

WHAT WATCHDOG WATCHES

There could hardly have been a more unlikely quartet, that Autumn night in 1966, to plant a tiny acorn from which, if not a mighty, at least a significant Oak would grow. A Conservative Councillor, a Liberal candidate, a Labour Party activist and a member of the Communist Party – what could they have in common? Only anger! They stood outside the old Regal Cinema (the present Waitrose site), furious that they and the others at one of Reading's earliest so-called Public Consultation Meetings had been informed by Councillor Williams that there would be a Shopping Precinct in Church Street, whether the Public wanted it or not. Most thought it was not needed but were not unduly worried until Plan C was pinned up.

Because of then Government Regulations on mixing shops with through roads, Church Street would be pedestrianised and a new road would link Henley Road/Prospect Street with Caversham Bridge, destroying in its path some 200 homes in Westfield Road, Prospect Street and adjoining roads. After all, as one Councillor stated, they were only working-class terraced houses, albeit well built and the occupiers would be delighted to move to Caversham Heights.

A First Move

So what was to be done? This was hardly the baby for the infant Warren Residents' Association and there was no other suitable organisation. Time was short, so the only possibility was to rally other objectors and form an ad hoc Caversham Residents' Committee to fight the scheme. A tall order. In a few short months an understanding had to be gained of the unfamiliar Planning Law, Public Inquiries and the Ombudsman. Mistakes were made but a tremendous amount was learned. The Battle of the Precinct was finally lost but the Council, for reasons known only to itself, at the same time, lost Plan C – so the threatened residents stayed, some of them to fight the successful challenge to the one-way system nearly 30 years later.

Many other local battles have been fought, throughout the country, since then, but the sad thing is that once the campaign is over, after the congratulations or commiserations, the group disbands. When the next issue arises, the opposition has to start from scratch again. The Residents' Committee decided that this was not for it and soon after the properly constituted Caversham & District Residents' Association, with its elected Committee and very supportive membership, came into being, later to be joined by the Mapledurham & District Residents' Association.

Ground to be Covered

At first it was thought that quarterly meetings would suffice, but it was soon realised that if Caversham was to be spared the worst excesses of the developer and the bulldozer, empty office blocks and supermarkets, the work would be continuous. The weekly Planning Lists are checked, all applications for Caversham – be it only for a garden shed – are studied and especially if plans involve loss of trees, increased traffic, obtrusiveness or adverse effects on local residents or businesses, representations are made to the Planning Department. Anything that affects Caversham is the concern of the Association.

Some issues may seem trivial but they can be serious matters for those affected. The Crossing outside the Library was too narrow and pedestrians met in the middle and could not cross on the green-man in time. Persistent nagging got it widened. Recently repeated reportings of Telecental's damage to our pavements led to repairs.

Lost and Won

Some issues are won. Others are lost. Of the failures, a trivial but annoying one was to get the stamp-machine, which was removed years ago, when the Prospect Street Post Office was modernised, replaced.

Much more serious had been the failure, despite many representations, to get the phasing of the traffic lights at Bridge St./Church St./Church Rd. altered to allow safe crossing for pedestrians and an easier right turn from Church Street for motorists.

A Lighter Side

Some campaigns have their funny side. Some years ago a rash of traffic sign poles, with nothing on the top appeared all over central Caversham, a hazard for the blind and a nuisance for those with prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs. The usual channels of complaint failed; the Council denied the existence of the poles. So the Association members counted and categorised them all and the results appeared, as a table, on the front page of the Bridge – the survey was later praised on 'In Touch', the Radio programme for the blind. Within 24 hours of publication practically all the useless poles had disappeared. Shortly after a member seeing a parked lorry full of poles and asking

their destination, was told 'Not to Caversham, lady, anywhere but Caversham'.

Loss of Bugs Bottom

The biggest tragedy must be the loss of the Bugs Bottom fight, thanks to the arrogant Nicholas Ridley, but it was not for want of effort by the Action Group, the Residents' Association and thousands of others.

Successes

But there have been successes on big issues too. Together with other groups, the Association opposed the Cross Town Route, which would have ruined Kings Meadow, participating in every session of the long Public Inquiry. The housing estate on Queen Anne's field (and incidentally the school did not own the field and neither gained from or was responsible for the sale) is bad enough but the proposed Supermarket with all the trimmings which the Association supported the Council in opposing would have been infinitely worse. Working with the Action Group and the Traders Association to defeat the one-way system was another success and recently we have had the good news 'No Supermarket on the Elliott's site.'

Not a bad record for a group of ordinary people with (originally) no expertise and poverty-stricken compared with the developers whom they oppose, who spend hundreds of thousands on Counsel and Expert witnesses.

Help!

But why write this potted history now? Simple. Unless a new Secretary comes forward before the A.G.M. in March the Residents' Association will cease to be. Two of the Officers are still active after nearly 30 years and others have given a decade or more of service. Some on the Committee are getting well past their sell-by date. A new Minuting Secretary is also needed and although this is less urgent a volunteer would be welcomed with open arms; but without a General Secretary to co-ordinate all activities the Association cannot continue. The work is not unreasonably demanding – finance, membership and planning are all dealt with by others, there is a loyal band of notice-distributors, the two local stationery shops are most helpful and local Councillors and Council Officials are cooperative.

It is difficult to believe that, in the whole of Caversham there is not one person willing to save the Residents' Association.

If there isn't, God help Caversham.

TALKING POINT

by
Rev. David Moody of Caversham
Heights Methodist Church



TOUGH-MINDED CHRISTIAN THINKING

CHRIStIANITY is often misrepresented, not just in the media but by what many people 'think' Christianity stands for. Then, not only are people misled but they close their minds to the truth about Christianity. It is only too easy to accept half-baked ideas and easy solutions, especially if they appeal to personal prejudice; but they delude. We Christians need to be tough-minded as we do some hard thinking in the presentation of the truth. We must not back off in attacking false representation, nor allow ourselves to be intimidated by such misrepresentations. 'Be as wise as serpents' said Jesus.

Our theology must express the truth about God and not accept a soft-minded sentimentality which thinks anything goes. Heinrich Heine's last words, 'Dieu me pardonnera, c'est son metier!' (God will forgive me, it's His trade) illustrate such soft-mindedness. Christians know that forgiveness is inextricably bound up with justice which requires a response from us to the forgiving death of Christ. Again, those who blame God for all the ills of the world, or who reject any concept of God because of the ills of the world, should do some hard thinking before reaching such inadequate conclusions which have abandoned the search for truth.

The tough-minded Christian will have nothing to do with the shallow philosophy of Swinburne, 'Glory to Man in the highest! For man is master of things.' Science and religion belong together in the search for the truth about humanity. So the Bible, dogma and doctrine will be subjected to the same thorough-going scrutiny as any scientific research. No soft-minded retreat from the ever expanding knowledge we gain in a world committed to the search for truth.

Nor will the tough-minded Christian surrender the high moral ground to the clever specious arguments of those who see their own well-being as their only touchstone. We will, for instance, have nothing to do with a National Lottery which claims a high morality as it hands out grants to opera companies and sports clubs and, Oh yes I nearly forgot, a little to charity, whilst Camelot rakes in over £2 million a week with a careless disregard of the many it misleads into greater poverty and deprivation. A morality which reflects a sleaze which seems to be infecting so much of our country.

The tough-minded Christian will not be afraid to speak politically: to speak out for the poor and deprived, the homeless and unemployed - for those who have no voice of their own. We will resist a grinding hard-hearted capitalism which places material progress before concern for people. For this 'wisdom of serpents' is salted with the 'gentleness of doves'. Imbued with the presence of Christ our sole criterion will be our understanding of the mind of Christ and its application in the world.

The danger of soft-minded thinking is that it leads to a gullibility which makes newspapers ethical leaders, immediate gain the purpose of life and sees self-interest as more important than community. The tough-minded thinking Christian will have no truck with such delusive ideas, but by hard solid thinking will come to the truth which results in faith in God and the salvation of the world.

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)
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

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers), Church Street, Reading 10.30am
Caversham Church House - Meeting for Worship 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

COULD YOU HELP THE HOMELESS AND NEEDY OF READING?

We are in urgent need of caring and reliable volunteers to join our friendly teams at the Drop-In Centre.

What the Work Entails

Anything from sandwich making, washing-up, preparing, cooking and serving lunch, clearing up, cleaning the toilets, washing the floor, making tea and coffee, issuing clothing, to chatting and listening.

Shift Times

We ask volunteers to help on one shift from 9.30-1.00 or 1.00-4.30 on Mondays, Tuesdays or Fridays. (We are also open on Saturday evenings but at present we have enough volunteers.)

The Clothing Store

We are also looking for people to help regularly in the clothing store. This involves sorting and sizing the clothing and serving the guests. You definitely need to be patient and long-suffering for this job but it does offer a marvellous opportunity to get to know the guests.

---*---*---

If you are interested in helping but can't manage to come regularly, why not join our emergency list.

OR

If you can't come every week, or you have young children, how about alternating with a friend.

Telephone Tessa Partridge on **01734 403849** who will discuss the work with you, answer any questions you may have and show you around the centre.

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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 April issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 6 March.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham by Monday 4 March.

The dates for May will be Monday 1 April and Wednesday 3 April.

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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There will be a public viewing of Senior Artists' work at Church House, Caversham on 9th March from 10am to 4pm.

Light refreshments will be available.

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91 - NOT OUT!

Is it something in the air in Caversham that keeps our eighty and ninety year olds so sprightly and active? Whoever conjured up the stereotype of old-timers in rocking chairs didn't live in Caversham. They don't exist round here. Most of those who are well into their Third Age are busy helping in the community, pursuing hobbies and sharing their friendship and enthusiasm with others - and long may it continue!

Among these people who are so active in their retirement are many of the distributors of the Caversham Bridge. One of them in particular, Mrs. Kitty Billingham or Kit as she is known to her friends, has delivered the Bridge in Valentine Crescent and Onslow Gardens ever since the paper started 30 years ago. Now in her 91st year she has just decided to retire. Kit lived in Valentine Crescent for 54 years but four years ago she moved to Mander Court. However, she continued with her round, dropping in on an ex-neighbour for a cup of tea at the same time. Now that same neighbour, Mrs Winnie Masterman, has kindly agreed to take over the round from Kit.

Like many other residents of longstanding in Caversham Kit was not born here. She was born in

Northamptonshire on the 13th of the month, the 13th child of a family of 13. She has no reason to be superstitious and, indeed, considers herself very fortunate to be living at Mander Court even though she did move in on the 13th!

One of her early memories when she was a girl is of the end of the First World War. It was Monday - "washing day" and suddenly there were soldiers in the street hugging each other and "going barmy". She was at home that day because at the age of thirteen pupils could leave school if they had put in the required number of attendances. However, legally she could not be employed until she was fourteen.

She then went to work at the Brook Manufacturing Company which employed 1400 girls. She was making blouses and was paid 5/6d a dozen. The garments were already cut out and they were shown samples which were quite easy to follow but occasionally they had to read up the instructions in a big book which was much more difficult. The young Kitty made progress and by the time she left at the age of twenty-five she was a supervisor.

Life was not all work, however. The family had all been brought

up to go to church. Mother was an Anglican but the family worshipped at the Baptist Chapel as father was a Baptist. When she was in her teens a group of Kit's friends attended Holy Trinity where dances were held on Saturday nights in the church hall, admission 3d if you went to church on Sundays! She started to accompany them and at the age of eighteen she was confirmed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by the Bishop of Peterborough and she has been a faithful churchgoer all her life.

She met her husband, Bert, at one of the dances and they married when she was 23. She stayed on at work until she was 25 and expecting their first child - no maternity leave in those days!

During the Thirties the Depression forced many men to move in search of work. First of all, the Billinghams moved to Cowley and then in November 1938, when Bert obtained a job at Miles Aircraft in Woodley, they set up house in Caversham and started to attend St. John's Church.

Their youngest child, a daughter, was christened there in the following June and the family continued to attend church regularly. The "baby" now



From Left to right: Mrs. Kitty Billingham with her granddaughter, Sally, great granddaughter, Lauren and elder daughter Cynthia.

attends the Methodist Church but gives her mother a lift every Sunday to St. John's.

Kit remembers that during World War II she couldn't travel back to Northamptonshire to visit her family and she missed them very much but in the Crescent she had very good friends and neighbours. The children played together in the park and went to the Saturday morning "pictures" in little groups. In those days parents didn't have to worry about taking and fetching their children everywhere as they do today.

In 1956 Kit joined the Mothers' Union and she still attends the meetings at St. John's. A time came when the branch was desperate for an Enrolling

Member and a few of them spoke about it to the Rev. Sumner. He said he would think of someone. By the following Sunday he announced that he had a solution - Kit was to do it! She did it for four years, giving up at the age of eighty. She still enjoys all the outings and meetings, mentioning in particular the joint meetings with the Methodists and the singalongs with Jim Plunkett.

Her skills with the needle and the sewing machine continue to be employed as she makes items for the May Fair and Sales of Work. A project she found especially worthwhile was dressing dolls and refurbishing cradles to send to the children in war-torn Bosnia. Of course, there is always a demand for her expertise in doing repairs and making alterations. She still uses the Singer sewing-machine her family clubbed together to buy for her 21st birthday present.

What does Kit think of the paper she has

delivered so faithfully for 31 years? Her reply, as one would expect, was gently diplomatic: "sometimes good, sometimes not so good". Had it improved or deteriorated over the years?" I asked, fishing for compliments. She thought for a moment then delivered her verdict: "about the same" then she added "I always like Katy".

Kit counts her

blessings: three children, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren who, apart from a grandson in the States, all live quite locally. She has her health and "that's everything". But most important of all, she has a steadfast faith and a quiet and contented spirit. Enjoy your retirement, Kit, for many years to come.

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The Rev Bill Carpenter, St Andrews House, Harrogate Rd. Tel: 472788.
(The Rev. Andrew Tyler, Hon. Asst Priest)
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.

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The Rev John Boakes, 9 Woodlands Grove, Caversham. Tel: 482530.

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Rev Peter Edwards, 14 Tredegar Road, Emmer Green. Tel: 477697

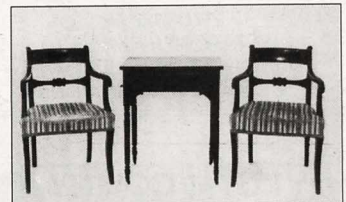
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Head of Planning and
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KATY IN CAVERSHAM

By the time you read this I hope the weather will have improved; apart from our own problems, blocked pipes, slippery paths and so on, it has been impossible to forget those even worse off, some even forced to sleep in doorways and beg a crust. I don't know what the current situation is regarding shelter and so far we've had no luck in discovering such facilities, one of our main difficulties at the moment being the inability to contact the right people on the telephone. If I might digress for a moment, I must say I deplore the habit of giving FAX numbers instead of ordinary telephone numbers. Trying to get the number of a local organisation recently, I found myself being offered the alternative of two addresses in London - needless to say, I gave up and rang a friend who was able to help.

But to get back to the business in hand. My sister and I were taken right back 50 years or more recently when, as a not-too-well-off family in South-East London, we found our mother one Sunday lunch-time whipping the 'pudding' off the table to give to a 'poor old man' who had knocked and asked if we had any food to give him.

Have things really changed so much? I think not! A few weeks ago, at the very heart of the cold snap, a man

called with a request for food; he was, he said, starving. In the current climate my sister thought it better to ask him to wait outside the door while she gathered something edible.

Alas, by the time she returned there was no sign of the man, nor could we find a trace of him in the immediate neighbourhood. I needn't tell you what 'torments' we suffered the next few nights, wondering what had happened to him. Could this really be Reading, we asked ourselves. The next day we tried in vain, through the social services (not easy to track down) to find where we could have directed this man.

Now I know several organisations are running their own kinds of 'food and shelter' but nothing and nowhere seems to be immediately available for desperate people. If anyone has any suggestions it would be nice to publish them in the 'Bridge'.

The Future of the 'Bridge'

I make no apologies for bringing up the subject again but it is a sad fact that, unless some of our younger members are willing to take over various jobs in the community, some of our efforts will gradually fizzle out. What is going to happen to the 'Bridge' when the editors and volunteers finally have to give up - it must come eventually, as we are all getting a bit long-in-the-tooth, and it would be

sad to think of 'our paper' having to wind up as might well happen to the local residents' association.

We can't go on forever. Do we care? Do you care? Nobody is asking you to take on a lot but surely there must be some among our readers who will take on just one small job. A friend, now well into her eighties, is still helping with the Drop-in Centre. There must be some thing you could do, something which would help.

Margery Gazel

Many Caversham people will have known Margery who died in January. In recent years she has lived in Lowfield Road and, before her retirement, worked for many years at the BBC Monitoring Service. She joined the service during the war and moved to Caversham Park when the Monitoring Service moved there, eventually being joined by her husband, Stefan, when he came here after the war, having had a very colourful career. Both of these people will be remembered by many friends in Caversham. Margery always tried to keep in touch with old friends and still tried to get to the local shops where she could meet many people she knew; she always welcomed the opportunity to catch up on their news. Our sympathy goes especially to her daughter, June, son-in-law Mike and grandson at this time.

Sister Anna McGrail

I have no doubt many of our readers will have known Sister Anna; for a long time she was resident at Saint Anne's Convent but unfortunately, with increasing age and illness, she had to move to a convent at Bridport and more recently to Belgium where she died in January. Sister Anna had many friends, not only in the Catholic Church but among the many people she met and talked to in Caversham. Our prayers go with her as they do with Sister Ethel Francis; she was in some ways just a name on a Prayer List, so it was good to read in last month's 'Bridge' something of

her own career. A lot of people must have met her at some time or other.

Gordon and Mary Page

May I add my own congratulations to Mary and Gordon on their Diamond Wedding just before Christmas. Gordon was one of the first people I ever interviewed for the 'Bridge' and I have very happy memories of people like him and the help they gave us so willingly in allowing us to share their lives in the early days of the 'Bridge'.

Please, please - you out there - do let us have news of old friends to pass on through this paper.



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ROTARY CLUB OF CAVERSHAM 50/50 CHARITY WALK

On the weekend 15/16 June 1996 The Rotary Club of Caversham are running a charity walk with a difference. Walkers will be invited to take a 5, 10, or 20 mile walk from Basildon Park, Lower Basildon (courtesy of The National Trust) at any time over that weekend and raise

money via sponsorship for their own favourite charity and a rotary charity.

The 50/50 Great Basildon Hike is open to ALL sections of the community in the Reading area and beyond. From family groups with their pets, to teams from schools,

clubs, scout groups, shops & offices. All are invited to come and participate in this fun weekend at Basildon Park.

It is hoped this will be one of the largest charity fund raising opportunities in the Thames Valley. More information later.

OPEN UNIVERSITY SUCCESS

Congratulations to Mrs Margaret Notton of Emmer Green, an active member of St Barnabas Church, who heard recently that she had been awarded a First Class Honours B.Sc Degree by the Open University after eight years of study in her own time. Margaret

started with the science based foundation course and has finally ended with a biology based degree. Her final year dissertation, which included practical work, was on earthworms; these proved to be very difficult to find during our last long

hot summer and, once found, not easy to identify. Although she did find some flatworms none of them were the notorious Australian and New Zealand species that have been accidentally introduced into this country.

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RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

By Watchdog

STILL MORE HOUSES

Here is one less campaign to mount. The proposed superstore on the former Elliott's site has been dropped from the Borough structure plan. Apart from being widely unpopular, it was a non-starter on planning grounds alone, but there were powerful forces at work trying to push it through.

The site will not of course stand empty. Its almost certain use will be for housing. The site is large, much bigger than it appears from the street, so it will take a considerable number of houses. It is highly unlikely that any of it will be used to provide a much needed playing field for Thameside School. Trafalgar House owns it, and they are in the business of making money, not of providing facilities for the local community.

In the long term, the school will get extra pupils from this development, with no expansion of its site. The interests of the existing community will be secondary to the need to extract the

maximum value from the land.

HENLEY ROAD

Meanwhile, in the Henley Road, building is going apace on the former Queen Anne's playing fields. It is better than a superstore, of that there is no doubt, but even so, with the development of the former Elliott's site, it will lead to a considerable increase in the population of Caversham, and hence to an increase in pollution, for every house means at least one extra car. To these two developments must be added those of Bugs Bottom and Deans Farm, all of them leading to added pressure on services, and, in three cases, to loss of open space which, even if not open to public access, was welcome as giving a sense of spaciousness.

PLAYING SPACE

It was good to see that through the combined efforts of local residents and councillors, a former playspace has been reopened and equipped in the Mayfield Drive

area, where it was much needed. Although eventually it will be required as an extension to the cemetery, (for which it is earmarked) until it is, it is better used for the benefit of the living than the dead. Good playspace makes all the difference in bringing up a family in urban areas. All the development going on in Caversham at the present should include sufficient play-space for the children who will live there.

POST OFFICES

Sub-post offices have always been a focal point of the community, but they are becoming an endangered species. Caversham is not the only place where they have been closed down. Alongside this has been a growing trend to open post offices within superstores (this has already happened in another area of Reading) which somehow does not seem the same as the familiar

neighbourhood post office. The increasing pressure on the busy Prospect Street post office highlights the folly of closing down sub-post offices, as there is now too long a distance between these that are left, to transfer business there. We don't really want to go to a superstore to cash our benefits, post our parcels and buy our various licences, but it could well come to that.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?

As I write this, during a period of bitterly cold weather at the end of January, I am sorry to see that there are as yet no aconites out in St. Peter's churchyard. These tough little flowers normally appear at the beginning of the year, no matter what the weather. Have they been deterred by the penetrating blasts from Siberia, or is there some other long term underlying cause? Aconites do

have a tendency to disappear after years of being established, and it is not easy to get them going again.

The bright golden carpet in the churchyard always raised the spirits on the cheerless days of early January, and served as a reminder that spring lay ahead. Advice from more knowledgeable gardeners than I would be welcome, on the likelihood of their appearing again or how best to establish a new lot. There must be organisations or individuals who would be pleased to finance their rehabilitation. (Don't worry, Watchdog, they are still there. Eds.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Caversham and District Residents' Association will take place on Monday, 25th March, at 8.00 p.m. at the Free Church Centre, Prospect Street.

This will be a crucial meeting for the Association, as so far no replacement secretary has been found. The Association has done too much good work in the past not to continue into the future.

OBITUARY

MURIEL OLIVE MacADIE
born 18th January 1911
dies 26th January 1996

Muriel MacAdie lived in Caversham for the last twenty-three years and became a respected and loved member of the community. She came here on retirement from teaching to be near her friend and early colleague Anne Simkins.

Muriel was educated at Southend High School where she became head girl. A friend writes "I looked upon her as a kind of elder statesman. She was firmly convinced that there was a large amount of good in everybody and no contempt should be entertained for a person's actions, only for the actions themselves. Her skill with words was well known to all her friends who were inspired by her understanding and sensitivity in reading aloud, especially poetry."

Muriel read English at St. Hilda's Oxford from 1929 to 1932. After teacher training she taught at Sunny Hill School in Bruton where she became the life-long friend of Anne Simkins. In 1938 Muriel took up a post

as English teacher at Brondesbury and Kilburn High School for girls in north-west London. The school was evacuated to Northampton and after a period of secondment to a Greenford school she rejoined Brondesbury and Kilburn when it returned to its London home and remained there until her retirement in 1970.

A colleague writes "I never felt intimidated by her superior height and her education. It was this sensitive and caring attitude to others, her encouragement of and interest in the ideas and progress of the individual, as well as her great love and knowledge of English literature that inspired her pupils. She was respected and loved by colleagues and pupils who appreciated her scholarship, perception and sense of humour. As Head of the English Department she had little leisure time for her special interests, until she retired. She was known as MOM as friend of Anne Simkins. In 1938 Muriel took up a post

then." In Caversham, Muriel joined St Andrew's Church and entered into many of its activities - Mothers' Union, Bible study and prayer groups, where her quiet reflections were much appreciated. She embarked on a painting course at the Arthur Legge centre and showed depth of knowledge of beauty and perspective.

She made invaluable and stimulating contributions to the University of the Third Age books group in which she took a lively interest, especially on account of her personal acquaintance with writers. Muriel was a founder member of the poetry group Scan. Her role as critic and mentor for the writers was very highly valued.

In recent months her health gave much concern to her family and friends. At Dellwood Community Hospital a nurse said she realised Muriel "was a special person." We all feel it was a privilege to have known her. A.S.

ACE

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

REVD PHIL ABREY APPOINTED COUNTY ECUMENICAL OFFICER

The appointment has been announced of the Revd Phil Abrey, the minister at Caversham Park Church, as the new County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Berkshire. He takes up this three year, part-time appointment in April and is being seconded from Caversham Park Church where he will continue to be its minister but with a reduced time input.

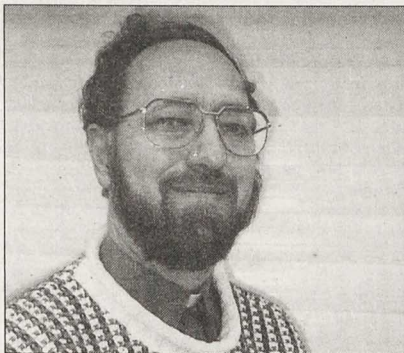
all the ecumenical activity in the County. Locally CTB works through some 25 local Churches Together of which Churches Together in Caversham is one. (The Revd Phil Abrey has been Chairman of Churches Together in Caversham for nearly five years and plans to relinquish this post at the AGM in June.)

THE ROLE OF THE COUNTY ECUMENICAL OFFICER

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN BERKSHIRE

Churches Together in Berkshire (CTB) has as its members all seven main denominations, namely Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Society of Friends and the United Reformed Church; under CTB they have an agreed basis of faith. It is the body that encourages, facilitates, supports and oversees

The County Ecumenical Officer's role is to further the mission and unity of the Church within Berkshire. He will do so by promoting a vision of the greater unity that is possible and helping the participating denominations and local churches to work together. This includes encouraging the sharing of resources, taking initiatives and the



- O. Jewiss

The Revd Phil Abrey, the new Churches Together in Berkshire County Ecumenical Officer.

avoidance of unnecessary overlapping.

Among particular concerns that the County Ecumenical Officer will be expected to address in the coming years will be: how can we and should we move ecumenism forward, how best should the Christian Church in this area celebrate the

millennium and, on the assumption that we may have six Unitary Authorities in Berkshire, how should the Church relate to the civil authorities?

Caversham Bridge congratulates Phil Abrey on his appointment and wishes him well in the sizeable but important and interesting task that is ahead of him.

LINK GROUP NEWS

A New Year and a new member! - at the first 1996 meeting Lorraine Vallance was welcomed to the Link Group. She will represent St Margaret's Church, Mapledurham and the Churches in Reading Women's Centre.

A provisional diary of events (watch this space for updating and confirmation) was drawn up, as follows:

- 26 Feb: Judy Dooley will speak about the work of Macmillan Nurses at this meeting.
- 25 Mar: THE GRAND KNIT-IN! There was unexpected competition last year, so get our date in your diary now!
- 22 April: Knitted-square-sewing
- 20 May: Business meeting
- 17 June: AGM

Just a reminder that the Link is essentially an Ecumenical action group and the object of the monthly meeting is to exchange ideas and receive information about avenues of support. As financial help is sometimes called for, the Knit-In is the main annual fund-raising event.

New members are always welcome and you may need to know more about the Knit-In (and sewing-up session) so please get in touch with Barbara Graham on 482043.

CORRECTION

The Women's World Day of Prayer will be held on **MARCH 1st** and **NOT** February as stated in the February Caversham Bridge.

St Andrew's Fellowship

A well attended meeting in January heard Mr John Howes talk and show slides on the Lands of the Hapsburgs. Mr Howes, who is widely travelled, started his programme with an interesting résumé of the history of the Hapsburg dynasty.

Then he proceeded to show beautiful slides of magnificent palaces and views of European capitals, once under the government of this famous family.

He gave a promise to return to the Fellowship next year and tell members all about a proposed trip he is making to the Finish lakes later this year, a date they will look forward to.

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH EASTER MISSION

What are you doing in Holy Week, this year? Hoping to make your Christian faith more live and vibrant?

Now Caversham Heights Methodist Church can help you there. In co-operation with Churches Together in Caversham, the Heights Methodists are holding an event-filled mission that week. A week that speaks of a vibrant Christian faith.

Two BIG events in the church itself will be the launch concert on Saturday 30 March, when CANTICLE from High Wycombe will sing, and on Good Friday evening, 5 April, there will be a dramatisation, 'Son et Lumiere', of Mark's Gospel when groups from other churches in Caversham will join the Heights Methodists in making the presentation. CANTICLE are a Christian music group which 'provides Christian entertainment to encourage Christians in their faith'. These events are sure to be sell-outs so make sure you get your tickets early.

On Maundy Thursday, 4 April, there will be an open Palestinian supper which will attempt to portray the type of meal Jesus sat down to with his disciples at the Last Supper. Good Friday morning at 10.30am, a United Service will centre on the crucifixion of Jesus. Saturday evening, 6 April, will welcome everyone to a grand Barn Dance in the church hall. Easter Sunday will be the celebration of Jesus risen and alive.

Six students in training as Methodist ministers at Wesley College in Bristol will share in the mission. Thursday, Friday and Saturday they will run a morning Holiday Club for children and they will meet with teenagers in Squash on Sunday evening, 31 March. There will be a teenage night hike or sleep-out on Saturday night, 6 April, ready for Easter breakfast on Sunday at 9.30 a.m. All children and teenagers will be welcome to those events which will be well organised and supervised, and with that bit of adventure.

The students together with church members will lead prayers each morning and devotions each evening of Holy Week. The students will also trespass into House Groups, Luncheon Club, Ladies Network (Thursday at 2.30 p.m.) and other places, as well as help deliver invitation leaflets to houses. So don't be surprised of your bell rings and you discover a student minister on your doorstep with information leaflets about Caversham Heights Methodist Church.

Over 1500 houses were visited in October with information about the church in a 'One Street at a Time' publicity drive. Another 1500 houses will be visited on the same basis in March. It is all part of an ongoing publicity campaign to let people in Caversham know about Caversham Heights Methodist Church.

EASTER MISSION PROGRAMME OF MAIN EVENTS

Saturday 30 March	7.30pm	CANTICLE Concert
Sunday 31 March	11.00am	Family Worship and Sunday Starters
	6.30pm	Alternative Service
	8.00pm	Squash
Maundy Thursday		
4 April	10.30am	Holiday Club
	2.30pm	Ladies Network Meeting
	7.30pm	Palestinian Supper
Good Friday		
5 April	10.30am	Holiday Club
	10.30am	United Service
	7.30pm	Dramatised Mark's Gospel
Saturday 6 April	10.30am	Holiday Club
	7.30pm	Grand Barn Dance
		Youth Night Hike or Sleep-out
Easter Sunday		
7 April	8.00am	Communion
	9.30am	Easter Breakfast
	11.00am	Christ is risen!
	6.30pm	Evening Praise

FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL SUCCESS

Congratulations to the Caversham Heights Methodist 'Squash' Club Five-a-Side football team which recently won the Southampton District MAYC (Methodist Association of Youth Clubs) Cup. The team, comprising David Agrawal, Mark Bentley (Captain), Tom Hunter, Howard Olley and Alex McCubbin (with substitutes Tim Peirce and Russell King), went on to compete for the South-West Region MAYC Cup at Truro School on 3rd February.

There they won two matches out of six played unfortunately ending their 'cup-run'. However, congratulations to the team on their winning the Southampton District Cup.

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HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 1996

Full details of services at the individual churches will be published in the next issue which will be available at the end of March.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

GROWING COMMITMENT TO UNITY

If the numbers attending the three events during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity are any guide, there is a growing commitment to Christian Unity in Caversham. One might have thought that concentrating on three denominations in three separate events would emphasise our differences but instead, by trying to understand the practice and meaning of each other's faith, those who went were surprised by how much we had in common and, from the richness of diversity, how we might deepen our understanding, increase our faith and perhaps even improve our practice of it.

Benediction at the Church of Our Lady and St Anne

A large congregation drawn from almost all the churches in Caversham filled the Parish Church of Our Lady and St Anne for the United Service on Sunday, 21 January. The Revd Father Anthony Jones introduced those non-Roman Catholics attending to the modern Service of Sung Evening Prayer and Benediction. Any fear of over formality was dispelled at the start when an over eager organist and choir were stopped from launching into the first hymn with the priestly admonition "Hold you horses!" Although the weather outside was particularly cold, any ice inside the Church was quickly broken and the Service proceeded with warmth, dignity and reverence.

Father Anthony unpacked the mystery of the service by reminding us that we were celebrating the life giving death and resurrection of Jesus. All prayer is eucharistic: all prayer in the Body of Christ is one with the sacrifice of Christ; it is united heart and soul with Jesus giving himself to the Father. With Jesus we pray to the Father. In Benediction the priest blesses the people by showing them the consecrated elements of the Eucharist, which will subsequently be taken by the eucharistic ministers to those unable to attend mass, a demonstration that the Lord continues to pour out His love, which is seen in the Eucharist. All of this is drawn together through the work of the Holy Spirit and is a Christian sign of the unity of the Church. It shows God's love for us through the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection; Jesus comes to us in and through the Eucharist, whereby we identify with Him.

Why are some Methodists? . . .

Two days later part of the Methodist Hall was full to overflowing to hear why the Revds John Boakes and David Moody were Methodists. Although John Boakes confessed that he would rather have talked about why he is a Christian, he revealed that he is a Methodist by conviction. It is because of the openness of the Church where all are welcome, all are involved, all can be saved. It is because the

Church seeks after spiritual growth; and it is because of the certainty of the Christian faith, the assurance, the peace of mind - a miserable Christian is a contradiction in terms.

David Moody is a Methodist because of the act of faith he has taken. He wanted to know God, to do something about it, which has been enabled by the means of grace through worship, prayer, study of the scriptures, through fellowship and through the Lord's Supper. He spoke particularly of the importance and the centrality of the Lord's Supper, a potent reminder of what God has done for us through his life, death and resurrection.

. and other Baptists?

Finally on the last day of the week of Prayer for Christian Unity, the Revd Peter Edwards explained to a large gathering in the Baptist Church why by conviction he is a Baptist. He believes in returning to the roots of faith, for which the Bible is the primary authority. His idea of the Church is that of the New Testament, namely an assembly of people gathering together for worship, fellowship, witness and service. Each church is a missionary church and part of the Body of Christ.

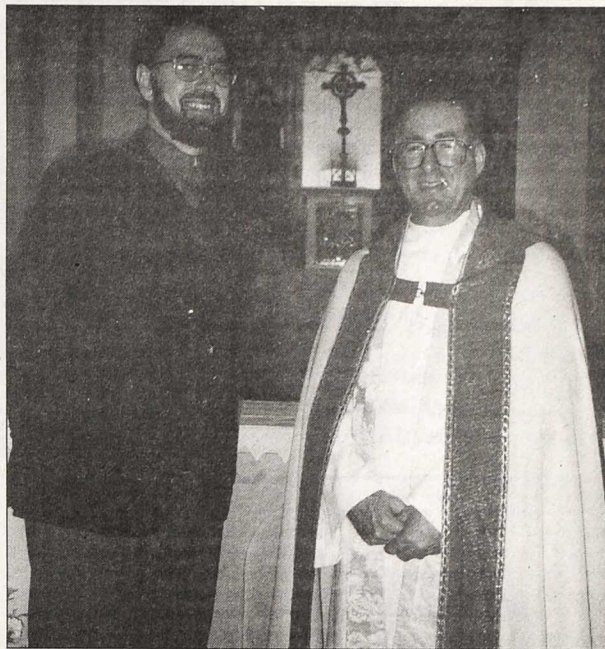
Peter Edwards referred to Believer's Baptism as a Gospel sacrament. To repent, believe in Jesus Christ, to be baptised and to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit is a response to the message of Jesus Christ.

The total immersion in the baptistry is like going down into the grave; in the water sins are buried. Coming up the other side is like Jesus' resurrection into new life, a life where sin had been forgiven. Baptism for believers is a once and for all occasion; it is a declaration of principle and faith.

The Baptist view of the pattern for ministry is that set by Jesus who came among us not to be served but to serve. Ministry is the responsibility of the whole Church in which all serve according to their particular gifts; it is a priesthood of all believers where there is no distinction between clergy and laity.

We are all Christians Together because . . .

We share a common basis that unites us as Churches in our pilgrimage that is expressed in the words of our commitment not only as Churches in Caversham but nationally. This



- O. Jewiss

Our picture, taken after the Unity Service, shows the Revd Father Anthony Jones, priest at the Church of Our Lady and St Anne, with the Revd Phil Abrey, Chairman of Churches Together in Caversham, on the left.

states that we acknowledge God's revelation in Christ and confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures. In obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit we commit ourselves to seek a deepening of our communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body, and to fulfil our mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world, to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Owen Jewiss

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CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS

The thirty-first Annual General Meeting of the Good Neighbours was held on Monday, 15th January, 1996 at Church House, and as a break with tradition was held in the afternoon.

The Chairman reported on the work of the previous year, eighty to eighty-five per cent of which continues to be essential transport for the elderly and/or disabled, and remarked that while the Good Neighbours was a simple organisation with no written constitution, somehow it seemed to work! Canon Kingsbury thanked everyone involved, and said he knew from his own experience of the good work done, quietly and without fuss.

The afternoon meeting was generally held to be successful, and at the conclusion everyone stayed on for tea, cakes and the chance to talk with friends and helpers.



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AROUND THE CHURCHES

NEW LOOK FOR THE KITCHEN AT ST. PETER'S



Guess the weight of the cake.

Serving teas on Sunday afternoons as part of St. Peter's Alive in summer 1994 and again the following year has led to the refurbishment of the kitchen at St. Peter's.

The Sunday teas were a success. Friends and families came to enjoy a chat and a taste of the delicious home-made cakes, newcomers were welcomed and invited to look round the church and a quiz was devised for the children.

However, there was one snag - the state of the kitchen.

In overall charge of the refreshments was Regula Adams, well known to many in Caversham as a teacher and demonstrator of cookery and famed for her apple strudels.

Regula expressed concern that the church kitchen was not up to the standard required by the regulations. Her comments were overheard and a generous gift of money was given by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.

Mike Crosbie, churchwarden and keen DIY enthusiast, drew up a plan and the units were purchased. A second anonymous gift paid for a replacement water heater. Richard

Milne offered his expertise in carpentry and the job began. The work was done in stages to ensure minimum disruption and after weeks of hard work was finally completed to universal applause. "But what a pity" everyone said "there isn't any money left to do the floor, the old tiles do spoil the effect".

Now it was the turn of the women. Mike's wife, Jean, and Richard's wife, Yvonne, together with Mary, the wife of churchwarden, Eric Smith, and Regula, determined to have a Coffee Morning. They aimed to raise £200. The event was enthusiastically supported by the congregation who

brought and bought, guessed the weight of the cake, sponsored tiles at £1.20 a time and thoroughly enjoyed what turned out to be a very pleasant social occasion. The result was more than double the target and now the units are set off by a superb vinyl flooring with a tiled effect in beige and brown.

Everyone is delighted with the results of this concerted effort and you will be pleased to know that next time you enjoy refreshments at St. Peter's they will have been prepared in a kitchen well up to EC regulation standards even to the towel rails carefully positioned to ensure that the towels don't touch the walls!

WHY I AM A BAPTIST

As part of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a meeting was held on 25th January at Caversham Baptist Free Church entitled "Why I am a Baptist".

Pastor Peter Edwards spoke on the subject and gave a very interesting and thought provoking evening. Amongst the topics covered were Baptism, Authority, Church Membership and individual ministry. "We don't practice Adult Baptism - we practice Believers' Baptism" Pastor Edwards told those present - Baptism being the outward sign of the burial of the pre-Christian life and resurrection of a new one, a dramatic service in itself that has brought many to a belief in Christ.

Regarding authority within and outside the local church it was explained that Baptists take as their authority the Word of God, anything that is not Biblical being optional. Church meetings are held regularly where, through the power of the Holy Spirit, those present make decisions about all aspects of church life; at this point there was an element of humour when Peter Edwards spoke of the "anarchy" that can arise from this democratic idea of, in effect, government of the church by the church members. On the other side of the coin, when unity is reached it is the best form of decision making.

Unity being a major issue of the week it was stressed that, whatever differences the denomination have, Christians are welcomed and received for who they are and not for what they practice.

It was pointed out that an inconsistency in the Baptist Church was that people were accepted into membership without having been baptised although baptism and membership usually went hand in hand. The role of each church member as a minister of the church was elaborated on - anything that the Pastor can do can also be done by a member of the church provided that person has the gift and has authority from the church meeting.

Baptists see the church - the Body of Christ - as a congregation of people with particular gifts, the Pastor's being to serve his fellow Christians.

A lively question and answer session was followed by some very welcome tea and biscuits and a time of fellowship with those present, in great contrast to the very cold night outside.

Judy Ruck



CHURCH-WOMEN TOGETHER IN CAVERSHAM

On the afternoon of 18th January, Christian women (and one man) of Caversham from at least eight different churches came together for one of their meetings which take place at approximately two-monthly intervals. This time it was the turn of Caversham Heights Methodist to host the meeting and they decided to have a Worship Workshop. It was great to see how the women of four different denominations could work together.

We divided into five groups. While one group learnt some modern hymns by Rev. Brian Hoare (this year's President of the Methodist Conference), another group went to another room to write a prayer. The third group practiced choral reading - finding new experience in trying to express the joy of Mary in the words of the Magnificat (Old Book of Common Prayer version) - while the 4th group worked out the way to express the same joy in dance and mime. Those who felt they had no talents in any of these activities had "great fun" cutting out pictures from magazines to make very attractive posters. After about an hour of "working," we brought all our activities together in a short service, groups three and four working together more or less in harmony.

When we adjourned for our usual tea of scones, cream and jam, it was suggested that people should sit with the new friends they had made by working together rather than with their own church groups. It did not stop people from talking! Everyone agreed that it was good to be doing something ourselves, together, as a change from just sitting and listening to others doing it for us. And while we ate our tea we thought of others less fortunate than we are and made a collection for "Feed the Children".

The next two meetings of Church (or Christian) Women Together in Caversham will be at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church at 2.15 p.m. on Tuesday, 5 March, and at Caversham Baptist Free Church at 2.30 p.m. on Monday, 29th April. Put these dates in your diary now, and come and join us.

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EMMER GREEN – “A LUNG OF READING”

Seventeen years ago an exhibition was held in St Barnabas' Church showing something of life in Emmer Green years ago. What an excellent exhibition it was and what a great deal of hard work went into gathering all the information together.

Since then as the years have gone by new snippets of Emmer Green's past have come to light and may be worth recording.

ROSE HILL

Besides Caversham Park and The Grove a third interesting old residence of importance was Rose Hill. A building on this spot is clearly marked on John Rocque's map dated 1760 and Thomas Pride's of 1791. The present house was obviously built on this site and its earliest known owner seems to have been Mrs Elizabeth Richard c. 1802-1837.

Hers may have been the initials carved on an old pump in the garden together with the date, 1812, which is described in an old paper. The house seems to have stood beside one of the great commons at Emmer Green, for an 1840 guide book to the area informs us, "At the point where the road leaves the common it passes on the left, Rosehill, the neat and tasteful residence of Mrs Peacock".

Not long after this, in 1848, a Mr Henry Shepherd bought the house which he enlarged, also improving the garden. It seems that Emmer, of Emmit or Emmair Green, as it was

also spelt, was becoming increasingly popular among the wealthy for the 1831 census informs us that "Capitalists, bankers and professional and other educated men" numbered 24. At a later date Rosehill became known as Kidmore Grange and was the home of a member of the Sutton family, the Reading seed merchants.

COUNTRY RETREAT

The old guide book tells us more of Emmer Green. After mentioning the extensive commons which were to be enclosed by 1865, it goes on - "The water is particularly salubrious - . . . During the summer months numbers of invalids and those who wish to be rid of the smoke of the town for a while fill the lodging houses in the place. Emmer Green can be considered one of the lungs of Reading".

A manuscript diary of 1843 remarks "When we reached the beer house by the brick and tile kiln, upon turning round we were struck by the charming view of Reading". It is easy to imagine the wealthy townsfolk in the valley below taking a simple yearly summer holiday on the hills of Emmer Green.

At least it must have brought an increase to the income of those who had suitable accommodation to let. Each spring, cottage rooms would be aired and spring cleaned ready for the visitors, windows flung wide open to the warming sun and fresh country air, plain country furniture scrubbed and

polished till it shone and sprigged curtains newly washed and ironed.

Soon the population at Emmer Green greatly increased as the holiday makers arrived, the ladies with their parasols and paints strolling through the countryside, picking wild flowers to press or paint, or sketching in some warm, secluded spot, the men walking the Chiltern Hills, returning with a thirst to call at the beer house and join farm labourers, brick kiln workers and other local folk drinking their pint.

Evenings would be spent in the best parlour playing cards by lamplight or chattering about the day's activities, and no doubt bed time was early and sleep sound after such a healthy day in the country. No doubt too, a visit to drink water at the Physic Garden in Surley Row also helped to increase the sense of well-being.

LOCAL BRICKS

A brick kiln appears to have already been in use at Emmer Green by 1654 for in the Reading Corporation diary of that year mention is made of land belonging to a kiln there being called Hoars field. Whether it was the kiln that was in use until recent times or another one is not known.

Dr Plott, in his Natural History of Oxfordshire, 1705, also writes of one at Caversham and this again could have been at Emmer Green, for it was in the parish. He writes "At Caversham . . . they make a sort of brick 22 inches long and above 6 inches broad in the place of the Laths or Spars (supported by pillars) in oasts for drying mault, which is the only use for them". Dr Plott, also notes "much mauling done at Henley". It would not have been a great journey to take these bricks from Emmer Green to Henley even in those days.

M.K.

EAST BANK AND BLAKENEY POINT

Fifty pairs of eyes gazed upwards as a huge black and white bird with 'barn-door' wings and long legs a-trail came in from the sea. Traversing the length of East Bank the White Stork dropped into a reed-fringed pool on Clew Reserve.

Barely five minutes later the watchers stared in disbelief as another long-necked, 'leggy' beauty loomed over the shingle-ridge. An equally rare Purple Heron, of slightly lesser proportions, followed its predecessor into the reed-beds.

MEADOWS AND MUDFLATS

For generations, Royalty, internationally renowned ornithologists, T.V. celebrities and birders have pounded this raised half-mile muddy footpath, known as East Bank, which extends from the coastal road to the shingle-ridge overlooking the North Sea on the Norfolk coast. Meadows and mudflats with a small water-course on their east side complement Clew Bird Reserve's vast reed-beds to the west.

A few miles up-coast the shingle-ridge terminates amongst the sand-dunes of the Blakeney Point promontory. A visitors' tea-house with full accommodation for warden and students form part of the Reserve's facilities. A look-out post with huge wooden telescope tops its bedrooms. Nearby, a tree-plantation is often filled with rarities when the north-east wind blows.

East bank and The Point boast two of the highest Check Lists in Britain.

PRESENT-DAY ‘TWITCHERS’ WORRY ME

Since the 1970s, American autumnal rarities to the Scilly Isles have drawn many twitchers but recently a drift back to Norfolk has corresponded with its increasing rarity activity. Perhaps one day the old venues will regain their status - in my 'dotage' I sincerely hope so - yet present-day 'twitchers' worry me.

Pleasant enough and advanced well into 'adulthood' many may be, but the old 'know-how' which was such a natural part and parcel of our own development from a very early age is sadly lacking.

They will be seen at the 'big' twitches with all the latest gear yet, so 'light on homework' are they that relevant 'birding' discussion with them is a 'non-runner'.

We once jocularly referred to such folk as 'nice types - but dudes'. Now the question has to be asked, did they - do they - really CARE about their subjects?

Like so many wild and domesticated creatures, birds increasingly depend upon mankind's protection, understanding and love in these days of world-wide horrific torture, abuse and killing. They are all a part of our environment and heritage.

We must never forget that when our Lord God made US, He made ALL creatures - even the least of these - and SAW THEY WERE GOOD.

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A lost pond at Emmer Green. Budgen's car park now covers the whole area but the row of attractive cottages behind the tree is still there. Perhaps these homes became holiday accommodation for those in Reading wanting the fresh air of the countryside.

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A SPOT OF FORWARD PLANNING

By Hortus

When it comes to seed sowing a little forward planning is a great help.

Some seed packets have on the back coloured diagrams indicating the best times to sow, to plant out and when the plants come to fruition. Others, less helpful, suggest sowing in early, middle or late spring and harvesting or enjoying the plants within 'X' number of

weeks. There is no hard and fast definition of 'early' or 'late' spring. As a rule of thumb I tend to treat spring as March and April and make early spring sowings towards the beginning of March and late sowings about mid April. It also depends on whether I am sowing in a heated propagator, under cover or out of doors. A later sowing isn't necessarily wrong since nature has a

habit of catching up - often seeds sown later in a warm soil will grow more quickly than seeds sown earlier in a colder soil. Of course, if you sow seeds in heat and bring them on early, make sure you have somewhere suitable to bring on the resulting plants before it is practical to 'harden off' and plant them out.

Since I tend to take my holidays early in the season to avoid

the height-of-season pressures, I have to take into account proposed absences from home when working out my sowing programme. After all, what is the point of being on holiday when the peas are ready to harvest or the flowers are coming out in the borders? I suppose the counsel of perfection is never to go away - there is always something to do in the garden, but we live in an imperfect world and we have to balance out the demands on our time. So to get the best from our packets of seed (and they are not cheap) it is necessary to plan ahead.

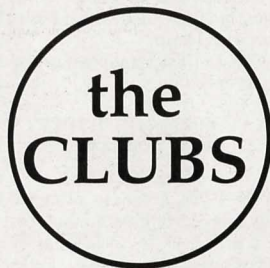
I find that when one knows how long vegetable seeds need to arrive at cropping time it's not a bad idea to work back in the diary from a desired cropping time to a point in spring which would be suitable for sowing. I have then drawn up a plan ahead, on a weekly

basis - from January/February to May/June - to identify when the different varieties need sowing. As sowings are made they can be crossed off the list. I keep my chart in a plastic flimsy folder so that it can be pinned up in a prominent place for ease of reference.

An alternative to drawing up a chart is to create an index file using an old shoe box and old card cut up to form weekly or monthly compartments, then file individual seed packets in weekly/monthly order of sowing, when successional sowing is required the packets can be put back in the next appropriate compartment.

Finally another spot of preparation I find useful is to spend the odd half hour or so writing plant labels in advance of my sowing and pricking our programme.

However you plan have a fruitful sowing season!



Rosehill WI

Within easy reach of Reading there are interesting examples of Norman church architecture. The Church of St Peter and St Paul at Checkendon has a Norman interior, while also in the Chilterns but further east is the Norman tower of the Church of St Bartholomew at Fingest. These local churches, and many others elsewhere in the UK,

were described and illustrated with slides by Mr Ken Surman when he spoke about 'Our Homeland Churches' at the January meeting. The question of the survival of Saxon churches, usually made of wood, was discussed and also the 'compound' character of so many churches due to building additions and modifications made over the years and centuries. Members made their own contribution to the subject by bringing along photographs of churches that had interested them.

The Annual General Meeting of Rosehill WI will take place on 6th March (St Barnabas Church Hall, 2.00 p.m.).

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

The Guild celebrated its thirty-fourth birthday on December 7th 1995. To mark the occasion members had a Christmas/Birthday lunch at the Reading College of Technology on the actual day, which was both festive and very enjoyable.

The annual Christmas/Birthday party was held on 14th December. The Caversham Bell Plate Ringers provided unusual, excellent seasonal entertainment, encouraging members

to join in with the carols and also to experience ringing the bell plates for themselves. A party tea followed with birthday cake made by Mrs Manning and refreshments provided by the Committee. The competition "A Christmas table decoration" was won by Mrs Alice Smith. Finally, a draw in which everyone received a prize, brought a happy and enjoyable afternoon to a close.

Treasurer, Mrs Manning, invited members to her home for tea and mince pies on December 21st. It was a very pleasant, friendly afternoon. Visitors were invited to bring along a tin of food and these were later taken for distribution to the homeless.

A small group, led by Mrs Odey, enjoyed an afternoon at the Hexagon pantomime and another group joined the Henley Lions for a visit to the Swan theatre at High Wycombe to see Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Two very good afternoons of entertainment, thoroughly enjoyed by those taking part.

The first Guild meeting of 1996 was well attended; several new members came along as well as visitors from as far away as Devonshire.

Mr Harms, the visiting speaker gave an "Audio-visual presentation". With slides and narration he took members on a magical journey starting in San Francisco depicting the steep hills, cable cars and fine buildings. The journey continued to California and beyond. The

turn to page 11

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from page 10

stunning scenery, colours in gardens and forests and reflections on the lakes en route were breathtaking.. Arriving in Canada the audience was treated to more spectacular scenery and impressive views of the Rockies (some taken from the air). An excellent presentation, thoroughly appreciated by everyone.

There was no competition this month. Mrs Odey is arranging for a group to see Oklahoma at the Hexagon in March. Craft and Social Studies afternoons have resumed and Rambles will start again in the Spring.

The Chairman, Mrs Doris Smith, held a "new members" meeting to give an insight into Guild activities and also to deal with any queries.

The next meeting will be held at Church House Caversham on the third Thursday in March at 2pm when new members/visitors will be most welcome.

Chazey WI

Intrepid - that was the word for them! They ploughed their way through the snowfields to uphold the honour of the Women's Institutes. Undaunted by the arctic conditions, in their boots and winter coats, carrying their equipment in haversacks, they arrived - at the Mapledurham Pavilion for the February meeting. Yes, they did enjoy it! The wind had dropped and there was no need for torches: the snow made very satisfactory crunches at each step and it was FUN! The meeting was good too. The president arrived early to put on the heaters and the hall was warm, so the 15 members present could enjoy the talk on "Spinning & Weaving". Helen Lily brought small looms, a spinning wheel and several drop spindles as well as skeins of wool, dyed by herself. There were plenty of hands-on articles to pass round. The natural wool feels hard and sticky and two washes are needed to remove lanolin and soften the yarn. Fleece from different breeds of sheep showed the diversity of texture obtainable. Some Chazey members tried their hands at spinning with drop spindles and produced a slubbed thread of wool. Helen Lily was so encouraging that everyone felt that

they could produce something worthwhile, given the time. It would be much quieter than a knitting machine and wouldn't interfere with the telly. It was a warm, companionable evening and the walk home was full of talk and laughter.

The Annual Meeting will be on Tuesday 5th March when a new committee will be chosen. The Birthday Meeting is 2nd April.

Caversham WI

The first meeting of the New Year was a members' evening with a variety of games. After a welcome from the president, Margaret Cameron, great satisfaction was expressed for the excellent Christmas dinner and party.

Sheila Bryant had arranged a 'faces' quiz with the eventual winner being Margaret Cameron. A fast and furious beetle drive provided plenty of cut-throat competition and Doreen Beard was the winner. More prizes were on offer in a final card game and the usual raffle. After the refreshments members were reminded that next month's meeting would be slides of a trip to the Holy Land.

Caversham Ladies' Club

A warm welcome was given to members at their first meeting of 1996 by Mrs Brenda Strong, Chairman, and New Year greetings were given from the floor and committee. Club business was discussed and completed.

Mrs Strong then reminded members that the first meeting of the year was given over to members to air their complaints, suggested changes, ideas and outings, but all agreed they were quite happy with their club, and there were no suggested changes or complaints. The Chairman thanked them and gave a list of places for outings, and members added their interest also. A paper was given to each member to write their choice of two destinations. The papers were collected and after sorting London was a high choice and Compton Acres with Bournemouth a close second. Madame Chairman said the first outing would be in May.

It was now time for entertainment and the Treasurer, Mrs Queenie Strong, read some very comical 'lyrics' which all enjoyed, followed by a good singsong of well

known songs, sung with much gusto, so it was a very welcome sight when that 'cuppa' appeared, to relax and enjoy after a happy and interesting meeting.

Just before closure members were told the Speaker at the next meeting was to be Mr Harris who was going to show views of Austria, accompanied by film music.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The Guild met in St Barnabas Hall on Tuesday evening, 9 January 1996.

Members of the Arts & Crafts will be having a Sewing afternoon at their next meeting and will also discuss plans for future meetings.

Words & Music members are having a Social afternoon as part of an extended festive season. There will also be a fork and finger buffet with members supplying the food.

Ramblers have enjoyed their annual lunch at the Maltsters for their annual gathering. There has been just one walk since New Year and that was a local road walk because of the very damp conditions. A visit to a pantomime Cinderella was also on their agenda.

Mr. D. Noyes was the speaker for the evening and gave members lots of info on the changing face of Reading. There were many photos and slides of Reading about thirty years ago. There was a slide show to remind members of all the wonderful old buildings which have been replaced by red brick buildings and the I.D.R.

Mr Noyes has a wonderful collection of before and after slides of shops and public houses which are no longer standing. It reminded everyone that people used lots of different shops and smaller businesses instead of one large supermarket as they do now.

Caversham Heights TG

The chairman welcomed guests and members, there were so many birthdays that it was only fair to have two floral prizes.

The speaker Mr G. Kay was introduced from The Jubilee Sailing Trust, formed in 1978 in one of the ships of the Onedin Line with the aim of integrating able bodied and physically

disabled people through the medium of Tall Ship sailing. Every voyage the eight permanent crew members are joined by 40 other 16-70 year olds including eight in wheelchairs who are paired, one disabled to one able bodied buddy.

Everyone has a part to play in sailing and life on board is all about equality and teamwork and to enable this to be achieved £3 million was raised to build a purpose built ship with power lifts, flat decks, speaking compass, loop audio system etc. The trust aims to provide happiness with a sense of achievement and adventure for everyone and we saw hardly mobile members steering the ship, blind members high up on the rigging, someone with jointless fingers peeling potatoes, not only enjoying themselves but proving they are equal to anyone. It was very clear how people with special needs, once they've gained confidence can face up to their problems and even make a career for themselves afterwards.

The Social Studies group enjoyed a walk along the Cotswold Way with the help of Mrs. Beek and her slides. She and her husband took the train to Bath and walked daily stopping along the way every night, so alongside the beautiful pictures were anecdotes about her hosts. Almost 50 members enjoyed a visit to the Mill at Sonning on Saturday. After an excellent meal and a hilarious play everyone was ready to face the freezing weather again. Thanks to Mrs. Read for arrangements.

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