



ALBERT CUMBERLAND PhD, JP

1922-1996

EARLY DAYS

Albert Cumberland was born in the village of Gotham, Nottinghamshire, on 9th July 1922. His father was a carpenter, his mother a teacher. After leaving the local village school and West Bridgford Grammar School, he studied history at Nottingham University, gaining a first class honours degree in two years rather than in the normal three years. The fast-track degree course was imposed so that Albert could be conscripted into the army for war service!

WARTIME

Albert served with the Durham Light Infantry in Italy before being landed in Normandy on "D" Day 1944 where his unit suffered heavy casualties. A tour of duty in Egypt followed before he returned home to a base in Skipton. The horrors of war had a deep effect on him but happily, whilst in Skipton, he met Margaret whom he married in 1947.

BEGINNING OF TEACHING CAREER

After leaving the Army, Albert began a lifelong career in teaching, starting in Dudley. During his time there he also gained a PhD for a thesis on the History of Non-conformist Faiths in the Midlands. Further teaching posts took Albert and Margaret to Birmingham and then to principal posts in Nelson and Colne and in Burnley before they moved to Reading in 1972 where Albert became Principal of Reading College of Technology.

As a teacher and principal, Albert Cumberland was a great enthusiast for education. He gave gentle but expert support to students and staff alike. The Colleges he ran, not least "Reading Tech", prospered and grew under his leadership. He retired in 1982 but his many and varied interests kept him very busy into retirement.

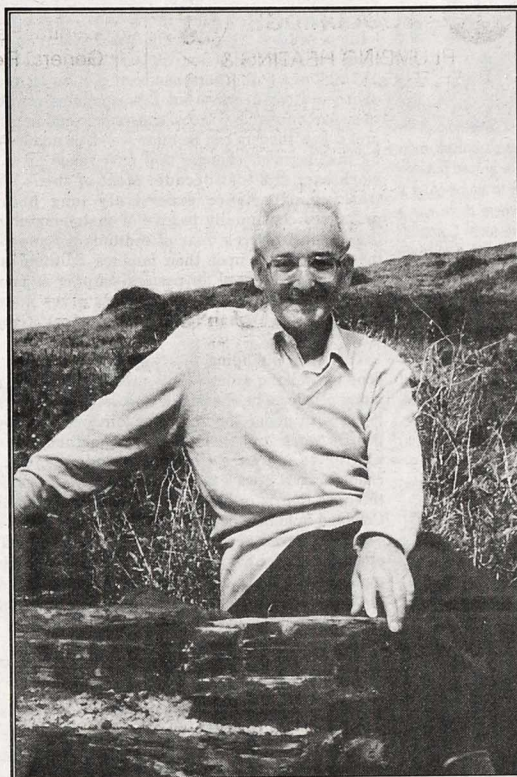
A MAGISTRATE

His work as a Magistrate gave him enormous satisfaction. He originally joined the Bench in Nelson, Lancashire in 1966 and continued as a JP upon his arrival in Reading, being elected Chairman of the Reading Justices in 1988. It was Albert Cumberland's task to oversee the amalgamation of the Reading Bench with that of Bradfield and Sonning. The result of the amalgamation, handled by Dr. Cumberland in a typically sensitive and thorough way, was the formation in 1989 of the current magistrates' Bench, the Reading and Sonning Justices. It was entirely appropriate that he became the first Chairman for the new Bench, a position he held until the end of 1990. Albert Cumberland was also instrumental in developing training for magistrates and an awareness programme on the magistracy for schools.

His former magisterial colleagues appreciated Albert Cumberland for his wisdom and for the way in which he always gave a thoughtful and considered response to anyone who sought his advice. His kindness and humility are qualities which will be long remembered by Court officials and Magistrates alike.

QUAKERISM

Work on his thesis aroused Dr. Cumberland's interest in Quakerism and what had begun as an historical and intellectual quest turned into one which was both personal and practical. He joined



the Society of Friends in 1958, while living in Dudley, and thereafter it was the Quaker meeting for worship that sustained his many other activities. Nationally, he had been a member of the standing representative meeting of British Quakers, savouring the fact that it retained its seventeenth century name, the Meeting for Sufferings. Locally, while never obtruding himself, he quietly and competently did whatever he was asked - taking the children's class, seeking advice on a heating system, visiting those applying for Quaker membership, serving as clerk to the managing trustees and much more. Whatever he did, Albert Cumberland undertook the task with a meticulous attention to detail that was never fussy. He was a man of few words and these activities were outward expressions of a firm faith which permeated his life but of which he would have felt it presumptuous to speak.

KEEN ROTARIAN

Albert Cumberland had been active both in Round Table and, later, with Rotary in Nelson before moving to Reading. Soon after arriving in the town, Albert became an energetic member of the Rotary Club of Reading and was the Club's President in 1983/84. During his presidency he laid the foundations for Rotary's current fund-raising activities with the first ever Rotary Fun Run taking place in May 1984.

One of the highlights of his presidential year was to lead a large party of Reading Rotarians and their wives on a visit to Normandy and to the Rotary Club of Caen Est (now Caen Abbeyes) with which it is twinned. Thus, 40 years after his "D" Day experiences, he once again landed with a British expeditionary force!

ROTARY PROJECTS

Albert Cumberland will be remembered within the Rotary movement for his dedication to projects with an international connection, which involved young people, or which were of an educational nature. In this context he was an acknowledged expert on the Rotary Foundation which provides a variety of educational

and vocational scholarships and which is also Rotary's vehicle for a number of global projects such as "Polio Plus". Around the world there are numerous people who came to Reading from abroad to further their education under the Rotary Foundation banner, often to return home to improve crop yields or to apply other acquired skills to the benefit of their countries, sometimes eventually to become civic leaders themselves. Albert Cumberland worked tirelessly for the Rotary Foundation and with these students so that many people in many countries would be deeply saddened to learn of his death.

Polio Plus was launched in 1986 by Rotary International as a worldwide campaign to immunise the children of the world against six killer diseases, polio, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, tetanus and tuberculosis. Working with the World Health Organisation, Rotary's task was to provide funding for the immunisation programme together with support and expertise in setting up vaccination centres in areas of need.

The original objective of eradicating these diseases by 2005 seems certain to succeed. This will provide an enduring tribute to the life and work of Albert Cumberland who was the local Area Coordinator for Polio Plus in the Thames Valley.

MUCH CHARITABLE WORK

Amongst the large number of charities and good causes in the area which benefited from Albert Cumberland's quiet counsel, many were connected with education, with care for the less fortunate or with the environment and outdoor pursuits. The Reading Waterways Trust was established with his support. It started from a students' project at Reading College and became an important influence for improving the rivers and canals of Reading. As part of this interest, Albert walked the navigable length of the Kennet and Avon Canal, an accomplishment which gave him considerable pleasure.

KEEN WALKER

He loved the outdoors and the hills. He could often be seen walking around Balmore, by the Thames or in the more distant hills and valleys. This was a pastime he often enjoyed with his family, his son David, his daughter-in-law Catherine, and the five grandchildren. For such an energetic and apparently fit man, a sudden death from a heart attack was as unexpected as it was shocking to all.

EDITORS' NOTE

Many readers will have their own memories of Albert Cumberland. We ourselves were indebted to him for an article last autumn about the Quaker way of life and he had promised to extract from work he was doing on the history of "tin-roofed churches" information about those in this area; he always had some project in the pipeline. One editor recalls a chance meeting on the bus when the plight of some Bosnian refugees was mentioned and within a week two Quaker owned flats were put at their disposal. He saw the need and took action. Truly a good man who will be missed by very many, and we offer our condolences to his wife Margaret and the family.

D/EX 1758/33/4

TALKING POINT

by
Fr. Tony Jones
St. Anne's R.C. Church



ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF FAITH AND SERVICE

On Low Sunday (the Sunday after Easter) 1896 the first public Roman Catholic Mass was celebrated in Caversham, in a home called 'The Firs', where the playing field is now, behind the Elizabeth House Flats, on Gosbrook Road. Since the previous year 'The Firs' had been the home of a group of French Sisters of Mercy who had come to Caversham at the invitation of Mrs. Florence Crawshaw, the Catholic 'lady of the manor' of Caversham Park, (now the BBC monitoring centre). The sisters had had Mass in their house since they arrived but only for themselves. The few Catholics of Caversham had to either cross the river to attend Mass at St. James' church in the Forbury, or walk out to Mapledurham House where there was a Catholic chapel and a resident priest. But once the sisters settled, these local Catholics petitioned Bishop Ilsley of Birmingham to have their own parish and Mass centre. And so, in the spring of 1896, the bishop established the Catholic 'Mission' (as it was known then) of Caversham, with the sisters' chaplain, Father Raymond Haskew, as the first parish priest. Thirteen people attended that first Mass on Low Sunday, in six months the number had risen to 85 and the parish grew rapidly. Within ten years the church, parish school rooms and presbytery had been built and the parish of Our Lady and St. Anne was firmly established among the people of Caversham. Incidentally the title of the parish recalls the Shrine of Our Lady of Caversham which was famous throughout England in the Middle Ages and the chapel dedicated to St. Anne which stood on the Caversham end of the original medieval bridge, leading to St. Anne's well at the top of Priest Hill. The Catholic community was determined to remember its roots in the past as it prepared to build for the future.

So for 100 years the parish has grown and flourished. Twice St. Anne's church was extended with side aisles to accommodate more people, and in 1954 the chapel of Our Lady of Caversham was opened to serve the pastoral needs of the growing population of the Heights. St. Anne's school has been extended several times so that it can offer a committed Christian education to more and more local children, (we are building another new teaching area and extending the church car park as I write this piece). Today, in its centenary year, 750 come to Mass at St. Anne's parish each weekend, and many more call themselves parishioners of St. Anne's because this is their spiritual home.

It is a happy coincidence that there were thirteen original parishioners at that first Mass on the Sunday after Easter 1896. Traditionally there was a core group of thirteen disciples who were the first witnesses of the Resurrection, the eleven apostles, Mary the Mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalen. They were the first to see Jesus from the dead and to believe; and because they believed they proclaimed their faith and shared it with anyone who was willing to listen. The Church was born in the light of Easter Faith. Once the disciples had grasped the power of this new life in Jesus Christ and how it transformed their own lives, they heeded the words of Jesus to them, 'Go out to the whole world, proclaim the Good News to all creation; baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'. And then, 'I will be with you always, even to the very end of the world'. This has been the faith and mission of the Church for two thousand years, to believe, to be baptised and to know that the Lord Jesus is with us always and will never abandon His People.

This is the Easter Faith that was celebrated by that tiny Catholic community 100 years ago, and has flourished ever since. 'We are the Easter People and Alleluia is our song' says a recent hymn. Our parish celebrations during this centenary year will focus on the presence of the Risen Lord Jesus among his people through the celebration of the seven sacraments. Our Catholic faith is that Christ gives to us the wonderful gift of His Life and Love by our sharing in the sacraments, so we are going to have a special centenary celebration around each one of the seven sacraments over the year from Easter 1996 to Easter 1997. For one hundred years the Catholic community of Caversham has encountered the Risen Christ and has had its faith sustained and strengthened, in good times and bad, in happy times and sad, by the sacraments.

We will also be having very special centenary events. Archbishop Couve de Murville of Birmingham will celebrate the Centenary Mass of Thanksgiving on Low Sunday at 10.30 am, followed by a 100th birthday party buffet. From 4th-11th May a group of about 40 parishioners will be going on pilgrimage to Rome, to express our unity with the universal church and to take with us a silver crown that has been commissioned for the statue of Our Lady of Caversham. Pope John Paul II will bless the crown and, on July 21st, Archbishop Barbarito, the Papal Nuncio to the United Kingdom will crown the statue, honouring Mary, Mother of the Lord, and special patroness of our parish.

So a year of celebration, of thanksgiving, of prayer and action. We give thanks to God for so many blessings over the past 100 years and we commit ourselves to carry our Easter Faith into our future. Jesus, our Risen Lord, is the light and glory of our way; we are the Easter People, and joyful Alleluias will ring out from St. Anne's this year!

"BUILDING BRIDGES"

Bridges, real and imaginary, have been in the minds of Caversham residents for many years, and so the current topic for Lent may have an additional appeal. Bridges are needed to enable people to pass over barriers and talk together, and this is important for Churches and those 'outside'.

Chaplains are at the forefront of this bridge-building and those ministering in a work-place (Industrial Chaplains) have the opportunity of meeting perhaps many more than others do. So that they can operate completely independently of both management and staff the work-place chaplains in this country are funded by the Churches and not the organisation to be visited, as applies in many other situations. This imposes a limit on the number of paid chaplaincies. In the Methodist Church, for example, over 80% of the 150 work-place chaplains are unpaid volunteers, lay or ordained, and so do the work in their own time or in addition to their 'official' duties respectively. Their status in the place visited is that of a privileged visitor.

Traditionally the work has been done in factories and heavy engineering, but now chaplains are also to be found in offices, shops, superstores and in rural areas. Few readers can be unaware of, or unaffected by, the enormous changes that have taken place at work over the last decade. Most of those now working experience excessively long hours; pressured continually to give of their maximum; unethical practices; fear of redundancy and the inevitable effects upon their families. So there is a rapidly growing need for pastoral care for so many who have little peace of mind. It gives added meaning to the hymn "Make me a channel of Your peace".

The 'bridge-building' of a work-place chaplain is done by walking around the premises, meeting as many people as he/she is able and being available to listen with understanding. Chaplaincy is very low-profile work and certainly not spectacular nor aiming to increase Church attendance, but a chaplain must always be prepared to "give reason for the hope that is in him" if asked. The late Rev Bill Gowland told how he often visited the night shift at Vauxhalls and responded to a shop steward's challenge of working for and being paid by management. Bill's denial of this and his assertion of being there to serve each individual resulted, some years later, in the shop steward becoming a

Church steward! It is rewarding work.

Chaplains work in ecumenical teams, if only for mutual support, whenever there is one operating as in Reading - Industry Trade and Employment Mission (ITEM) - and they always represent all denominations during their visits.

If any lay or ordained person would like to know more about work-place chaplaincy, please contact ITEM (Sue Penson) on Reading 573568 or myself on 472140.

John Frew,
Industrial Sec. for Methodist District

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE, READING

When this is in print members will have once again taken part in their annual Study Day entitled "Memory", held at Reading University on Saturday, March 23rd.

The subjects on the agenda were Memory in the Third Age; Memory, Anxiety and Ageing; and Studies of memory; a Workshop "Everyday Memory" plus member groups presentations on "Aspects of Memory".

The speakers were Peter Shea of London University, Professor Alan Smith, Reading University Psychology Department, and, for the Workshop, Dr Jan Cockburn, also from the above department.

The next Open Meeting is at 2.15 on April 22nd in The Kennet Room at the Civic Centre and the subject is The Oracle Shopping Centre.

For anyone interested in joining the Association, please contact A. Jones 01734 580085.

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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.

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.

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

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH
Rev David Clark, 41 Highmoor Rd., Caversham. Tel: 471909

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL
Church Office Tel: 474529

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

The Rev John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common. Tel: 723418

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All contributions for May issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 3 April.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham by Monday 1 April.

The dates for June will be Monday 29 April and Wednesday 1 May.

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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The Editors regret that owing to the amount of copy received, some articles have had to be compressed and some held over to a later date.

A GUEST SPEAKER FROM DÜSSELDORF

During the weekend of 17th-18th February a distinguished foreign visitor stayed at the home of Mr Martyn and Mrs Lily Allies. Frau Gunhild Lehmkuhl was the guest speaker at the spring meeting of the Reading-Düsseldorf Association, of which Mr Allies is Chairman and Mr Robert Dimmick of Caversham Park Church is secretary. As a lecturer in Business Studies at the Killegschule Kikweg, Düsseldorf, Frau Lehmkuhl brought a group of students to Reading last year on a work experience stay, which turned out to be highly successful. However, it was not on Business Studies that she lectured to the fifty people in the Civic Centre, but on her book, 'Wo ist dein Bruder Abel?' (Where is your brother Abel?). This describes the impact of Nazi persecution on the Jewish community of one town, Düsseldorf, and the fates of individuals within it. Her two years of research enabled her not only to write the book but to help her students to put on an exhibition about this terrible chapter of German history. Frau Lehmkuhl described tragic individual stories. One of the

saddest cases was that of Frau Auguste Leven, the elderly owner of a small hat shop. Her business was taken away and she was sent to a house where Jews were collected so that the government could

deal with them at will. When the official order came for her to go to the station for 'deportation to the East' she knew what was coming. She gassed herself. Some Jews, like young Hans Neubeck, who was also a communist, showed astonishing courage. He distributed anti-Hitler leaflets among German soldiers. At the age of twenty he was beheaded. With typical German attention to detail the time it took was recorded - seventeen seconds. The case histories show how Düsseldorf's Jewish population sank from 5,624 in 1933 to 45 in 1945.

The churches - and this was made very clear in Frau Lehmkuhl's book - did not give a strong lead in opposing these anti-semitic policies. The Catholic Church showed more firmness than the Protestant denominations. One of the cases on Frau Lehmkuhl's list was that of a Jewish-Catholic marriage. The Catholic Archbishop of Cologne did his best to protect the couple and they survived the war. At the end of Frau Lehmkuhl's talk there was an animated discussion, centring on her difficulties in researching such a sensitive subject and interviewing those who had lived through this period. The vote of thanks was moved by the Mayor, Councillor David Geary, who said that the lecture reinforced the message of the Anne Frank Exhibition, recently held in Reading. 'We should reapply these lessons to our human family'. The evening closed with refreshments, over which discussions continued informally. It was an event which made people think and will stay in their minds.



Speaker Frau Gunhild Lehmkuhl with Mr Robert Dimmick, secretary of RDA and former Mayor of Reading.

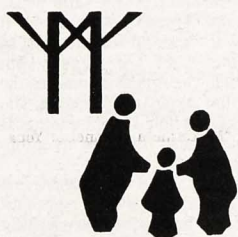
NEWS FROM HIGHDOWN

SIXTH FORM INFORMATION EVENING

The Highdown sixth form centre welcomed prospective students and their parents to an information evening on Thursday 8th February. The evening's purpose was to provide communication between the centre and its future students. There was the opportunity to find out about the courses, extra-curricular activities and sixth form life in general. Current students and teachers were on hand to guide and inform parents, and the evening opened with a speech by the Headmaster Alan Furley, who spoke about Highdown sixth form's traditions. The heads of various departments were also there to talk to parents.

MICHAEL ROSEN VISITS THE SCHOOL

Poet Michael Rosen arrived on 27th February to give a controversial talk on the issue of Anne Frank. After spending the previous day at the Anne Frank exhibition in Slough, sixth formers and year eleven students were pleased to be involved in the discussion which also developed into how to deal with racism. Mr Rosen also read some of his poetry which has dealt with his own personal experiences of anti-semitism and certainly shed some light on why the Nazis were so incredibly hostile towards the Jews during Hitler's Germany.



HOME-START READING

A VOLUNTARY HOME VISITING SCHEME

Help is urgently needed for HOME-START READING - a registered charity which supports families with children under five years of age who are under stress. If you have had parenting experience with children, could you visit one of these families, in the Reading area, once a week? Could you be a friend, aunt or grandparent to them?

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For more information, please telephone HOME-START READING on 01734 429518.

OBITUARY

RUTH HAWTHORNE

It is a well known phrase that "travel broadens the mind." That that is not essential is proved beyond doubt by Ruth Hawthorne who died earlier this year. For the first 90 years of her life Ruth did not live more than three miles away from the place of her birth in Peppard Road. She attended Hemdean House School and prepared for her beloved life of teaching at the University College of Reading, where she was an enthusiastic member of the Rowing Team. She moved to Upper Woodcote Road in 1924 and then to Emmer Green in 1960. She was very content there and moved to North Devon in 1990 to be close to her daughter Sheelagh after the death of her daughter Elizabeth in 1989. The premature death of Elizabeth was the most crushing blow in Ruth's life, yet characteristically, she picked herself up and carried on.

Ruth's great love was young people. She taught in many places, including Twyford, Alfred Sutton and running her own school. Many generations of children remember her with great affection via her work with the Sunday School at St. Barnabas Emmer Green. She and I both held the view that children have so much to teach us as they see the reality of life with less prejudiced eyes. Ruth was always more interested in other people than in herself. I personally found friendship with her a source of joy and inspiration.

I do hope you will be able to join us on May 8th at 11 am at St. Barnabas Emmer Green when we shall express our gratitude for knowing her in a Service of Thanksgiving.

Leonard L. Burn, Priest in Charge,
St. Barnabas Emmer Green 1972-76.



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RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

By Watchdog

CRAMMING THEM IN

It is difficult to believe that it could be possible to cram anything more in the way of houses and other development into Caversham, but as long as there is any space left it will continue to be filled up.

The waste land between St. Martin's Precinct and Promenade Road has recently been cleared of brambles, and soil samples have been taken. Although no plans have yet been submitted, inquiries have been made which suggest that there are developers intending to apply for permission for housing. This land has been an eyesore ever since the allotment holders were turned off it (who remembers those neat rows of onions and splendid displays of gladioli?) and it has become the haunt of the less desirable elements of human life rather than of wild life, so its loss is not likely to be mourned. It will nevertheless pose problems of access from and to an already fully used road system, and bring pressure to bear on local schools.

The cause of far greater concern are the plans for 199 houses at Amersham Road. This is a very large number for any area, but particularly so for where the main amenity is some open space. In many ways it is cut off from the rest of Caversham, as it is a long walk from the central area, and is not itself on the way to anywhere, so it is little known except to those who live there. This newly proposed development promised some extra amenities, but with hundreds more people living there, they will be less than adequate, and the extra pressures are likely to produce the kind of problems associated with housing areas with too little infra-structure. The area needs more time to develop as a community, and if it is to maintain the progress it has already made, it should only have a limited number of extra houses added to those already there.

Far less controversial is the proposal to demolish the warehouses at the end of Priory Avenue and replace them with sheltered housing. These warehouses are served by enormous lorries which are far too big to be brought into a residential street near a busy junction. Sheltered accommodation does not generate much in the way of traffic, certainly nothing to equal a lorry as long as a row of terrace houses. The accommodation will be within easy reach of public transport, shops, doctors and dentists and churches,

and also close to attractive amenities such as the riverside and Caversham Court. This will be a welcome change. It is just to be hoped that departing nightclub clients will respect their new neighbours.

All these houses will need to be counted in the extra quota of houses that Berkshire has been forced to accept. Taken with all those already being built on Caversham's diminishing amount of open space, this area will certainly have taken its share in bearing Berkshire's burden. Apart from its public open spaces, there will soon be little left.

ALL LIT UP

Don't go to Blackpool to see the lights; come to Caversham. Walk along the river bank, either side will do, the Warren or the Promenade, not strictly speaking in Caversham, and be dazzled by the lights shining from the inappropriately sited golf driving range. Golf is not an activity normally associated with the river bank. These lights are very powerful. They shine across the river right into the houses on the opposite bank. They are also dazzling on a summer's evening for anyone taking a walk along the promenade.

It is no good planting a few inadequate shrubs or trees to screen them. They are unjustifiably intrusive and make life unpleasant for people using the promenade or living in the Warren who were there long before the golf range, which itself looks like a row of battery hen sheds. A high quick growing hedge of cypressus might go some way to alleviating the problem, but until such measures can take effect the hours of use should be limited to daylight hours. Even then the monotonous sound of balls being hit detracts from any tranquillity which might be expected in a riverside setting.

The other set of lights is at the junction of Hemdean Road and Church Street, where a forest of traffic lights is, at the time of writing, still being erected. Are quite so many needed? As they are yet to be unveiled, it is at the moment only possible to speculate about the sequence in which they will operate. Presumably they will ease the passage of buses out of Hemdean Road, and the pedestrian controlled crossing across Hemdean Road will help reduce the risk of being knocked down by something coming up

from behind. For the rest, judgement must be deferred until all systems reach go.

CHAZEY COURT

Not houses, but a large nursing home complex is the proposal that is ringing alarm bells in the whole Warren area. Chazey Court, the site in question, is just within the Borough of Reading, but in character it is part of the rural area of Mapledurham, as indeed it was until comparatively recently. The group of buildings there is unique. The Department of the Environment listing describes them as being important, comprising as they do the farm house group, listed Grade II starred, and the barn, in need of repair, but nevertheless attracting the rare Grade I listing. The whole set of buildings is also listed for its group value.

What would happen to it if the seventy eight unit nursing home development were added to the site, however sympathetically it was designed, and however carefully the barn was restored? The whole character of the place would be lost.

And not only its character would be lost. A business of that size is going to require a large staff, whose only way of getting there will be by private car. Perhaps the dedicated few will cycle, or even walk, but their number will be minimal. In addition there will be visitors' cars and source vehicles. The Warren, which is essentially a country lane leading to nowhere in particular, will have to be up-graded (or downgraded, some may think) to cope with this extra use and will soon become another urban road, with lighting, passing places and double yellow lines. All this will bring a major change to an area which for only technical reasons is not included in the adjacent area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. This is not acceptable.

If the development did gain planning permission, it would of course bring a much needed cash boost to the Mapledurham Estate, probably one of the least altered in the country, and all the more remarkable for being so close to a busy urban area, but the cost is too high. This has to be said with reluctance as the long term future of Chazey Court itself must be uncertain. Ideally it should continue as a farm which is what it has been all through the centuries but the viability of farms close to urban areas, and such a one as this with highly graded listed buildings to be maintained,

is very much open to question. Just how much change is acceptable?

WELCOME NEWS

Caversham and District Residents' Association heaved a collective sigh of relief as a potential secretary stepped forward. Although at this point it would be premature to make any announcement, there is now every reason for believing that the Association will be in good hands after the Annual General Meeting on 25th March, and will be able to continue with the kind of work described in last month's front page article. There will be

vacancies on the committee and if anyone would like to be further involved with the work of the Association, a phone call to Reading 472300 or 472864 would bring details.

A WELCOME SIGHT

The aconites eventually appeared in St. Peter's churchyard, although in patches, rather than a great sheet. This hard winter, which must be in the top ten for this century, has delayed all the spring flowers. By Easter there should be a glorious display to make up for the drabness of the long winter.

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We have moved from Hemdean Road to Prospect Street. Your donated items of clothes, unwanted gifts, bric-a-brac, china, glass will be gratefully received.

The money raised from the sale of these goods supports patients and families of cancer sufferers in the Reading and District community.

We also need more volunteers - half a day or just a few hours a week would be appreciated. Please pop in or ring the above number.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

St. Andrew's

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 8.00am The Eucharist, Distribution of Palms
 10.00am Parish Eucharist, sung, Procession with Palms
 11.30am The Eucharist, Distribution of Palms
 6.30pm Evensong
 Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 7.30pm The Eucharist, with address
 (Fr Dominic Whitnall C.R.)

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 7.30pm Sung Eucharist. Feet Washing Ceremony

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 9.30am Liturgy of the Cross
 11.00am Children's Service, followed by Hot Cross Buns in the hall and a walk to Mapledurham

EASTER EVE: 6th April
 8.30pm Service of Light, Easter Eve Ceremonies

EASTER DAY: 7th April
 8.00am The Eucharist
 10.00am Family Eucharist
 11.30am The Eucharist
 6.30pm Evensong

St. Barnabas, Emmer Green

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 8.00am Eucharist (1662) Blessing of Palms
 9.30am Procession with Palms and Parish Communion
 (Starting from Church Hall)

4.30pm Evensong
MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 7.15pm The Last Supper Eucharist in the Context of a Meal in the Church Hall (Bring a main course)

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 2pm The Proclamation of the Cross (no communion)

EASTER DAY: 7th April
 8.00am Eucharist (1662)
 9.30am EASTER SERVICE. The Services of Light, Baptism and Communion.
 4.30pm Easter Egg Service

Caversham Park Church (Ecumenical)

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 11.00am Passion Narrative Communion
GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.00am Meditation at 51 Galsworthy Drive
 7.30pm St Mark's Gospel at Caversham Heights Methodist Church
EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 9.45am Egg Hunt for the children
 11.00am Easter Communion

Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 8pm Service including Holy Communion - Revd John Boakes
EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 10.30am Service including Holy Communion - Revd John Boakes
 6.30pm Evening Service - Mrs Josie Honey

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.30am United Service (with Baptists)
 7.30pm Dramatic Presentation of St Mark's Gospel
EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 8.30am Communion Service
 9.30am Easter Breakfast
 11.00am Family Worship with Communion
 6.30pm 'Christ is Risen'

Caversham Baptist Free Church

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.30am United Service with the Methodists at Caversham Heights Methodist Church
EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 8.45am Easter Sunday Communion Breakfast
 10.30am Easter Sunday Family Worship. Christ is Risen! Hallelujah
 6.30pm Easter Praise

Caversham Hill Chapel

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.30am Service
EASTER DAY: 7th April
 10.30am Service

JOYFUL EASTER GREETINGS TO ALL OUR READERS

St John the Baptist

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 8.00am Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
 9.45am Meet at New Bridge Nursery for a Procession of Palms and Parish Eucharist

MONDAY IN HOLY WEEK: 1st April
 8.00pm Eucharist with Stations of the Cross

TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK: 2nd April
 2.30pm Mothers' Union Service
 8.00pm Eucharist with Stations of the Cross

WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK: 3rd April
 8.00pm Eucharist with Stations of the Cross

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 10.00am Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
 8.00pm Sung Eucharist and Stripping of the Altar followed by Gethsemane

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.30am At the Cross: including an all age service at 11.15: a session for young people
 Stations of the Cross
 2.00pm The Good Friday Liturgy

HOLY SATURDAY: 6th April
 10.30am Journey to Easter Day: a session for young people. Finishes at 12.00

8.00pm The Easter Liturgy: the service of light, lighting of the Paschal Candle and first Eucharist of Easter.

EASTER DAY: 7th April
 8.00am Holy Communion (Prayer Book)
 10.00am Easter Eucharist for all ages
 6.00pm Evensong

St Margaret

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 7.00pm Passover Supper and Eucharist, Trench Green Hall, vigil in church to midnight.

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10am-11am Meditation and readings on the Cross
 at St Andrew's Hall - bring and share lunch, activities, and worship for children
 1pm-3.30pm

EASTER EVE: 6th April
 9pm-12.30pm Vigil (and ceremony of new light) at St Peter's.

EASTER DAY: 7th April
 8.00am Holy Communion
 11.00am Family Eucharist
 6.30pm Easter Praise at St Peter's. Informal service for all ages.

St Martin's (RC) Caversham Park

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 9.15am Mass at St Martin's
 10.45am Mass at St Michael's Sonning Common

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 8.00pm Mass of the Lord's Supper. Watching till Midnight (at St Michael's Sonning Common)

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.00am Village Witness (St Michael's Sonning Common)
 3.00pm Liturgy of the Lord's Passion. Confessions after the Liturgy (at St Michael's Sonning Common)

HOLY SATURDAY: 6th April
 9.00pm Solemn Easter Vigil (at St Michael's Sonning Common)

EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 9.15am Mass at St Martin's
 10.45am Mass at St Michael's Sonning Common

EASTER MONDAY: 8th April
 11.00am Mass at St Michael's Sonning Common.

New Testament Church of God

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.30am-4.00pm Service
EASTER SATURDAY: 6th April
 10.30am-2.00pm Service
EASTER DAY: 7th April
 11.00am-1.00pm Morning Worship
 6.30pm-9.00pm Evening Worship

Our Lady and St Anne (RC)

SATURDAY: 30th March
 5.30pm Vigil Mass
PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 9.00am Mass: (Heights Chapel)
 10.30am Mass
 5.00pm Stations of the Cross and Benediction
 6.30pm Mass
 7.30pm Parish Passover Supper in the Parish Hall
MONDAY: 1st April
 9.15am Mass
 8.00pm Service of Penance with visiting priests
TUESDAY: 2nd April
 9.15am Mass
 7.30pm Mass of the Oils at St Aloysius, Oxford. celebrated by the Archbishop,

SPY WEDNESDAY: 3rd April
 9.15am Mass
MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 8.00pm Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper followed by Watching at the Altar of Repose until midnight

GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 9.00am Morning Prayer of the Church
 3.00pm Solemn Liturgy
 7.30pm Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
HOLY SATURDAY: 6th April
 9.00am Morning Prayer of the Church
 8.30pm SOLEMN EASTER VIGIL AND FIRST MASS OF EASTER
EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 9.00am Mass (Heights Chapel)
 10.30am Mass
 6.30pm Mass

St Paul's United Reformed Church, York Road

EASTER DAY: 7th April
 11.00am Easter Festival Service including Holy Communion

St Peter

PALM SUNDAY: 31st March
 8.00am Holy Communion
 9.15am Sung Eucharist with palms procession 9.10am Caversham Court

11.15am Morning Prayer
 6.30pm Evening Prayer
HOLY WEEK: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 7pm Holy Communion
MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 9.30am Holy Communion (said)
 8.00pm Sung Eucharist, stripping of altars, vigil to midnight
GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 8.00am Holy Communion
 12-3.00pm Three Hours' Devotion (The Rector)
 1-3.30pm at St Andrew's Hall - bring and share lunch, activities and worship for children of St Peter's and St Margaret's

EASTER EVE: 6th April
 9pm-12.30am Vigil and ceremony of new light
EASTER DAY: 7th April

8.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
 9.15am Sung Eucharist (for all ages, with eggs!)
 11.15am Morning Prayer (Book of Common Prayer)
 6.30pm EASTER PRAISE for all to celebrate

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

EASTER SUNDAY: 7th April
 10.30am Meeting for Worship at Friends Meeting House, Church Street, Reading.

EASTER 1996 - READING EVENTS

MAUNDY THURSDAY: 4th April
 7.30pm United Free Church Holy Communion at St Andrew's United Reformed Church, London Road.
 Preacher: Rev Tom Stuckey
GOOD FRIDAY: 5th April
 10.15am for Procession of Witness starting Holy Trinity Church, Oxford Road.
 10.30am (Free Parking at Central Swimming Pool by kind permission)
EASTER DAY: 7th April
 8.00am Easter Morning Open Air Worship in Forbury Gardens (at Abbey Baptist Church if raining).
 Preacher: Major Alan Lyne, Salvation Army

ST. MARK'S GOSPEL ON STAGE

As part of the Easter Mission at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, St. Mark's Gospel will be performed on stage in the church on Good Friday evening at 7.30pm. The entire Gospel will be brought to life before

the eyes of the audience. The three years of the life of Jesus, from the moment he bursts on the scene at his baptism by his cousin John, right through to his death on a cross. Three years portrayed in two and a half hours!

During the evening the audience will be able to grasp the rapid movement of the Gospel and feel the various events in the life of Jesus come alive. They will be involved in the temptation of Jesus, see his transfiguration, share in the

feeding of the 5,000, sing out at his triumphant entry and be part of the crowd to crucify him. Tickets are £2 for adults, with free entry for children, and may be obtained at the door on the evening or purchased in advance by ringing 472223.

AMERICAN EXCHANGE

Caversham Heights Methodist minister, Rev. David Moody and his wife Joan, will be exchanging pastorates soon after Easter with a minister of the United Methodist Church in the USA. They will be going

to Worcester, New York State, which is a town near the state capital of Albany, for six weeks. They will be exchanging with John and Carroll Phillippe who will take the place of David and Joan Moody at Caversham Heights for five Sundays commencing from 21 April. John writes that he has two churches in Worcester where they have started a youth group, now very active, and a 'Monday School' at East Worcester. This meets for one hour and forty-five minutes and reaches grades 1 through 6 whose families have little or no church involvement. John and Carroll write that they are very excited at the thought of coming to Caversham and meeting all 'the good folk there'.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

AROUND THE CHURCHES

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS COVENANT

In mid-February the five denominational Chaplains at the Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust broke new ground by signing a Covenant to work together, thus becoming only the fifth Hospital Chaplaincy Local Ecumenical Partnership in the country. The Chapel at the Royal Berkshire Hospital was crowded with members of hospital staff, Chaplains' Assistants and representatives from local churches to witness the signing by the members of the Chaplaincy Team and the ratification of the Covenant by representatives of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, the Free Church Federal Council, and the Chairman of Churches Together in Berkshire.



- O. Jewiss

Present at the signing of the Covenant in the Chapel of the Royal Berkshire Hospital were (from left to right) the Bishop of Reading (The Rt Revd John Bone), the Revd Christine Pocock (Free Church Federal Council), the Revd Stephen Collinson (URC Chaplain), the Revd Alison Meere (Anglican Chaplain), the Revd Judy Davies (Methodist Chaplain), the Revd Fr. Alan Hartnell (Roman Catholic Chaplain), Senior Chaplain the Revd Elizabeth Jackson (Anglican) and the Revd Mgr Canon Cyril Murtagh (Portsmouth R.C. Diocese)

EASTER DAY Songs of Praise at St Peter's!

If you have ever watched Songs of Praise - this is for you!
Pam Rhodes will not be there, which is a shame, but St Peter's Church is having its own **Songs of Praise on Easter Day**, Sunday 7th April at 6.30pm. We invite all readers to come and sing, and hear people who live in Caversham tell their own stories. The service will last about 45 minutes. For more information, ring John Madeley, 476063.

Christian Listening Day Workshop

On Saturday 24th January, Pam and John Edmonds-Seal, Christian Listening tutors from the Acorn Christian Healing Trust, came to Caversham Baptist Free Church to lead a very interesting day's study on the gift of listening.

The workshop started with getting to know each other and continued with a time of worship led by Sheila Goldsmith, herself a tutor in Christian Listening.

There followed a talk and open discussion, led by Pam and John, on listening as a ministry and listening to each other, which we then put into practice by working together in pairs. We were then introduced to the concept of listening to what is going on inside us whilst listening to others. John next led us in an exchange of ideas on helpful ways of listening to God and identifying possible barriers to hearing His voice.

It was just over a year ago that the idea of setting up a Justice and Peace group in St Anne's Parish was first formed. Whilst the group is now a well-oiled machine, the wheels of progress ground exceedingly slowly to begin with. Indeed, it was not until mid-Summer that a dozen or so members of the Parish began to meet in earnest.

The Catholic Fund for Overseas Development (CAFOD) Justice and Peace groups that operate throughout the country have a threefold aim. It is to:

- raise funds to support the many and varied community projects undertaken by CAFOD in developing countries throughout the world
- increase local Parish awareness by placing these projects in the context of the political and economic situations prevailing in those countries
- emphasise the obligation of Christians to work, in whatever way they can, for a more just and equitable distribution of scarce resources.

The first task that the St Anne's group faced was that of identifying a specific country to support: a country with which to work in partnership, for such is the title of the CAFOD scheme. A number of countries were proposed - Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Nicaragua and others. But how to choose one deserving cause from another? As the group represents the whole Parish the method was simple - a Parish election.

Whilst the conduct of the election, held after Mass over two weekends in June, might have caused the Electoral Reform Society to raise its corporate eyebrow, the Parish voted overwhelmingly to 'work in partnership' with Ethiopia.

CAFOD projects in Ethiopia include the Gemini Trust which helps families with twins who would otherwise be disadvantaged by this additional burden; Hope Enterprises which looks after, and provides training for, street children; and the teaching of new and vital agricultural skills.

With the temperature in Caversham threatening to equal that in Addis Ababa, the group drew up a programme of fund-raising and awareness-creating activities. The first was a silent auction held in conjunction with the Parish's Harvest Supper. Some £800 was raised which provided a most encouraging launch towards the albeit modest initial target of £2000 by July 1996.

A busy Parish, looking forward to its centenary celebrations this year, makes many demands on the pockets and purses of its parishioners and there must therefore be a limit to the number and frequency of the CAFOD group's major fund-raising events. Between these extravaganzas, however, home-collecting boxes have been steadily filling with small change and have provided a steady trickle of cash into the fund.

February is arguably the most dreary month of the year - an ideal time therefore to have a party! The party on Saturday 24th February was a party with a difference - an Ethiopian Meal. Sixty parishioners gathered in the Parish Hall for a meal of doro wat (a chicken stew), vegetable alecha, and rice - washed down with a glass of wine from Waitrose! The Hall was bedecked in the green, yellow, and red of the Ethiopian national flag. But the icing on the cake was the presence of Achame Shana, an Ethiopian now living with his family in Reading. Achame left his home in Keffa - a province in the south-west of Ethiopia (and, incidentally, the area from which the word 'coffee' originates) - to study agriculture in Bulgaria and subsequently at Reading University. After the meal he gave a brief talk, firstly about the background and function of the coffee ceremony and then going on to explain about the current economic and political conditions in Ethiopia. Had it been dropped, the proverbial pin would have deafened everyone present.

Despite positive developments in Ethiopia's economic situation, the average life expectancy at birth is forty-seven years, sixty per cent of the population live in absolute poverty, and the Gross National Product per head is £69 (compared with the UK's £11,119).

The profit from the Meal has, of course, helped the fund to grow, and the level of awareness about Ethiopia's problems has been raised: a double incentive, surely, for the Parish to put its Christian values into practice by continuing to work in partnership with Ethiopia.

G.S.

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BLACK AND WHITE SERVICES

AROUND THE CHURCHES

GOD'S CHILDREN
NEED HOMES

This was the message proclaimed by a banner unfurled by the Bishop of Oxford and a homeless couple and displayed outside St Mary's House in central Reading close to the side entrance of Heelas on a Saturday morning at the end of February. It drew attention to the interdenominational day conference on housing which was going on inside. It was a conference at which speakers supported by representatives from Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire made a strong plea for social justice.

The Oxford Diocesan Board of Social Responsibility had combined with the Churches National Housing Coalition to organise the conference, sponsored by the local James Butcher Housing Association, to draw attention to the fact that the homeless and badly housed people are now severely disadvantaged and marginalised and to speak out on their behalf. This the conference did by endorsing a letter which the Bishop of Oxford was sending to all MPs and members of the House of Lords in the three counties asking them to do all they could to oppose the present legislation.



- O. Jewiss

The Bishop of Oxford with the unfurled banner. The homeless Kate and Jim Liggat are on his right; also visible are Caversham's Robert Dimmick and the Drop-in Centre Manager, Steve Coleman (third and second from right in front row).

A SERVICE OF BAPTISM
Witnessing for the Lord

On Sunday 11th February a service of Believer's Baptism took place for three friends, Muriel Huggins, Jean Sanson and Nigel Tolson, from the fellowship of Caversham Baptist Free Church.

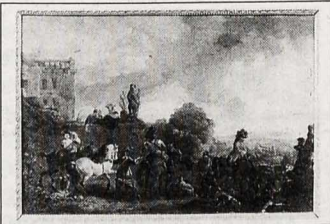
It was a moving service with very strong testimonies to the power of God in the lives of ordinary people. There were more than a few moist eyes in the congregation at one stage.

Nigel told us of the Amazing Grace which found him and chose the song of that name as something which pinpointed the moment he accepted the Lord into his life. Muriel said that she found Jesus when she had lost the other members of her family at a relatively late age and, I'm sure she won't mind my saying that, at well past the age to receive her bus pass, she becomes one of our youngest Christians.

Jean gave us a picture of her "Forever Friend" who met her need when she was in hospital for an operation and is always there for her. We thank the Lord for our new brother and sisters and look forward to watching and being involved in the growth of their faith as members of the family of God.

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WOMEN GIVE POWERFUL MESSAGE



- O. Jewiss

Our picture shows some of the committee who organised the service with Deaconess Margaret Robinson (in the centre of the front row, fourth from left) who was the speaker, and Mrs Kathleen Morgan, who led the Service (fifth from left).

If God calls you to do something he will give you the power to do it and he will not accept your excuses. That was the message that came from the 1996 Women's World Day of Prayer, which is always held on the first Friday in March. This year it was heard by well over 100 people, mostly women, from all the denominations gathered in the Church of Our Lady and St Anne, Caversham.

Every year the women of a particular country prepare a Service which is used at ecumenical events throughout the world. This year it was the turn of the women of Haiti, the first black-led republic in the New World which will celebrate its bicentenary in eight years' time. Women are very important in Haitian society, being the mainstay of domestic and economic life in a troubled republic with a turbulent history.

Ann'wé! Ann'wé! (look, see and act)

Ann'wé (pronounced An Way) is the widely used call of alarm by the people of Haiti and was used in the Service to focus the prayers of the world on a society where people are defying the law and acting corruptly, where the children are victims of hunger, injustice and oppression, where God's children suffer from abuses of all kinds, where despite the atrocious living conditions the people know that Jesus Christ delivers and saves and God the Father will not abandon his children.

God empowered Jeremiah, Mary and Elizabeth

The speaker, Deaconess Margaret Robinson of West Reading Methodist Church, used the characters in the two readings, one on the call of Jeremiah and the other the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to show how God had called them and Mary's cousin Elizabeth for specific tasks. Each of them had made excuses for not doing what God had wanted them to do but in each case God empowered them to do his will. Similarly Deaconess Margaret Robinson told those present that when God calls us we should not try to resist his call. When God calls anyone to do anything for him he gives them the power to do it.

The Women's World Day of Prayer is one of the opportunities we have during the year to pray together across denominational boundaries. It is an event arranged and facilitated by women but open to all. The Service was led by Mrs Kathleen Morgan from the Church of Our Lady and St Anne; she was assisted by ladies representing almost every other church in Caversham. Men of Caversham, who generally were not present, ann'wé! God may be calling you too to do something for him. Do not make excuses because he will give you the power to do it.

Owen Jewiss

MATTERS
OF CONCERN

A series of three talks will be given at Caversham Heights Methodist Church (Wesley Lounge), Highmoor Road, at 7.45pm.

Monday 29th April

Mrs Kay Bews (County Organiser) will speak about HOMESTART. This is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own home and help to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Tuesday 7th May

Mrs Ann Snell (County Director) of AGE CONCERN will speak about the work of the organisation with special reference to the types of residential homes and care available for the elderly and methods of financing them.

Monday 13th May

Mrs Philippa Marshall of RELATE will speak about the work of the group locally in respect of Marriage Guidance. Further information from Ray Goodman (Tel. 474593).

CHURCH-WOMEN
TOGETHER IN
CAVERSHAM

On Tuesday afternoon, March 5th, Christian women (and four men) met at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. It was also the anniversary service of Gosbrook Road Women's Fellowship and over 100 people enjoyed fellowship together.

During the service the Network Singers sang four pieces from the Iona Community and Mrs Paula Andrews from Caversham Park read the lesson. The Rev Judy Davies spoke to us about her work as chaplain at the Duchess of Kent house in Liebenroad Road, Reading. The collection raised £100 for the work at Duchess of Kent House.

The next meeting of Christian Women Together in Caversham will be at the Baptist Free Church on Monday, April 29th at 2.30 when the speaker will be Revd Christine Rowe, with musical items by Mrs R. New. Come and join us! You will all be very welcome.

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CAVERSHAM THEATRE

MURDER IN COMPANY

When patrons of Caversham Theatre enter St Anne's Hall they are accustomed to seeing the stage curtains open and it set for the show to commence. The curtains were closed when they arrived for Murder in Company and when they were drawn the stage was bare - it was set for the rehearsal of a play within a play!

First on stage were Margaret, a thirty-plus unhappily-married who was played with customary competence by Jackie Case, and Alan, her twenty-plus lovesick swain. Alan, despite Margaret's discouragement, did not flinch from a clinch and whilst engaged in this they were spotted by Smith, the hall caretaker. Tony Hales, with measured gait, deadpan expression and

contemptuous insolence, gave a very effective characterisation of the sinister Smith.

On to the stage then burst Philip, the producer of the play within a play, whose bossy, tetchy character was nicely portrayed by Peter Ludlow. Philip had good grounds for being tetchy. He suspected his wife of having a lover, he was provoked by the interfering Smith and he had to cope with a cast that was unreliable, liked a bit of fooling around and was rebelling against the play he had chosen.

The one who fooled around most was the amiable, avuncular Ronnie in whose part John Evans was happily at home. Ronnie had a soft spot

for Doris, a role suited to Sue Stainthorp, who rushed on to the stage in agitated and bloody state after fleeing from a prowler. Alarm now gripped the Company: who could the prowler be?

A lost and found scarf threw suspicion initially on Philip, but soon it was focussed on Smith. His character had been blackened by the revelation of Phoebe, a former professional actress played very professionally by Maggie Stokes, that he had hounded her son to death. But before his guilt could be established, Smith lay dead beside the Company's teasmade which he had been repairing. An ill-wisher had switched on the current when Smith had two bare wires in

his hand. Now the hunt was on for both a prowler and a murderer.

The third act opened with Pat, who would have liked to have been in Margaret's shoes when Alan was around, having a tense scene with Alan as she brooded over the murder. The audience was fooled into believing that it was Smith's murder that was upsetting her - but no! We were back in the play within a play and producer Philip bounded back on the stage again to tell the couple what a mess they had made of it. But the hoodwinked audience knew better than Philip, for Anne Brent as Pat had handled the emotional scene very well and Simon Lovelock, playing Alan, had

displayed the rare knack of reacting to the lines of other actors as if he was hearing them for the first time.

As is to be expected in murder mysteries, it was the most unlikely member of the Company who proved to be both prowler and murderer. The frustrated Ronnie, whom all the ladies liked but none was prepared to love, had been spied by Smith as he set upon Doris. To a tense Company and audience he made his confession and walked off into the night. The play ended with an off-stage revolver shot.

Murder in Company was an ingenious, cleverly written play well cast and directed by Bob Green and acted with pace and with sensitivity to its dramatic and humorous possibilities.

E.M.A.

MS THERAPY CENTRE CONCERT

Luckily for those at the St Peter's Concert on February 24, "Concord is Here" did not announce the usual disruptive plane noise.

The Erleigh Cantors, conducted by the very competent Ian Westley, were singing Benjamin Britten's seemingly simple but colourful Choral Dances from "Gloriana", greetings for Elizabeth I on an imagined visit to Norwich. St Peter's is very fortunate in having Ian Westley as their Chorusmaster and Organist, and his effect on the church choir clearly comes from professionalism such as

shown in this performance.

Like the other singing in this admirable concert, the highly enjoyable results seem easily attained, but this only comes with excellence in ability and practice, very obvious with this group. The singers gave a rendering well worthy of the mastery of Bach in his Motet "Der Geist Hilft", and strongly recalled other Vaughan Williams works in his moving Mass in G Minor, especially by the sopranos in the very high register "Sanctus".

The concert, to raise funds towards the urgently needed new

Berkshire Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre, ended with a glorious performance of Monteverdi's large scale psalm setting "Beatus Vir".

The audience also heard interspersed instrumental renderings by the local Strand String Quartet of Mozart's delightful Divertimento in D, the original version of Barber's famous Adagio - difficult to play by a small group subject to full exposure, and the beautiful but wistful pre-opera Puccini piece "Crisantemi (Chrysanthemums)".

Florestan

AROUND THE CHURCHES

THAMES VALLEY DIOCESE?

Before Christmas, leaflets were available at St Anne's outlining the proposals for a new Thames Valley diocese as reported in January's "Caversham Bridge". Since then, a vote has been held at St Anne's the result of which was 317 in favour of the proposal and 63 against with 31 "don't knows" and 2 spoiled papers. It is understood that there was similar support elsewhere in Oxfordshire and, to a lesser extent, in North Hants and Berkshire. The results have been sent to the Archbishop of Birmingham, the Bishop of Portsmouth and the Papal Nuncio. The Bishops of England and Wales will decide on their recommendations on the issue at the Bishops' Conference after Easter.

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KATY IN CAVERSHAM

FORWARD WITH THE 'BRIDGE'

It's not often that we get such a swift response to some of our appeals but, unless I've been misinformed, it seems we have had a very swift answer to the request for somebody to save the future of the Residents' Association. Last month one of our reporters wrote a potted history of the Association, ending with what was, in effect, an appeal for somebody to take over from Molly Casey when she retires after many years of active service. No details as yet, but it seems somebody has already responded to this appeal and hopefully we shall be able to report next month on details.

AND NOW FOR THE BAD NEWS

I don't know if I'm too anxious to praise Caversham as a community and sometimes miss out on the down side of all this.

A neighbour had her home broken into recently while on holiday and not long ago somebody actually broke into the house of an old lady who only died that

morning. I suppose it was my own fault that I had my wallet stolen (I use the term very definitely as it all happened in such a hurry that somebody had obviously been watching out). But one bit of information worth passing on; as it all happened on a Saturday afternoon, apart from notifying the police, it never occurred to me that lost (or stolen) credit cards could be reported immediately instead of waiting until the banks opened. A very kind shop manager came to my assistance, loaned me his office and enabled me to report the loss immediately through a central number. We have, I'll admit, still some very nice helpful people in the area - don't forget.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

And while on the subject, I'd like to recommend that anyone who is approached to join would do well to link with a neighbourhood watch scheme. Like many others, I've criticised the police on various occasions, so I'm delighted to tell the story of a neighbour living

alone who became aware that there was a prowler trying to get into her house. She had only recently linked with the Neighbourhood Watch, so she had the sense to ring the police immediately. They gave her very sound advice about not letting anyone in, but almost before she had finished phoning the local police were on the spot, giving her help and reassurance. It does make one feel happier.

LANDSCAPE SERVICES

Being somewhat worried about the possible loss of part of our garden and some very worth saving plants, shrubs etc., we enlisted the help of K e n n y l a n d s Landscape Services (Tel: 01734/723600 or Mobile 0831 514864) and very quickly got the services of James Sadler who very carefully moved a prized mulberry tree out of the way of the bulldozers. It isn't exactly cheap but well worth it when some plant or tree is special and well worth saving.

WASHING MACHINES ETC.

I've mentioned Andy Dunn before, the

washing machine expert who advertises in the 'Bridge' and when we were suddenly presented with a swimming pool instead of a kitchen floor, we knew where to turn. He came as quickly as possible; alas, he did a lot of clearing up but discovered, as so often happens in older property, that there was a blockage which he himself couldn't deal with. Fortunately we managed to discover somebody called Super Rod (yellow pages). As we had expected, this wasn't exactly cheap either but well worth it in the circumstances and the young man who came soon traced the blockage and, hopefully, put it right. Like the man from Kennylands, he departed after giving us loads of good advice about how to deal with such problems in the future.

I pass these on happily knowing that somebody might find the information useful.

OUR CLEVER VETS

Unfortunately our own local paper doesn't seem to have

cottoned on to the services of our vets who have now moved to Oakley Road. Fortunately other papers, including the Henley ones, have filled the gap and there was a wonderful report of a particularly clever piece of work on the part of Nick Butcher, who recently performed a somewhat unusual operation on Bruno, who was suffering from a rare strain of anaemia and failed to respond to treatment. Nick some time ago had taken into his own care Tilly, an energetic black Labrador threatened with having to be put down by her previous owners, and he performed a rare operation of giving Bruno a transfusion with the help of Tilly. Both animals have responded well and everyone is delighted.

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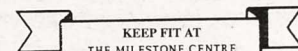
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HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Barely two years after the 'Braer' oil-tanker disaster in the Shetlands, gross mismanagement has caused yet another to founder upon our shores. Fifty thousand is the estimated final death toll, including Puffins, Razorbills, Guillemots, Red-throated Divers and Scoters.

Yet again - and 'On Cue' this tragedy, larger even than the cull from the Torrey Canyon, has occurred in highly environmentally sensitive areas of Pembrokeshire - and precisely as breeding is about to commence!

How such a potential killer of wildlife can be given the name, 'Sea Princess' is beyond belief. Perhaps 'Sea Devil' or 'Skull and Cross-Bones' would be more appropriate. The whole business is utterly inexcusable and the lack of cohesion between the authorities unbelievable.

To more pleasant matters, this long winter has seen flocks of Redwing descending into gardens all over Britain. Even in Caversham it was good to see so many of them. My back-garden provided great close-ups at barely ten feet through the French-windows.

Every day their high-pitched, yet so diagnostic 'Tsee-ip' calls filled the air as they commuted to and fro or rested in the trees.

The influx was so heavy that berries were rapidly consumed and other forms of sustenance sought. Halved apples which I put out for them were eaten with great relish. Shortly now they will be returning to their breeding-grounds in the Arctic.

To the real birder it was a tremendous thrill being surrounded by such large numbers of these migrant thrushes

on one's own doorstep.

A lone Song-thrush daily heralds the dawn - or is it Spring (?) at the bottom of my garden. Its highly repetitive song significantly separates it from the Mistle Thrush and Blackbird.

During a round of golf at Peppard last Autumn, I was pleased to see a Great-spotted Woodpecker as it called from a nearby tree. Even more surprising was a party of Crossbill which frequented a line of poplars alongside one of the fairways.

Most times spent on the golf-course are pleasant and peaceful, but occasionally, others are marred by the baying of hunting hounds. For those of us sensitive to the feelings of 'foxy' and who appreciate all animals, this is most definitely not conducive to good golfing concentration!

Scops Owl

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FRIEND or FOE?

By Hortus

This is the time of the year when many plants not bargained for put in their appearance. They are like squatters in the way they take over the different parts of the garden and grow much more quickly than the chosen occupants of the borders and beds. We call those plants weeds - the dictionary definition being 'wild herbs springing where they are not wanted'. This is, of course, not the whole story.

Broadly, there are three types of weeds, most of which are wild plants. There are annual weeds (growing from seed each year) such as

shepherd's purse, corn poppy, hairy cress, chickweed, speedwell and cleaver, biennials (growing from seed one year to flower the next) such as wild carrot and burdock and perennials such as dandelion, dock, horsetail, ground-elder and bindweed. I am inclined to include as weeds some cultivated plants like forget-me-not which has a habit of seeding all over the place. While I enjoy their colour in season I do not appreciate the way they appear year after year in the wrong places especially after I had removed them immediately they had flowered the

previous year. Early removal of weeds is good practice since weeds rob garden plants of moisture and nutrients. They can overgrow and shade cultivated plants. Some weeds release growth-inhibiting chemical which prevent germination and growth of cultivated plants.

So what is the best way to keep weeds under control? I always remember the old adage 'one year's seeds, seven years' weeds' and try to remove the earliest crops of weeds when they appear, hand weeding where necessary. Subsequent regular hoeing should keep the

annual and biennial weeds at bay. Perennial weeds are more of a problem, particularly those that grow shoots every time a root is broken off. When I moved to my present garden I found it was being overrun by ground-elder which behaves in that way. Over the years the constant digging out of plants and their roots has proved successful in eliminating the ground-elder from the garden. I incidentally found masses of its roots under paving slabs - the removal of those roots was a major factor in eradicating the weed. The regular removal of

such weeds as they break the surface helps weaken the stamina of the plants, causing them to die off. I do not use chemicals to control weeds since I am averse to inorganic gardening.

In conclusion, is there anything that can be said in favour of weeds? They (and other wild plants) can help us diagnose the state of the soil in our gardens. If there are nettles in your garden you probably have a rich and fertile soil. If clover is present your soil may be lacking in nitrogen. So, before you get rid of all those weeds, see what they are telling you about the state of your garden.

the CLUBS

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

At the February meeting Mrs Livingstone, Returning Officer, gave a talk on the Townswomen's Guild in readiness for the Annual General Meeting which was to be held in March when a new Committee would be formed.

Ms A. Welsh, the speaker, gave an interesting insight into Aromatherapy, explaining the healing properties of the numerous oils she had on display and giving members the opportunity to sample the various fragrances. All were fascinated and enlightened by this talk.

The competition, a "Homemade Valentine Card and Poem" was won by Mrs E. Hodgkinson. A pleasing number of members attended the

Arts and Craft session and enjoyed both a friendly and a productive afternoon.

The Social Studies group met to discuss topical items and the Scrabble group also met.

A small group took part in the Law and Order Day at St Mary's Church House.

Caversham W.I.

Members were able to forget the cold February evening outside while enjoying sharing Sue and Robin Smith's visit to the Holy Land. Familiar Bible scenes and places were brought to life in the excellent slides and descriptions, mostly of temperatures in the nineties.

Various dates and future events were given out in the business section of the meeting, including the forthcoming Spring Council meeting at the Hexagon and the group meeting in April.

After tea and the raffle the competition for a holiday souvenir was judged and Mrs Sylvia Myszor was declared the winner.

Everyone was reminded about the annual meeting in March which would include a bring and buy.

Caversham Community Association

After a festive break at Christmas and New Year

members gathered for the traditional cheese and wine party. Entertainment was provided by the Barry Strong Accordion group with plenty of community singing. The following week the keen card players were able to enjoy a whist drive led by Doreen Crawley. The winners were Dolly Usher and Peggy Jefferson and the unfortunate winner of the booby prize was Dee Rayburn - a visitor.

The month ended with a popular games evening, Scrabble, dominoes and card games were enjoyed by those present.

February began for members on a very colourful note with a selection of lovely slides shown by Mr Taylor and called 'Enjoying Colour Photography'. Some useful tips for improving one's own efforts were given and much appreciated.

Romance was in the air for the traditional Valentine Party. An American supper and wonderful musical entertainment from Freda and Len Clarke made a most enjoyable evening. The competition for an appropriately decorated sponge was won by Mrs Maida Feast with Mrs Ann Wright being second.

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the CLUBS

from page 10

Exercise for the brain was on offer the following week with a quiz evening. Winners included Margaret Cameron and Clare Briggs. The second half involved team games and the winners went home with a bar of chocolate.

The month ended with another popular bingo session with both cash and grocery prizes, and some delighted winners.

St. Peter's Wives' Group

For its December meeting the St Peter's Wives Group held a Christmas party. In accordance with tradition, the room was suitably decorated and members provided a festive spread. Jim Plunkett played the piano and provided song sheets to enable members to join in the singing of Music Hall songs and a few carols. Add to this some games, a lot of chatting and a very sociable evening was enjoyed by all.

In January, Vincent Kelly brought his slides (plus stick, rucksack and sleeping bag!) to talk about his walk along the Pilgrims' route to the cathedral of St James of Compostela in Santiago,

Spain. The route is over one thousand years old, and had once been followed by pilgrims from royalty downwards. He had planned to complete the 455 miles in six weeks, during the late summer of 1994. In fact he completed it in thirty days, starting in southern France and staying at a variety of "pilgrims' refuges" along the way. Mr Kelly told the stories which had led to the pilgrimage, its history and explained how traditions had developed.

He described, with much enthusiasm, his own journey, the scenery, places of interest and above all the many friendly and interesting people he had met along the way, both actually following the pilgrim way, or providing, at the refuges, for those who did. At the end he had earned his "Compostela", the certificate for completing his pilgrimage.

treasures were saved despite the terrible destruction wreaked by the fire on the fabric of the castle. Only a few major works of art were lost or damaged including one painting.

At the A.G.M. there will be a Sales table of Easter Goodies and a Quiz organised by this years Programme Planner, Iris Birch.

Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

For the first time for many years there was to be an election at the annual general meeting, vice-chairman Heather Richards told members of Caversham Heights Townswomen's guild at the main meeting in February. It was to take place on the third Thursday in March, with the returning officer present. Cakes and unwanted articles were wanted for the accompanying big bring and buy sale. Helen Neil gave a charming token of appreciation to Pat Read, treasurer, who organised the previous month's enjoyable visit to the Mill at Sonning. Various other meetings and outings were discussed.

Mr G. Kay who spoke about the Jubilee Sailing Trust wrote to thank the guild for its donation. He was hopeful that a volunteer from the guild would join in the Trust's activities from time to time.

Nick Wallen and Linda Russell from Pavane consultants presented a programme about Celtic art. Celts were known as western barbarians, inhabiting finally the whole of northern Europe. Their language was derived from Indo-European.

Having moved into Gaul and Britain, they were eventually put under pressure by the Romans and Anglo-Saxons. The first people to shoe horses, they constructed two-wheeled chariots and hill forts. Tall craftsmen with long braided hair, they wore bright clothing, loved music, eating and drinking, enjoying life. Inspired by classical art forms and others they evolved their own style, using patterns in metal working and illustrating illuminated manuscripts. It was the Celts far away in the northwest of Scotland and in Wales and Cornwall who kept alive both art and religion during the Dark Ages. There is now more respect for the skill of these artists.

Pavane has collected the work of designers from Celtic regions. Some exquisite

examples of sterling silver, pottery, Aberlemno spirals on ceramics and knitwear with Pictish patterns were shown, to mention only a few.

Rosehill W.I.

Loo, lavatory, toilet, john, privy, water closet; all appropriate terms for the same facility depending on fashion and social context. The development of the loo may not be central to industrial archaeology but at the February meeting members were persuaded that here was a fascinating facet of social and technical history. Mrs L. D. Williamson considered means of sewage disposal from the time of the Roman occupation to the reign of Queen Victoria. Her talk ranged widely over technical aspects, health implications and social differences. She discussed how analyses of the contents of cesspits have contributed to archaeological research. It seems that increased interest in public hygiene led to a flowering in the development of the loo in Victorian times; the invention of the siphonic flush by Thomas Crapper was a part of this.

Rosehill W.I. is to be hostess at the group Meeting on 25 April and an outing to Wilton House is being planned for 8 May. At the meeting on 3 April (St Barnabas Church Hall, 2.00pm) Mr Bill Brooker will take us 'Behind Scenes at The Hexagon'.

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