover the bulk of the cultivated land.

Arrangements were being made for the Christmas parties in the guild.

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