



Caversham Bridge

No 734

www.cavershambridge.org

April 2026

Olly's Work

by Helen Strong

A SPECIAL COMMUNITY charity concert took place at Highdown School in Emmer Green on Saturday 7 March in aid of the Olly Stephens Trust. Olly was a local boy, aged 13, who was murdered by two boys of the same age in Bugs Bottom five years ago.

Since then, Olly's parents, Amanda and Stuart Stephens, have dedicated themselves to protecting young people against the dangers of knife crime and social media. They have met government officials, been into local schools, and taken part in TV and radio documentaries.

Last summer they decided to become a registered charity, *The Olly Stephens Trust*, to enable them to raise money and use donations safely and securely. They have already raised money for other charities which have the same values as they do and are relevant to their cause, including Number 5 Counselling Services, and the Ben Kinsella Trust parenting special children.

As close family friends, Martyn and I wanted to help raise money, so decided to use our love of music to put on a concert with the assistance of local musicians. We enlisted the *Vocalese* community choir, run by Richard Whenell, which meets weekly in the Heights Primary School in Caversham.

...arranged especially...

Vocalese opened the concert with one of Olly's favourite songs, *Starman* by David Bowie, which Richard, the choir leader, had arranged especially for the occasion. Their offerings included everything from Beatles *Help!* to *Baba Yetu* (The Lord's Prayer in Swahili), and they filled the hall with their 60+ voices. They ended the concert with *Starman*, this time a singalong version for the audience to join in with.

Other performers were Lisa Winship, a singer/songwriter and pianist, who grew up in Caversham Park, with her self-composed songs and delicate piano playing, an emotional rendition of the Barbra Streisand song *The Way We Were* sung by Julie Kench, a local singing teacher and performer, and



The Vocalese community choir

photo courtesy Vocalese

Martyn Strong who had written a song called *Like Starlight* containing memories of the happy times the two families spent together. He also performed *The Rainbow Connection*, a song originally sung by Kermit the Frog - a link to the rainbows which seem to appear whenever we think of Olly.

The organisers were delighted when local young people volunteered to take part; Ash,

Aaditya and Sophia showcased their talents of singing, guitar and piano playing, and Joe helped behind the scenes with the technical aspects of the concert.

With the amazing talent on show from the school and local musicians, and raising over £1500 for the charity, there was a real sense of community and a hope this will become an annual event.



Prunus Yedoensis (Yoshino Cherry) flowering in Balmore Park

photo O Badziak

Time to renew subscriptions

THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION for the Caversham Bridge remains unchanged at £7 for 12 monthly editions. For payment details see page 3.

This month your paper is a packed 20-page edition, with contributions from both regular and new writers. Music is a theme which runs through much of this edition, starting with a report of the fund-raising concert for *Olly's Work* (see above). We have reviews of a range of recent musical events, from the performance of Mozart's *Così fan tutte* by the Merry Opera Company and Concerts in Caversham's Spring concert (p10), to the musical *Grease* by students at Highdown School (p11). We look forward to a performance of the Reading Symphony Orchestra later in April (p10), and our Local Scene painting is of Pop Classics in the precinct, where they are busy preparing for *Record Store Day* on Saturday 18 April (p13). On the same page we have the latest review from Mark Wells, this time of a performance of tribute group Oasis in Reading.

We celebrate the success of local businesses

by Phil Chatfield

with recognition for both the True Food Co-operative (p5) and Sarah Hawkins of Barkshire Dog Training (p9). Our *Wellbeing* article from Ami Roy considers the benefits of writing (p19), and *Creative Caversham* this month showcases the talent of illustrator Carolyn Carter (p8).

Other regular writers include Happy Wanderer (p7), Les Cooper (p12) and Tricia Marcouse with her *EcoTip* (p15). We have our regular planning update from CADRA (p6) and a new layout for our *What's On* information (p6), with regular weekly events now presented separately as *What's on Weekly* (p16).

Contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org

or by post at Church House, Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX.

Please note, it is currently not possible to contact us by phone.

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What happens to God...



Talking Point

by
Revd John Dudley

ON A SUNDAY morning following Worship, in conversation over a cup of coffee, I was asked “What happens to God when the world comes to an end?”

When planet Earth was created, our logic suggests it would have been an integrated component part of God’s Infinite Creation. We may think of this planet as our physical home but, if the God of this planet and the Creator of all things, are one and the same, planet Earth can be nothing more than a ‘staging post’ on our spiritual journey towards God’s realm, where the true Kingdom of Heaven may be found.

...encouraged to believe...

In Jesus’ farewell discourse (John’s gospel Chapter 14 verse 2) we, His disciples, are encouraged to believe in God, to believe in him who assures us of a place ‘in his Father’s house’ and furthermore, nowhere on earth offers the peace He offers. Jesus goes on to reinforce the message by saying He is preparing that place for us, and having done so will return to take us there.

When we read or speak about Jesus and His teaching, one must understand that Jesus, being both fully human and fully God, is communicating through the body to reach the spirit, using imagery and language his

Jesus goes on to reinforce the message by saying He is preparing that place for us, and having done so will return to take us there...

audience could relate to, in their lifetimes. They held the belief that the earth was flat, with a dome above which contained stars, and a watery dome below. The Sun was the centre of the universe, which orbits around it.

Two thousand earth years after Jesus walked on the surface of this planet, mankind has walked on the surface of the Moon and, through telescopes in space, can view images on the horizon of the visible Creation, while acknowledging that that may not even be the extent of Creation or what lies beyond.

Where then might the Father’s house be, that Jesus refers to in John’s gospel Chapter 14, verse 2?

Is it not in Eternity with God who is eternal, and in whose presence there is everlasting Joy and Peace?

Revd John Dudley

Formerly of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry



Blooming Beautiful

VOLUNTEERS, MAINLY drawn from the Keep Emmer Green grouping, have created and maintained a hedge line and some substantial flowerbeds outside the Emmer Green shopping parade.

Towards the end of last year, crocus tommasinianus varieties were planted around the mature trees on the site to give nectar for early bumblebees and these crocuses are spreading beautifully.

Richard Parry



April showers and May flowers

text and photo Roslyn Weaver

Spring blossoms in Westfield Park

IF YOU MISSED World Poetry Day in March and can’t wait until the UK’s National Poetry Day in October, April is a good choice to celebrate poetry anyway. For those in the northern hemisphere, April brings much delight with its Spring flowers and prompts many a joyful poem.

Yet joy in new seasons can also feel mixed: with loss of whatever season is finished, and with uncertainty about what is ahead. Emily Dickinson writes of mixed delight and sorrow:

**‘Absent Place – an April Day –
Daffodils a-blow
Homesick curiosity
To the Souls that snow’,**

while Robert Browning longs for the beauty of the English spring:

**‘Oh, to be in England
Now that April’s there’**

It is also hard to go past those most famous of daffodil lines, from William Wordsworth:

**‘I wandered lonely as a cloud ...
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden daffodils’**

April brings much delight with its Spring flowers and prompts many a joyful poem...

Poetry may not be everybody’s favourite art form, but there are as many types of poetry as there are tastes: from comical and entertaining to serious or abstract; from comforting and encouraging to eye-opening and thought-provoking. Studies suggest that poetry benefits our brains, social lives, mental and even physical health – by engaging a different part of our brains, building empathy and opening up to new perspectives, lowering stress and the heart rate. You can write it, read it, listen to it; there are ‘poetry pharmacy’ collections to comfort and restore, poem booklets to send to someone instead of a card, and poems to choose by season, by mood, by whatever topic you fancy.

And if poetry really isn’t your thing, you can still rest assured that you’re probably quoting it anyway from time to time, even unknowingly. Many famous common expressions first appeared in lines of poetry – one example, apparently, being ‘April showers bring May flowers’.

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World Book Day at Playday Caversham



by Larisa Brown • photos: Paul Fiani

Both photos show the black and white theme in the playing field



SENIOR MANAGER Sam Norris of Playday Caversham, dressed as a 'caring Cruella', led a group of under-fives wearing ears and tails made in the nursery round the former Hemdean House playing field in tribute to the classic story 101 Dalmatians, as part of World Book Day and in support of cancer research.

Sam said: "The children currently love playing with and walking their toy dogs, so we thought the best way to celebrate World Book Day was by following their interests." Rather than asking parents to provide costumes, the children were asked to dress in black and white. The children then made ears and tails during craft sessions.

Parent Stacey Pragnell commented: "Playday constantly comes up with fun and creative ways to fuel our twins' imaginations. The added bonus of supporting a fantastic charity makes it even more special."



Time to renew subscriptions *by The Editors*

£7 for 2026/7

THANK YOU to our subscribers who have already renewed. 2026 subscriptions are £7 for 12 editions and are due from 1 April. You can pay by bank transfer, or by cash or cheque to your deliverer.

NEW OPTION

Online card payment. We have been working to introduce a membership payment facility on our website. This will go live shortly, allowing you to register your details and to pay by card. The system will also enable automatic reminders if appropriate.

See <https://cavershambridge.org/online-subscription>

Otherwise, payment details are as follows:

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Easter Services in our Churches

In addition to services at the normal times, which are outlined on page 19, the following additional services and events are planned for Palm Sunday 29 March, Holy Week and Easter Sunday 5 April. Please check individual church websites for the most up to date information.



St Margaret

Palm Sunday 9:30 – United Parish Worship, walking to St Peter's for readings and drama, ending at St John's at 12:00
Maundy Thursday 19:30 – Supper with Holy Communion Mapledurham Village Hall
Good Friday 10:00 – Stations of the Cross (in churchyard)
Sunday 11:15 – Holy Communion

St Peter

Palm Sunday – See St Margaret's entry
Wednesday 19:30 – Stations of the Cross
Maundy Thursday 19:30 – Holy Communion
Good Friday 12:00 – Good Friday Service
Saturday 11:00 – Easter Story for children and families
Sunday 6:00 – New Fire for Easter, 9:30 – Easter Day Celebration

St John

Palm Sunday – See St Margaret's entry
Maundy Thursday 18:00 – Maundy Thursday Supper
Sunday 9:30 – All Age Easter Celebration with Holy Communion

St Andrew

Good Friday 14:00 – The Hour of the Cross
Holy Saturday 8:00 – The Fire, the Vigil and the Resurrection Liturgy
Easter Sunday 10:00 – All-Age Service,
 (Also 8:00 quiet service & 11:30 Prayer Book)

St Barnabas

Palm Sunday 9:30 – Parish Communion, 11:15 Family Communion
Tuesday 19:00 – Stations of the Cross
Wednesday 19:00 – Evening Prayer for Holy Week
Maundy Thursday 19:00 – Holy Communion with foot washing
Good Friday 14:00 – Hour of the Cross
Easter Sunday 5:30 – Dawn Service, **10:00** – Easter Celebration Eucharist

Methodist Church

Palm Sunday 10:30 – Shared Worship at Caversham Heights
Maundy Thursday 19:30 – Holy Communion Service at Gosbrook Road
Easter Sunday 10:30 – Worship at Gosbrook Road Church
Easter Sunday 10:30 – Worship at Caversham Heights

Grace Church

Good Friday 10:30 – Service
Easter Sunday 10:30 – Service



Caversham Baptist Church

Maundy Thursday 18:30
Good Friday 10:30 – Churches Together in Caversham Good Friday Worship followed by
11:15 walk to St Martin's precinct – with open air worship, continuing on to Caversham Court Gardens. All welcome
Easter Sunday 10:30 – Easter Sunday Service

New Testament Church of God

Good Friday 11:00 to 13:00 – A water baptism service. Good opportunity for those who haven't experienced baptism by immersion before to come along and see.
Easter Sunday 11:00 – Resurrection Sunday Experience, where our Creative Arts team will bring to life the story of the ultimate comeback by Jesus. This one will be exciting!!

Caversham Park United Reform Church

Easter Sunday 11:00

St Michael Catholic Church Sonning Common

Saturday Vigil 17:30
Palm Sunday Masses (with blessing of palms) 9:00 and 10:30
Maundy Thursday 19:00 – Mass of the Lord's Supper (with washing of feet)
Good Friday 15:00 – Solemn Good Friday liturgy
Easter Saturday 20:00 – Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday 9:00 and 10:30 – Easter Masses

Our Lady and St Anne Catholic Church

Saturday 17:30 – Mass
Palm Sunday 10:00 – Mass (with blessing of palms)
Maundy Thursday 19:30 – Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday 12:00 – Stations of the Cross, **15:00** Celebration of the Lord's Passion
Holy Saturday 10:00 – Blessing of the Baskets, **20:00** – Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday 10:00 – Easter Mass

Leave the cap on

by The Editors

DID YOU KNOW you do not need to remove the caps on bottles when they are recycled? The proportion of bottles which have aluminium screw tops has grown in recent years, particularly for wine bottles.

Research by Alupro, an industry funded organisation representing the UK's aluminium packaging industry, identified approximately 5,000 tonnes of aluminium caps and collars could be recovered and recycled each year. The most effective method of extraction is via the glass recycling process, where aluminium can be removed using a process called eddy current separation.

So when you visit the local bottle bank with your store of empties, make sure the lid is screwed on to ensure the aluminium (or steel) is recycled rather than heading for landfill.

For further information, see alupro.org.uk/industry/programmes/caps-closures

Bereavement Support

by Penny Cuthbert

ALL OF US EXPERIENCE loss at some point in our lives, sometimes multiple losses, and the pain can be hard to bear. I lost my husband to cancer in 2019, and know from personal experience some of the challenges bereavement brings. A few months after Simon died, I attended a Bereavement Journey Course run by a local church and found it enormously helpful to listen to the video input from a grief counsellor, and then to have a chance to talk with others about what resonated, and share something of what it was like for me. The course was well led by trained facilitators, and it was helpful being with others who understood.

Since that time, as a parish (Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham) we have begun to run the Bereavement Journey Course ourselves, and our next course will run in central Caversham on Wednesday evenings 19:30-21:30 from 15 April-3 June (with a break on 27 May). The course covers topics such as attachment, separation and loss, difficult feelings, rites of passage, coping with others, coping with change, moving forward, and an optional session on questions of faith. The course is open to anyone who has experienced loss at any time, and open to people of all faiths, or none.

To find out more or to book a place on the Bereavement Journey Course email bereavement@ctmparish.org.uk or contact Penny on 07825 331810 – I am very happy to chat over a cuppa with anyone who wants to find out more about it.

Grief is hard. Death can impact all of life.

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- Attachment, separation and loss
- The pain and responses of grief
- Anger and guilt
- Coping with others' reactions
- Delayed and suppressed grief
- Adjusting to change
- Moving forward healthily
- Faith questions – a Christian perspective (optional)

Running soon:
Wednesday Evenings from 15th April 2026 7.30-9.30pm

For more information or to book a place contact: bereavement@ctmparish.org.uk 0118 996 8836 (church office)

To find out more visit: thebereavementjourney.org

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For your bookshelf...

by Vicky Barnes

Welcome to the **Fourbears monthly book review!** **Fourbears Fest 2026 is now in full swing, and we're loving every minute.**

TO CELEBRATE Harriet Muncaster's visit to Fourbears Fest, the young reader pick this month is *The Diary of Wiska Wildflower: The New School*. Meet Wiskabella Wildflower, a wiskling (a magical fairy-esque creature born from crystals) who has moved to the town of Twitching to start at her new school, Inkcab Academy. For fans of Muncaster's *Isadora Moon* series, *Wiska Wildflower* is the same sparkling feast for the eyes. Her beautifully whimsical illustrations and scrapbook format is very engaging for early readers. Her creation of diary entries, hand-drawn maps, letters and more are bursting with colour, fun and imagination. *The Diary of Wiska Wildflower* is ideal for readers aged 7+. Don't miss the sequel *The Diary of Wiska Wildflower: The Crystal Cave*, out later this year!

For adults, the much awaited fifth instalment of Robert Thorogood's *The Marlow Murder Club* series landed on shelves in January, and it does

not disappoint. *The Mysterious Affair of Judith Potts* is Thorogood's most intrepid instalment of the series, and it is eagerly welcomed since its predecessor left us with a big old cliff hanger. For those who are new to the series, it follows amateur sleuth Judith Potts and her trusted friends Becks and Suzie as they solve baffling murders in the quaint town of Marlow. This is crime at its best; I hesitate to use the term 'cosy crime' at risk of dulling its spark. Thorogood's writing is far from fluffy, his handling of narrative is careful, and his plots are driven by fully fleshed out characters that we can all recognise. Nevertheless, Thorogood's books are certainly balm for the soul; the integral themes of friendship, community and eccentricity always offer a certain comfort in tough times.

Both titles are available in store, with signed copies of *Judith Potts* also up for grabs.

Don't forget that we have more events for Fourbears Fest coming up that we can't wait to share with you. There's an event for everyone so don't forget to head to our website or come and see us in the shop to book yourself in!

www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk



I'm feeling very small

photo V Barnes



True Food Staff and volunteers

Green Growth at True Food Co-op

text and photo Tayma Cannon

TRUE FOOD Co-operative has been recognised as one of the UK's leaders in sustainability-led growth. This local business was selected in February to be part of Green Growth 100, a programme featuring 100 small businesses across the UK which are leading the way in sustainability-led growth.

Small Business Britain, in partnership with BT, launched Green Growth 100 to celebrate and champion UK small businesses that are successfully using sustainability to drive business growth. These small businesses highlight how sustainability can be a driver of commercial success, not just environmental impact. From cutting waste and saving energy to rethinking supply chains and attracting new customers, these businesses are demonstrating that sustainable practices can enhance profitability.

Founded in 1999, True Food Co-op has been led by its members, who have placed sustainability at the core of the business. By selling organic, ethical, and zero-waste food and household products, the shop seeks to enable the community to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. True Food Co-op has shown how responsible practices can deliver both environmental impact and commercial success.

...good business sense...

True Food Chair, Catherine Hughes, commented, "We are delighted to be included in the Green Growth 100. This recognises that our commitment to sustainability is great for our community and the environment, and also that it makes good business sense".

Chris Sims, Chief Commercial Officer, UK Business at BT added, "The businesses in the Green Growth 100 are setting the benchmark for how sustainability can unlock innovation and commercial opportunity. It's inspiring to see how small businesses across the UK are turning greener practices into real business growth".

As a business featured on the Green Growth 100, True Food Co-op is also in the running for the Green Growth Awards, hosted by BT on 12 March 2026. These will see two standout businesses from the line-up awarded a £5,000 grant to help them to grow their sustainability ambitions and continue to drive positive change.

For details of the Green Growth 100, see smallbusinessbritain.uk/green-growth-awards
More on the True Food Co-op at truefood.coop

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What's On

If you have an event planned, please send details to whatson@cavershambridge.org We need these no later than the 10th of the month before the event for inclusion in the paper. It is helpful if they are submitted in the standard format below, using Calibri font. Later submissions can be included on our online What's On, which is updated regularly. To see what has been added check: cavershambridge.org/archives/category/around-caversham

The format of our *What's On* page has changed. Weekly events and meetings are now listed in our *What's On Weekly* feature on page 16. A listing of *Baby and Toddler* groups can be found on page 18.

Until Saturday 9 May – The original medieval manuscript of *Sumer is icumen in*, also known as the famed *Reading Rota* has returned to Reading for the first time since the dissolution of Reading Abbey in 1539. It is on loan from the British Library to Reading Museum. It is believed to be the earliest known English song with surviving music. The Museum is open, free, Tuesdays to Saturdays, 9:00 to 16:00 (17:00 Saturdays). See their website

www.readingmuseum.org.uk/whats-on/sumer-icumen

Wednesday 1 April-Saturday 16 May – Exhibition and sale of Jane McDonald original monoprints – 10:00-16:00 Tuesday-Saturday, The Caversham Picture Framer, 5a, Church Road, Caversham RG4 7AA Website <https://cavershampictureframer.co.uk>

Wednesday 1 April – *Rosehill Ladies* – 14:00 at St Barnabas Hall, Emmer Green. Tel: Sue 0118 947 7570 or email suegreen@hotmail.com

Wednesday 1 April – *Sailing the Göta Canal, Sweden, a talk by Clive Williams* – 19:30 doors open, 20:00 talk. Reading Offshore Sailing Club. Upper Thames Motor Yacht Clubhouse, Sonning Mill Island, Reading RG4 6TW. For further details see www.readingoffshore.org.uk or contact sailrosc25@gmail.com

Wednesday 1 April – *The many faces of Oxford Road a talk by Dr Alice Mpfu-Coles* – 20:00 The Caversham Heights Society at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. To learn more visit cavershamheights.org or email: contact@cavershamheights.org

Friday 3 April – *Bereavement Café* – 14:00-15:30 at St. Barnabas, Emmer Green. A safe place to find others who have had their own loss and can appreciate something of your experience. For further info Tel. Gill at 0118 947 8772

Saturday 4 April – *Easter Trail in Caversham Court Gardens* – 14:00-16:00, Friends of Caversham Court Gardens. Contact: friends@fccg.org.uk Website: <https://home.fccg.org.uk>

Sunday 5 April – *Blackhouse Wood: After the Ash, a guided walk* – 10:30 Meet in the car park next to the tennis courts on Caversham Park Road. Friends of Clayfield Copse. Come and see springtime in Clayfield Copse, the new plantings in Blackhouse Wood and learn about the work being done by volunteers.

Tuesday 7 April – *Caversham Women's Institute* – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel: 0118 947 5176

Wednesday 8 April – *No Dig Gardening, a talk* – 19:30 at Caversham Baptist Church (opposite Waitrose). Caversham Horticultural Society. Light refreshments. £3 entry for non members. See www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/talks

Friday 10 April – *Chazey Women's Institute* – 14:30 at St Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road. Tel: 01189 470964, or e-mail rowena@primology.com

Sunday 12 April – *AB Walker Bicentenary Memorial Service* – 15:00, Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin, Reading, RG1 2HX. AB Walker Funeral Directors is warmly inviting families, friends and members of the local community to a special Memorial Service at Reading Minster, as part of the company's bicentenary celebrations in 2026. Refreshments will be served after the service, offering an opportunity to gather and connect with others in an informal and supportive setting. For more information, please contact miranda@abwalker.co.uk

Wednesday 15 April – *Northcourt Avenue: Its History and People, a talk by Penny Kemp* – 19:00 doors open, 19:30 start. Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. The History of Reading Society. This meeting is open to all, visitors are asked to pay £2 each to attend.

Wednesday 15 April – *The University of Reading Art Collection, a talk by Dr Hannah Lyons* – 20:00 The Caversham Heights Society at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. To learn more visit cavershamheights.org or email: contact@cavershamheights.org

Saturday 18 April – *Beanpole Day* – 10:00 to 15:00 Caversham Court Gardens. Econet. Get your garden ready for the summer. See article on page 15. Website <https://econetreading.org.uk>

Friday 24 April – *Jane McDonald Artist talk* – 17:30 for 18:30 The Caversham Picture Framer, 5a, Church Road, Caversham RG4 7AA Website <https://cavershampictureframer.co.uk>

Saturday 25 April – *Body of the Play, by Eileen Clark. a Murder Mystery Supper* – 19:30 doors open, 20:00 start. Peppard Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Road, Peppard Common, RG9 5JA. The Chiltern Players present a tale of death amongst a troupe of amateur thespians rehearsing in their local village hall. Tickets £18 including a full two-course meal (bring your own drinks/glasses). Contact chilternplayerstickets@yahoo.com or 07597 845 632.

Monday 27 April – *Making Sense of Money, a talk by Dr Olga Klein* – 14.00 Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. Reading u3a. Non-members welcome, free entry. See www.readingu3a.org.uk

Friday 24 April – *Student takeover. Some of this year's French A-level students from local schools will give short talks on their A-Level research projects* – 19:30-21:30 Le Cercle Français at Church House, 59 Church Street, RG4 8AX. For those who are learning French, love France and for French nationals. Admission £5 welcome drink included. See www.readingfrenchcircle.co.uk for programme. Email readingcerclefrançais@gmail.com

Saturday 25 April – *Late Spring Concert* – 19:30 – St Andrew's Church Albert Road, RG4 7PL. Concerts in Caversham present Jiafeng Chen, violin – international prize-winner and professor at the Royal College of Music, with Adrienne Black, piano, playing a programme including works by Beethoven, Kreisler, Brahms, Korngold, Gershwin and Prokofiev. Tickets from £18-£26 – www.concertsincaversham.co.uk for information and tickets through the online Box Office.

Monday 27 April – *Getting on the Water – Steve Giggs presents and chairs a discussion on the features and benefits of different forms of sailing boat ownership and use* – 19:30 doors open, 20:00 talk. Reading Offshore Sailing Club. Upper Thames Motor Yacht Clubhouse, Sonning Mill Island, Reading RG4 6TW. For further details see www.readingoffshore.org.uk or email sailrosc25@gmail.com

Wednesday 29 April – *An illustrated talk by Richard Bennett of Reading Civic Society* – 19:00 for 19:30 Reading Canoe Club on the Warren, Caversham, RG4 7TH. The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens will be holding their spring meeting. The talk will follow a brief AGM. Free event. All welcome, you don't have to be a member. Website: <https://home.fccg.org.uk> Email: friends@fccg.org.uk

Coming Soon:

Friday 8 May – *Chance 2 dance 4 charity* – 19:30-21:30 Peppard Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Road, Peppard Common RG9 5JA. Tickets £8 on the door or online www.trybooking.com/uk/FSWD (+15p booking fee)

Saturday 9-Sunday 17 May – *Reading Walks Festival 2026* – 43 guided walks led by local experts, exploring Reading's history and natural heritage, with over a quarter celebrating Reading's great waterways to tie in with the 30th anniversary of the Thames Path National Trail. Tickets sold out fast last year, so check ReadingWalksFestival.org for availability and to book. A printed programme is also available at Reading's libraries, Reading Museum reception and other outlets.

Sunday 10 May – *Bell Sunday* – 10:00-10:40 at St Margaret's Church, Mapledurham RG4 7TR. An opportunity to find out about and try your hand at the ancient tradition of bell ringing. For details contact richardbisgrove52@btinternet.com

CADRA Planning Bulletin

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

THE APPEAL OVER the proposed 70home development on the former golf club land on the edge of Emmer Green moves to a public inquiry in May. While there is broad recognition of the need for more homes, many residents in north Reading and the Oxfordshire villages remain concerned about the risk to the rural fringe that separates the town from the surrounding countryside, and about where such developments may lead. Protecting that fringe is recognised in both Reading and South Oxfordshire's Local Plans, alongside the longstanding constraints on traffic and services caused by the limited access routes into north Reading from the rest of the town.

As reported last month, many conditions apply to the redevelopment of **Caversham Park (PL/22/0409)** for retirement housing and a care home. They are particularly important as the house and parkland are listed. The developer must set out how the work will be carried out, including materials and wall coverings used. When complete, the park will be open for the public to enjoy. Early conditions include the temporary removal and reinstatement of the historic gate piers, as well as assessments of wastewater capacity and storage arrangements.

Regarding wastewater, evidence at the recent Reading Local Plan examination highlighted the need for infrastructure work at Reading Sewage Treatment Works. The Environment Agency reported flows into the plant have exceeded permitted limits in three of the last four years and warned that additional connections could risk environmental harm to the Foudry Brook. This has broad implications for developments planned and in progress both within and outside Reading.

On Bridge Street, the application to add an extra bedroom to a groundfloor flat forming part of a fivebedroom HMO has been approved. Conditions cover refuse management, flood mitigation and the installation of bat and swift boxes.

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

CADRA is a non-political voice for Caversham, Emmer Green and the community around North Reading. It is run by a small team of volunteers.

Membership fee just £5 per year

see membermojo.co.uk/cadra for details.



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WHEN, AGED nine, I was asked by Mum and Dad what I wanted for Christmas, I told them I wanted a gramophone. A friend of mine had one, and I thought it would be great fun to be able to play The Laughing Policeman or The Teddy Bears' Picnic whenever I felt like it. What I received was a wind-up gramophone – the usual sort then – with a collection of funny old records dating from about the time of the First World War. I expect they had belonged to one of our elderly relatives. It was a wonderful gift.

One of the ten-inch records had, on one side, a song about 'the language of flowers,' and among the blooms mentioned in the chorus were

**'Pansies for thoughts dear,
And violets of blue
And forget-me-nots to tell you
I will always think of you'**

It must have been four years later when I learned at school that "pensée" was the French word for thought and worked out the name of the pansy came from the French. In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary confirms the word "pansy" is first recorded in English around 1500.

There were other English names for the several species of wild pansy. Geoffrey Grigson's Englishman's Flora tells us that *viola tricolor*, with yellow, purple and blue flowers, had names connected with the Holy Trinity. For some people, the two side petals looked like people kissing, and the popular names in Berkshire and Oxfordshire were 'Kiss me by the garden gate'; and 'Kiss me quick'. Then there was the name 'Heartsease'. People picked the flowers, stewed them, and drank

For some people, the two side petals looked like people kissing, and the popular names in Berkshire and Oxfordshire were 'Kiss me by the garden gate'; and 'Kiss me quick'...

the 'tea' to cure heart complaints. Whether this worked for psychological as well as physiological conditions I don't know.

The plant illustrated here is the commonest of the wild pansies, and the one you're most likely to find near here – *viola arvensis*, the field pansy. I took the picture on the edge of a field at Rose Farm, Mapledurham. The flowers are whitish with a yellow centre, but it can hybridise with *viola tricolor* and take on some of the purple and blue colours.

On hills farther north in Great Britain, where I grew up, the usual pansy was *viola lutea*, the mountain pansy, which is the largest of the native species, and is usually yellow. I had a surprise during a visit to Ben Lawers in the 1980s. I went with a party from the Scottish Field Studies Council, and we were given special access to this nature reserve above Loch Tay in Perthshire. The warden watched our every step to ensure that we didn't stray from the path and step on any of the rarities. The pansies were all completely deep purple, but I was assured that this was a local variant form of *viola lutea*.

I'm writing this article on 14 February. I had a meal in one of the restaurants in Prospect Street and wondered why it was so busy. I looked up, noticed the bunch of heart-shaped balloons above me, realised the significance of the day, and the old song came into my head.



Pansies in Mapledurham field

photo Happy Wanderer

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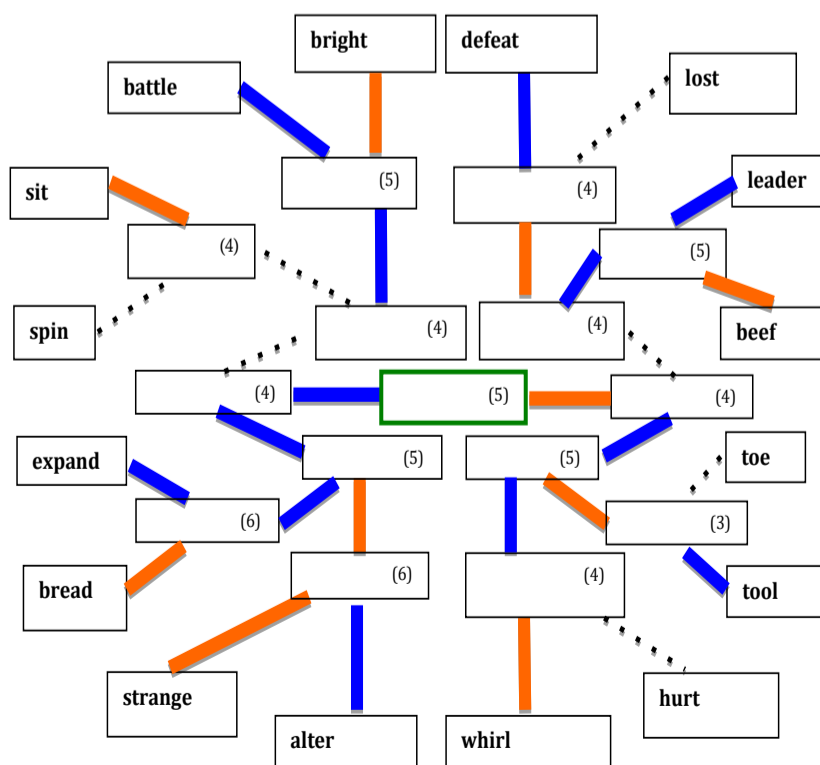
Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

WORD PUZZLE

Find the word that has the same meaning as the clue; or rhymes with; or has one letter that is different. For example: *tingle* has 6 letters, rhymes with *shingle* and means *thrill*.

Rhyme ———
Letter change
Meaning ———



Answers on page 18

WET, WET, WET

Can you find 25 words inspired by recent weather?

W O D U M B R E L L A E K N
E P F J A D R T D R O L E P
L M C E C R K W O C Z D I D
L A E S K E T C O V G D T E
I D F E I N R C L N V U H T
N O R L N C G I F N S P A A
G J A Z T H H C V O S S I R
T O I Z O S T E Y E P H L U
O R N I S A S K L Q R O W T
N F T R H L I S M Q M W E A
S H O D K P M T S L E E T S
Y G G O S S N O G Z E R I K
G N O A H S A R K D V F W R
W A T E R S O M S D U O L C

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| Clouds | River |
| Damp | Saturated |
| Drench | Shower |
| Drizzle | Sleet |
| Flood | Snow |
| Fog | Soggy |
| Hail | Splash |
| Ice | Storm |
| Mackintosh | Water |
| Mist | Wellingtons |
| Noah's Ark | Wet |
| Puddle | Umbrella |
| Rain | |

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Creative CAVERSHAM

Capturing the delight of our garden birds



As a child **Carolyn Carter** knew what she wanted to be – “an illustrator!”. She tells **Elestr Lee** how she achieved her dream of becoming an in-house artist for a leading greetings card manufacturer

“I GREW UP in Windsor,” Carolyn recalled. “Then I went to college in Bath, to do art. I ended up living in Bath for 20 years – initially I worked in shops and a gallery, doing bits of freelance design. I got my first design job due to a watercolour I had painted of a little chick. I had sent it with samples of my work to Meri Meri, a card company based in Cheltenham, and on the basis of that little chick they called me in for an interview and I got the job!”

“However, after a year I then moved to Ling Design, in Bath itself, and stayed there for ten years, painting in watercolour, and sometimes acrylic designs for greetings cards – all done by hand, as there were fewer computers in those days! Now a lot of my designs are done on the computer, only around 50% of my work is painted,” she explained.

Carolyn’s own artwork is inspired by nature, the



Glimpse of a sparrow (above)

all photos C Carter

“**Since moving to Caversham, Carolyn has discovered the Caversham Arts Trail and last year she made her first foray into the annual May event. “It was wonderful...”**

countryside – and especially everyday garden birds. She discovered that her grandad, who died when she was young, also loved depicting birds: “I found out that he did lots of detailed pencil drawings of birds. While a very different style to mine, we were clearly drawn to the same things. He also took little sketchbooks around with him, and sketched – just as I do, doing quick-fire sketches of scenes that strike me, wherever I go. Now I also do this with my husband when we are out walking or away.”

In 2023 Carolyn married her husband Neil at St Margaret’s, Mapledurham, and they live in Caversham. “I’m enjoying getting to know my new environment. It’s very different to Bath, but I am exploring and slowly discovering so many new places!”

After a decade with Ling, Carolyn spent nine years as a freelance artist and designer, working on various projects including designing logos, selling her artwork at exhibitions and creating a stand for an exhibitor at the Chelsea Flower Show. Many of her bird paintings were printed by card company Woodmansterne, and for four years she produced an annual calendar featuring garden birds for each month of the year, for Portico. Now she has returned to Ling and splits her time between home-working and the Ling studio in Bath.

...opening her own studio...

Since moving to Caversham, Carolyn has discovered the Caversham Arts Trail, and last year she made her first foray into the annual May event. “It was wonderful – I exhibited my work at Charles Burn’s barn in Emmer Green. I really loved being there!” she said. This year, she is planning to open up her own studio. “I won’t be showing my card-related work. As an illustrator you work to a brief, so I love the freedom to do anything within my own work. I am inspired by light and shade, and colour – people who came to see my work last year commented on how vibrant it is.

“I never get bored of painting birds – they will always be my main interest. As well as garden birds I have recently also been painting wading birds, lapwings and curlews – I am interested in highlighting endangered birds, to draw people’s attention to them. But I find I always return to garden birds; I love to observe their movements and try hard to capture something about their character. When I am painting my birds, I don’t like them to be too static, it’s as though you have caught a fleeting glimpse.

“I look out for birds in my own garden – I love the jays and the long-tailed tits – as well as when I am out walking. And of course, as well as loving to see birds, I really enjoy the sound of birdsong!”

Carolyn is thrilled she has made a career from her passion. “When I was young, I did my own illustrations for



The blue tit will always be a popular subject



Carolyn’s vibrant painting of a yellow wagtail

stories, and I even made greetings cards to sell in my local church. Being an illustrator was what I always wanted to do. I remember a teacher at primary school first mentioned it to my mum when I was just five. The careers advisor at my upper school, however, told me it was something you could only do as a hobby, and I’d have to get another job... I just thought it must be possible, and my parents were so supportive, so I pursued it, and you never know how things will pan out – and Meri Meri happened to like my painting of that little chick!”

And how will AI impact on the greetings card market? “AI is getting better all the time. But I hope that people will still prefer to buy artwork made by hand, out of a response to the world around us... it’s so much more personal, real and joyful.”



Find out more:

carolyncarterart.com

[carolyncarterart on Instagram](#)

cavershamartstrail.co.uk

It was the fashion

by Phil Chatfield

LAST SUMMER we were contacted by Keti Maglakelidze at Geo Café about one of her regular customers, Judian Bushnell, and the fashion shop she had run in Caversham in the 1970s. Intrigued, I arranged to meet Judian at the café to learn more about her business.

Judian Bushnell had been working as a manager for a children's clothing company in Camberley before starting her own business. As a young mum with two boys at Reading Bluecoat School, she was looking for premises in the Caversham area. The shop on Church Street was empty, and the freeholder was keen on having it used for fashion and run by a woman – a perfect match.

...catch the eyes...

The shop, called Belle Boutique opened at the end of March 1973, with stock which Judian brought from fashion houses in London. Initially the family lived over the shop, before later finding a home in Woodcote. The location was close to the traffic lights, so an exciting window display was essential to catch the eyes of drivers and passengers waiting there. At the time, other nearby shops included Belcher's greengrocery and a carpet shop. The premises is now the Thai Table.

We have looked for photos of the premises



Judian (right) with assistant Donnie Wilkinson, 1974

Her customers were often the models for these shows, although some local schoolgirls also helped...

without success – if any readers have a photo of the shop please do contact us. There were advertisements in local papers in 1973, describing the Belle Boutique as 'Caversham's new, exciting fashion shop', and adverts for the shop appeared in the Caversham Bridge during the mid-1970s.

Judian organised a series of fund-raising fashion shows through the years. The first was at the old Caversham Bridge Hotel, and then others in a variety of venues. In 1975, there was an advert for a fashion show in St Andrew's Hall in aid of the Forces' Help Society, and a photograph of a model in an outfit on the catwalk. In 1978, there was an advert for a fashion show in the Great Western Motors' Showroom in aid of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. Judian also remembers an event for the British Heart Foundation. Her customers were often the models for these shows, although some local schoolgirls also helped.

Judian's memory for names from the time is remarkable, and she has fond memories of many of her customers. She did wonder if there was anyone left in the area who remembers the shop or took part in the fashion shows. If you do, please write to us at editors@cavershambridge.org with your memories.



The boutique interior



Fashion show for the RNLI in a local garage

all photos loaned by Judian

IN THE NEWS by George Grubb



Sarah receives her award from Theo Paphitis

Training success

CAVERSHAM-BASED dog trainer, Sarah Hawkins, was in the news in February when she won recognition from Dragon's Den star, Theo Paphitis, through his Small Business Sunday (SBS) award.

Sarah set up Barkshire Dog Training in January 2022 to help dog owners who want to train their dogs using kind methods, providing personalised support to help dogs thrive in real life. Through patience, kindness and positive reinforcement, Sarah focuses on building calm walks, reliable recall, and the confidence to settle in busy, everyday environments – creating a partnership rooted in trust and connection, rather than control.

Sarah supports dog owners across Berkshire and Oxfordshire with ethical, force-free training methods, helping families build stronger relationships with their dogs. She said, "Being recognised by Theo means so much, and it was brilliant to meet him when I collected my award, the whole day was so inspiring. Being recognised alongside some amazing businesses, including several in the pet industry, was the driver to keep going and enter. I had applied for SBS a few times and kept refining what I shared – the post that won emphasised the power of collaboration, and how I work with other professionals to improve the lives of dog owners. The dog training world is unregulated so, having this recognition, helps give people confidence that they're working with someone reputable, qualified and committed to doing things properly, and helps people to trust me to help their dogs."

...positive training...

She regularly takes part in professional development and works with local pet professionals, including Oakley Vets in Caversham, to promote welfare-first dog care. She is also a member of Caversham Traders' Association, which brings together and supports a wide variety of local small businesses. Sarah hosts monthly Facebook Live sessions, collaborating with fellow professionals to share knowledge to support dog owners and raise awareness around positive training methods.

Small Business Sunday was launched by Theo Paphitis in 2010 and now has a network of over 4,500 winners. Each Sunday, small businesses across the UK can apply by sharing a post on social media using the hashtag #SBS between 17:00 and 19:30. Six winners are chosen and announced by Theo every Monday night.

Theo Paphitis said, "The value of being part of the #SBS community is second to none, offering vital support, upskilling, and motivation to some of the brightest startups and small businesses in the UK."



Sarah in her element!

photo courtesy S Hawkins

You can find out more at www.theopaphitissbs.com
To find out more about Barkshire Dog Training, visit:
www.barkshiredogtraining.co.uk

Birdsong from the Arctic can be heard in Caversham!



The orchestra rehearsing at Queen Anne's, Caversham with conductor Cathal Garvey

photo R Otter/RSO

Report:
Reading Symphony Orchestra viola player
Elestr Lee

QUEEN ANNE'S SCHOOL in Caversham is where more than 60 musicians have met for almost 20 years to rehearse full-scale orchestral concerts performed regularly in Reading. Reading Symphony Orchestra's rehearsals are currently enlivened by musical sounds of a more unusual nature: Arctic birdsong.

"I first encountered Rautavaara's *Cantus Arcticus* in 1998, and was immediately captivated," conductor Cathal Garvey explained. "I fantasized a little about conducting it one day but never had the opportunity until now.

"The work is subtitled *Concerto for Birds and Orchestra*. Rautavaara made his own recordings of

various Arctic birds in the northern marshes of his native Finland – cranes, shore larks, whooper swans and other wetland species. The recorded birdsong ebbs and flows within the orchestral texture, so the audience will have to keep its ears peeled. The technical challenge is the synchronisation of the tape recording with the orchestra – it unquestionably needs a trained musician with a score to press the 'play' and the 'stop' buttons at the right moments!

"Bird enthusiasts may be tempted to try to identify the various species, but much of the tape is manipulated – slowed down or altered – so the focus should be on immersion rather than identification. I find the piece really moving"

Prokofiev's 3rd Piano Concerto will be performed by Yazdi Madon, RSO's 2025 Young Musician Competition winner, while the Great Hall concert ends with Tchaikovsky's 1st Symphony, *Winter Dreams*.

Find out more:

Saturday April 25 at The Great Hall,
University of Reading, 19:30

For tickets visit: rso.org.uk

Reading Symphony Orchestra
Conductor: Cathal Garvey

Rautavaara –
Cantus Arcticus

Tchaikovsky –
Symphony No. 1

Prokofiev –
Piano Concerto No. 3

Soloist: Yazdi Madon
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Merry Opera's *Cosi Fan Tutte*

CONCERTS in CAVERSHAM

by Antony Gordon

CONCERTS IN CAVERSHAM at St Andrew's Church is now in its 14th year. Founded by Adrienne Black and Timothy Watts, who sadly died in 2024, the series of concerts has become established as one of Caversham's cultural gems. The 2026 season began in February with a concert featuring an all-string ensemble comprising seven freelance musicians and professional instrumentalists from various London orchestras.

The programme commenced with a string sextet in D major by Richard Strauss from his opera *Capriccio* (1942), which is not often heard in concert performance. The piece is refined, introspective and deeply expressive, which was beautifully portrayed by the C-in-C Ensemble.

...great energy...

The second work in the first half was Dvořák's String Quintet Op.77 (1887), again rarely heard live, partly because, unusually, it has a double bass as the fifth instrument. It is a work full of melodies inspired by Czech folk music, and was performed with great energy and obvious enjoyment.

Tchaikovsky's *Souvenir de Florence*, composed in 1890, was the featured work in the second half. Inspired by the composer's visit to Florence and the surrounding countryside, this is a piece with many toe tapping themes which culminates in an almost riotous finale.

The performances were of the highest quality and received a rapturous reception from the large audience.

Caversham is privileged to host such talented musicians, and thanks must go to Adrienne and Naomi Watts for continuing to organise these concerts.

The next concert features Adrienne playing in a recital with violinist Jiafeng Chen on 25 April.



The Concerts in Caversham Ensemble

photo A Black

Opera Packs the Pews by Elestr Lee

Così Fan Tutte

St Andrew's Church, March 7

ACTOR TIMOTHÉE Chalamet may have caused controversy last month when he said of ballet and opera "no one cares about this anymore..." however, Merry Opera's March visit to Caversham, with their current production of Mozart's *Così Fan Tutte*, drew a crowd of veteran opera lovers, plus those curious to experience the art, possibly for the first time.

Founded by Matthew Quirk in 2009, the small company puts on varied productions, giving experience to young singers just starting out – and *Così* proved the perfect vehicle for the outstanding young cast to show off their vocal talents, as well as their acting skills. As a comedy about relationships (often subtitled *All Women Are Like That*), it is probably best not to take the story too seriously but sit back and enjoy Mozart's genius in capturing human nature – warts and all – in music.

photo V Davies



The cast stepping out **all photos Mrs Lake and the Drama Department at Highdown**

GREASE: *The Musical*

at Highdown School
and Sixth Form

by **Edward Sanderson**

AN EAR-TO-EAR smile and a spring in my step are two features that have not left me since attending Highdown School and Sixth Form's recent 2026 production of the beloved 1971 musical classic, Grease. Positioned bang in the centre stalls, I was privileged to have a front-row view, providing a 360-degree perspective. This allowed me a greater appreciation of an elaborate, multi-tiered, three-dimensional Rydell School backdrop and, of course, the car itself, Greased Lightning.

Mrs Sherrie Lake, Curriculum Leader of Performing Arts at the school, admitted: "Putting this production together has been a lot of hard work but it is ultimately incredibly rewarding". She went on to acknowledge the immense collaboration required in organising such performances, recognising the production as "a massive group effort... coming together to produce something we're all incredibly proud of".

The solidarity described by Mrs Lake was indeed present, emanating from each of the 82



The full cast

participating students. They were supported over a three-month period by a team of dedicated Performing Arts staff, headed by both Mrs Lake and Mrs Pam Hawkins. Music was provided by a wonderful showband, conducted by the equally wonderful Mrs Reid. Showband performers share this sentiment, agreeing that the performance had been "an amazing opportunity", that they are "glad to have taken part in". Lighting and sound were organised by supervised student teams.

...confidence on stage...

Across three nights, a recurring cast donned an array of lively costumes, thanks to RABBLE Theatre, Practically Perfect Theatrical Hire and Jackie Dunn, an ex-teacher at the school, who returns each year to assist with the production. Though a handful of mature students are due to leave Highdown in pursuit of Performing Arts courses at other establishments such as Wilkes Academy, Swindon, younger students exercised passion and confidence on stage, particularly this year's lead – a Year 8 pupil.

Ticket proceeds from Grease will subsidise upcoming Performing Arts events, including the Highdown Summer Showcase Concert and Dance Show. I highly enjoyed the feel-good energy of Grease, and excitedly anticipate the events to come, hoping that this review will inspire readers to grab themselves a ticket and join me there!



The Showband

From our archive

ROYAL BERKSHIRE Archives have been continuing work on our programme of scanning back issues of the Caversham Bridge newspaper. The latest batch of papers to be published on our website cover 1972, 1977 and 1996.

We reproduced the front page of our December 1975 edition in February as part of our feature on Highdown School, which reported the appointment of new head teacher, Andrew Clarke. By chance, when checking a few of the recently scanned papers, we came across this front page of the April 1995 edition, which covered his retirement and the appointment of his successor, Mr Alan Furley.

Our archive provides a fascinating record of life in our area over the last 62 years – you never know what you might find if you dip in!

by **The Editors**



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Les Cooper

Enlivening Things

IT IS FEBRUARY and outside the rain is merrily dripping down the window and I have to write about things to do in April.

Hold it. Les didn't you write something like that before? I am afraid I did. It was the start of my February article, and I am afraid it may be boring but true. It has been a wet start to the year and, with the rain draining away the nutrients in the soil, gardeners will have to do their best to ensure their crops are well fed. In the past manure was easily obtainable, but now most of us have to rely on compost from our compost heaps or things we can buy like mushroom compost or Strulch.

Moving on, while I realise I am repeating myself, I would recommend planting *Eucomis* (pineapple lily) bulbs in containers.

Last year I mentioned how they will give you such a long display of exotic flowers all summer, and they lived up to expectations. Now is the time to put them in.

If you want to enliven your garden further, *Helianthus* (sunflowers) will do their best for you if you sow them now. Many people think of them as those six-foot tall things with large plate-like yellow/black centred flowers which children love growing, but there are many others worth trying. I believe gardeners braver than I am sow them in the open ground, but I sow mine in a pot and, when large enough, I prick them out into the garden, keeping my eyes open for slugs and snails.

Helianthus are hardy annuals and there are so many others worth growing. We



Gomphrena

photo E Cooper

are all into taking it easy and popping down to the garden centre to purchase a box or two of pretty *Petunias*. But why not reveal the miserly side of yourself and save money by sowing a selection of annuals. In my *Chiltern Seeds* catalogue, there is a wide selection of annuals to colour your garden and, who knows, it might reveal your artistic side too. In my April 2025 article, I mentioned

growing *Gomphrena Globosa* from seed. I had no idea about what I was attempting to grow, but it sounded interesting and germinated easily and readily. I planted out the seedlings and, despite the drought, I had a lovely group of orange flowers with unusual spherical heads of papery petals, just as the catalogue promised.

Growing something new is what makes gardening fascinating.

Small but Mighty!

text and photo Anne Mulford



Our rugby players

CAVERSHAM PARK Primary School, at the heart of the Caversham Park community, has been excelling in sport and music in recent months.

In October, our Year 3 and 4 hockey team was victorious in a hockey tournament hosted by St Mary's Prep School, Henley-on-Thames, at Shiplake College. They scored over 20 goals and conceded only 1. The entire team played with enormous enthusiasm and was congratulated by the hosting team. It was then the turn of our Year 6 Football team to play in a tournament against local schools held at Emmer Green Primary School. We were very proud when the team made it through to the final, only losing to The Hill Primary School on penalties. Our children were also invited to play at Abbey Rugby Football Club in the first T1 Rugby Festival to be held in Berkshire. They played a variety of practice games before playing matches against children from other schools around Reading. It was a great opportunity to practice their skills and gave them a taste of the excitement of competitive rugby. Hopefully this competition will lead to further sporting success!

The School Choir joined with other school choirs from the Reading area to take part in the Berkshire Music Trust Junior Music Festival at the Hexagon Theatre. This was a fantastic experience for the children, celebrating the joy of singing and being part of a mass musical event.

In addition to these achievements, we are proud to be one of only two schools in Reading taking part in the Government Funded Breakfast Club Scheme. This provides a daily free breakfast to our children from 8.15, which gives them a relaxed and friendly start to the school day. It also supports our parents with childcare, and helps with the cost of living by providing a free breakfast.

If you are looking for a school place for your child, we'd love to show you around! Please contact the school office to arrange a parent/carer tour with Miss Ray, our Headteacher.

To find out more about the school, visit their website at:
www.cavershamparkprimaryschool.co.uk

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The Local Scene

by Martin Andrews

Pop Classics

IT'S GREAT FOR the Caversham high street that it can boast so many individual and specialist shops, and Pop Classics is one of the most fascinating. For many of us, our lives have a sound track of evocative music that brings back memories and emotions of the past. So many generations of teenagers get through those difficult years supported by the pop music of the era. So, thumbing through the extensive racks of vinyl LPs, recognising iconic sleeves and images of bands and artists is an enjoyable and nostalgic experience.

...recognised expert...

Damian Jones opened Pop Classics at 35 Church Street in the Precinct in September 2023. Damian is a life-long record collector and a recognised expert in the subject, and he has featured in previous articles in the Caversham Bridge. About 20 years ago he turned his passion into a business with the support of his family.

When I visited Pop Classics, his daughter Maddie and her friend Cecily were on duty in the shop. Maddie has grown up with the business and has fond childhood memories of helping her Dad to clean records, learning how to hold the discs at the edge to make sure no fingers marked the delicate surface, and examining the disc for scratches. The customer base is expanding as more and more people are buying record players and re-discovering the pleasures of handling LPs and their particular sound quality. Both Maddie



Painting by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

and Cecily also help promote the business on social media.

The stock of records is amazing and includes all genres of pop, folk and jazz, and all periods from the 1950s to the present day – so everyone, young and old, will find records to suit their taste. Children are not forgotten as there are soundtracks to popular children's TV programmes.

Of course there are many serious record collectors looking for that rare LP or special edition, and Damian, with his vast knowledge, is always on hand to advise. Pop Classics also specialise in music memorabilia, programmes, tickets, posters and tee shirts, and merchandising of all kinds is on sale but they also buy records and music related material.

Why not visit Pop Classics on Record Store Day 2026 on Saturday 18 April?

Janina's popular

A Stroll through Caversham

book, featuring her paintings and a description of the buildings, has been reprinted and is available from **Fourbears Books**

janinamaher.artweb.com/drawings-prints-paintings



Oasiz

South Street Arts Centre –
30 January 2026

Text and photo Richard Wells

SINCE THEIR iconic reunion tour last year, interest in Manchester legends, Oasis, is at an all-time high. This was evident when we arrived at South Street to see tribute act Oasiz. The venue was busy with a mixed crowd, made up of those of us old enough to remember the 90s and some who were not even born then!

The 2017 refurbishment of the South

Street venue means the main space can be transformed from seated theatre to a standing gig venue, which was perfect for the evening and there was a lively atmosphere in anticipation of the show.

When Liam swaggered on stage, you could instantly forget you are at a tribute show and just lose yourself in the moment as they launched into classics such as Rock n' Roll Star, Supersonic, Some Might Say, amongst many others.

Oasiz features real life brothers, Steve and Marcus as Liam and Noel. Steve, as Liam, is the full package having the voice, stage presence and mannerisms of the real thing down to a tee. Even his chat between songs

had that unmistakable Manchester drawl. In fact, Steve is so convincing that a video of him performing recently went viral on social media, with over half a million views, having convinced people that the real Liam had made a cameo appearance at a venue in Kent!

The band itself was on great form and, whilst Marcus isn't a spitting image of Noel, his guitar playing, both in skill and tone would win over any die hard Oasis fan.

Whether you want to relive the vibe of last year's shows, or you missed out and want a piece of the action, I can definitely (maybe!) recommend seeing Oasiz, especially should they return to South Street, which isn't exactly half a world away!

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Community Connections

Interview with Richard Allan – text and photo Sarah Stuffins



Richard at the end of a successful clean round the Amersham Road area.

RICHARD ALLAN is Professor of Climate Science in the Meteorology Department at Reading University. He is also the current Chair of Keep Caversham Tidy, the small charity dedicated to eliminating litter, improving public spaces, and promoting environmental awareness in Caversham and nearby areas. Keep Caversham Tidy was set up by Jacopo Lanzoni in 2020. It quickly evolved into weekly clearing sessions on a Saturday, and was established as a charity, with a team of trustees and formal policies on health and safety, safeguarding etc. Richard saw posts on Facebook and got involved, as it appealed to his interest in being outside and getting together with a group of like-minded people who also wanted to do some good.

...volunteer opportunity...

The group runs a successful volunteer opportunity for Duke of Edinburgh award participants, and teamed up with the Fox and Hounds pub to do a joint litter pick for International Women's Day in March. Richard quoted some impressive statistics for the past year: 75 different litter pickers, working around 1,000 volunteer hours, collecting around 1,000 bags of litter.

How long have you lived in RG4?

I moved to Reading in 1995 to do my PhD. I came to Caversham with my family in 2004 because of its distinct atmosphere and history. I love our local parks (Bugs Bottom, Balmore, Caversham Court and Christchurch Meadows), along with some impressive trees like the St Martin's Precinct Oak, the Japanese Pagoda at the library, the Caversham Court Yew and others! It is also close to the South Oxfordshire countryside where I enjoy walking.

75 different litter pickers working around 1,000 volunteer hours collecting around 1,000 bags of litter...

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

I don't enjoy shopping generally but am a big fan of True Food Coop, which I think is a brilliant community-led initiative. I enjoy the walk over to the Loddon Brewery and the Flowing Spring.

How do you think we can be more eco-friendly here?

We should all think about how our actions impact climate change and try to reduce our carbon footprint. Locally, sign up to the Reading Adopt Your Street Initiative, or come along to our litter picking on a Saturday and help Keep Caversham Tidy.

How would you strengthen our sense of community?

We should get out of our "bubbles" and join community groups such as Keep Caversham Tidy, where you can meet a diverse group of people, from different backgrounds and ages, but with similar interests.

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

I would like to see Caversham make more of its fascinating history.

If you would like to find out more about Keep Caversham Tidy, check out their website

www.met.reading.ac.uk/~sgs02rpa/KCT

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Bowl Along to Albert Road

by Ros Hamilton

ARE YOU LOOKING for a fun way to get out more, stay active and meet new people? Why not give lawn bowls a try. Friendly, sociable and surprisingly energetic, a single match can involve walking up to three miles, making it a great way to keep moving without even noticing.

Many of our members join with no previous experience, and one of the sport's biggest appeals is how easy it is to pick up the basics. We're a thriving club, with most of our new members joining our popular Monday night bowling league. New members play in mixed teams alongside more experienced players, helping to develop skills in a relaxed, supportive setting. Alongside this, we offer coaching sessions, internal club competitions, and the chance to take part in external leagues.

Off the green, our welcoming clubhouse is a real social hub. With a keenly priced bar and kitchen, we host a range of events throughout the year, from quiz nights to curry nights. Membership is excellent value too: new full members pay just £80 for their first year, trial sessions are free, and social membership is available for only £25 per year. Equipment costs are minimal, with bowls provided if needed – all you need is a pair of flat-soled shoes.

If you can't make the Open Days, we also run open sessions every Friday evening from 18:00. Just let us know you're coming by contacting Gary on 07740 731502 or emailing cbc-secretary@cavershambowlsclub.org



Rolling up on a perfect green

photo C Adams

Tempted to give it a go?

Join us at our Open Days on Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May, from 10:00 to 13:00.



Club website www.cavershambowlsclub.org.uk

Facebook www.facebook.com/p/Caversham-Bowls-Club-100091450692625/?locale=bn_IN

Six reasons to play bowls (British Heart Foundation)

www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/heart-matters-magazine/activity/bowls



Beanpole Day:

Get your garden ready for summer!

by Tricia Marcouse

BEANPOLE DAY IS at Caversham Court Garden again on Saturday 18 April, despite the disfiguring scaffolding and netting across the main gate. The side gates will be open to welcome everyone from 10:00 to 15:00.

You can buy very reasonably priced plants and plant supports, whilst learning about wildlife friendly gardening and all kinds of environmental issues. We have vegetable and ornamental plants grown by charitable organisations, and a range of beanpoles, peasticks and plant supports to grow them up. Our plant supports come from locally managed coppiced woodland and willow beds, and your purchase helps maintain this traditional technique.

Other stalls include home-made cakes and biscuits, second-hand tools and books, Fair Trade products, the RSPB making bird boxes, bird tables and hedgehog homes from timber offcuts, as well as selling bird food and Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust sales with guidance on wildlife conservation. You will also be able to renew your Caversham Bridge subscription by card at the Fair Trade stall.

The repair shop experts will sharpen your garden

tools for a donation, so don't forget to bring those dull secateurs with you.

In addition, this year the Reading Bike Hub will be on site to offer a free safety inspection and limited repairs, for which you'd pay for any parts needed. They'll also give advice on further repairs necessary and the opening hours of the Hub in the town centre for getting these done. The Bike Hub takes in unused or cycles which have been outgrown for repair, refurbishment and resale. If you have an unwanted bike, then bring it to Beanpole Day and the Hub will make good use of it.

Car parking is non-existent at Caversham Court, so this is a good opportunity to come by bike, get a free inspection and leave your bike in a secure area whilst shopping.

Finally, the garden kiosk is open for light refreshments all day or bring a picnic to eat on the lawn by the Thames.

Our plant supports come from locally managed coppiced woodland and willow beds, and your purchase helps maintain this traditional technique...



EcoTip

by Tricia Marcouse

Rehoming the bigger stuff

MOST COMPANIES which sell furniture or white goods will take away the old one for an additional fee, which is the simple and convenient method of disposal when replacing such items. Unless there is a specific statement at the shop or on the website about reuse, you can assume landfill is the end point for furniture and metal recycling for white goods. It's the sensible method for broken, uncomfortable, ancient objects (or take them to Smallmead yourself and save the disposal fee).

Reusable furniture has options but, unless you live in a mansion or have an empty dry garage or shed for storage, these need forward planning. In this case you can agree which items are wanted by others and keep them until they are collected.

...simplest methods...

One of the simplest methods of passing such items on is to sign up to Freegle (www.freegle.co.uk) and post a photo and description. Anyone who is interested collects the item from your home.

Four main charities in Reading take second hand furniture. Each will have their own requirements, dependent upon current stock, whether they are selling or rehoming, and how much upcycling they can provide. Sofas, mattresses and other soft furnishings must have a fire resistant label.

Christian Community Action is mainly offering furniture to those in need, but also sells through their shop on Cardiff Road:


ccam.org.uk/support-us/donate-furniture

Thames Valley Hospice superstore in Richfield Avenue sells good quality furniture and has an upcycling unit working with wooden furnishings. They can also accept working electrical goods:

www.thameshospice.org.uk/donate-goods

The British Heart Foundation shop in Oxford Road sells furniture and has staff who can check working electrical donations for safety before resale: www.bhf.org.uk/shop/donating-goods/book-furniture-collection-near-me


Sue Ryder also sells some furniture through their various shops around Reading www.sueryder.org/shop-with-us/donate-to-our-shops/free-furniture-collection-service



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A beautiful place to bowl

by Graham Lyke

SPRING IS HERE once again, and that means that the Island Bohemian Bowls Club (IBC) is ready for action once more.

The Club, situated on Fry's Island, between Reading Bridge and Caversham Bridge, is a bowls club with a unique location – access is by ferry, which the club provides. It is a friendly club in a beautiful and tranquil setting, an oasis in the middle of Reading.

We welcome new members or players who have not played for a while, so why not give bowls a try. Bowls is for everyone, regardless of age, gender or ability, and you can play at whatever level you wish. IBC has recently had

National, County and League players, as well as players who want more of a social game. It is an excellent way of being active, and will bring you lots of friends and social occasions. We have many teams visiting us for friendly, mixed team fixtures, as well as men's and ladies' teams which play in local league games. The clubhouse has a bar, kitchen and full changing facilities, and hosts several social events throughout the year.

This season, the Island Bohemian Club is grateful to two local companies: estate agents, Farmer & Dyer, celebrating 21 years of business, and the Village Hotel on Caversham Bridge, for their sponsorship of this unique Bowls Club.

...see if you like it...

The Club is holding two Open Days, providing an introduction to the sport and for you to see if you like it and wish to take it up. These are on Monday 4 May and Sunday 24 from 14:00 to 18:00. You will receive some initial coaching on how to play the game and get hands-on experience. Please wear flat soled shoes or trainers. All equipment will be provided.

The sessions are free, there is nearby free parking evenings and weekends at Thames Promenade Car park. The club ferry can be taken from the Reading side of the river and will pick you up on the towpath at the end of Brigham Road, RG1 8DP. It will be waiting for you!

Beginners' Coaching and Taster Sessions start on Monday 11 May from 17:45 to 19:45 and continue every Monday throughout the Summer.

If you can't make the Open Days, turn up for the Taster Days every Monday.

For more information or to register your interest, please phone, text or WhatsApp 07825 394683 or Email recruitment@islandbohemianbowls.club Visit our website at www.islandbohemianbowls.club



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Beginners Welcome

What's On Weekly

A roundup of events, clubs and other meetings which happen every week

Contact whatson@cavershambridge.org to add your meeting or correct an entry

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

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

www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/rhymetimes

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

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

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

Mondays – *Ted Burnell Community Art Centre for budding artists* – 10:00-12:00 and 14:00-16:00 Church House, Prospect Street. New members are very welcome. Contact Jean Jackson 0118 947 6221 or email gj@grahamjackson.f2s.com

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

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

Wednesdays – *Caversham Writers* – Welcoming enthusiastic hobbyists and aspiring authors alike. Meeting weekly in person or via Zoom. Free to all. For details: meetup.com/CavershamWriters

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

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

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

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

Thursdays – *Weller Voices Community Choir* – 19:30-20:30. Weller Centre, 110 Amersham Road, RG4 5NA. Term time only. Singing is fun, free and for all. Join any of our sessions. For details, contact wellervoices@gmail.com

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

Saturdays – *Keep Caversham Tidy* – A local charity dedicated to eliminating litter and improving public spaces in Caversham. Free to join and no ongoing commitment. Families welcome! Email Keepcavershamtidy@gmail.com, FB [Keep Caversham Tidy](https://www.facebook.com/KeepCavershamTidy)

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

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

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



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“ You Wrote

Parking Enforcement – Waitrose and Iceland Car Park

Dear Editor

I WISH TO submit details of two separate Parking Charge Notices I received from Parkingeye Ltd. I trust that, if you include this as an article on how I dealt with these, it may help your readers if they receive similar parking charge notices.

Parkingeye claimed I was in breach of the parking terms and conditions on two separate dates in December last, when I was able to prove I was not. On the first date I was able to prove I was elsewhere, and the second related to overnight parking. This was a ludicrous claim on account of my circumstances: I am an 83 year old pensioner and suffer with mobility issues, which mean I can walk only a short distance without stopping for a rest.

For the parking company to claim I parked my car one morning, walked half a mile home way up the Peppard Road, and then walked back to the car park the following morning is farcical.

When you park your car no parking ticket is necessary. Therefore, unfortunately, you have no evidence to prove arrival or departure times, and this is what the parking company thrive on. So my advice is do not be intimidated because, when I challenged each parking charge, both were dropped.

One final note on this is that there is no publicly available evidence of the Parking Company having brought a single case to the Reading County Court in the past twelve months for non-payment of parking charge notices.

Frank Neale

Note – this letter has been edited to fit the available space.



It is easy to see how confusion can occur in the car parks. I now realise there are two different companies involved, with different time allowances **photos P Chatfield**



True Food volunteers in the shop

HANDS UP!

Local Volunteer Opportunities – True Food Co-operative, Emmer Green

text and photo Tayma Cannon



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For more information about us, our opening times and contact details, visit www.truefood.coop

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Hotel Makeover

Village Hotel reopened in December 2025

text and photo Phil Chatfield

THE LATEST chapter in the history of hotels at the Reading end of the Caversham Bridge, on the bank of the River Thames, has begun. For much of 2025, what was the Crowne Plaza Hotel was a busy construction site, shrouded in scaffolding. The hotel reopened in December and, although the external appearance of the building has changed little, inside it has undergone extensive rejuvenation.

It is now the Village Hotel Reading, the most recent addition to Village Hotels' portfolio. The refurbishment has transformed the premises into the company's model for the future, and work is still in progress to add new studios at the front of the building.

The Director of Sales, Katalin Mayer, hosted a Caversham Traders' Association meeting at the hotel in January and proudly provided us with a tour of the facilities. There are 122 en-suite bedrooms, all with large TVs, with some Sky access. The rooms are colour themed to indicate the type of room. Some suites have a riverside balcony overlooking the Thames and Caversham.

But there is much more: already attracting members from our area are a state-of-the-art gym which overlooks the river, a swimming pool and fitness studios.

There is a large meeting and events space which can cater for up to 150 guests for special events such as weddings. In addition, there is a pub and grill and a Starbucks coffee shop in the centre of the hotel, along with big screen live sports and a variety of interactive games, reflecting the Village Hotel concept of having everything under one roof

In our November 2021 edition, Happy Wanderer wrote about the old Caversham Bridge Hotel. He reported the earliest mention of the bridge in the historical record dates from 1231, and the earliest mention of an inn at the Reading end of the bridge comes in 1614, although bridge and inn could have been there long before those dates.

You can read the full article at https://cavershambridge.org/archives/sdm_downloads/november-2021-download

For more details about the new Village Hotel, see www.village-hotels.co.uk/reading.



For the youngest members of our community

LISTED BELOW are regular term-time events for toddlers, babies and their carers. All are free of charge, although donations towards costs are welcome.

Mondays – Little Lambs and You – Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, Caversham RG4 8HY 10:00-11:30. Baby and toddler group. Numbers are limited, so there is an online booking system. See www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk/Groups/382970/Little_Lambs.aspx

Tuesdays – Babies and Toddlers – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, RG4 8EB. 10:00 - 11:30. Refreshments available. All welcome. cavershammethodist.org.uk/baby-toddler-group

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

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

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

Fridays – Tiddlers for Babies and Toddlers – St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham Heights, RG4 7PL. 9:30-11:00. All are welcome, refreshments available. www.facebook.com/groups/209815529592564

Fridays – Baby and Toddler Group – Church House, Church Road, Caversham, RG4 8AX. 9:30 – 11:00. Step-free access at the back. See www.ctmparish.org.uk/stpeter for details

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

Future editions:

Contributions for the May issue should be submitted by 1 April and for the June edition by 1 May. These should be emailed to: editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 April for the May issue and 1 May for the June issue. These should be emailed to: advertising@cavershambridge.org



Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Pen and paper, ink and expression...

IN THE 1980s, psychologist James Pennebaker developed a therapeutic technique called expressive writing to help patients process trauma and psychological challenges.

With this technique, continuously journaling about something painful helps create mental distance from the experience, and eases its cognitive load.

In other words, externalizing emotional distress through writing. Writing things down involves retrieving memories. It also involves putting those memories into language, activating the brain's visual and motor systems.

Writing things down supports memory consolidation, the brain's conversion of short-term memories into long-term ones. The process of integration makes it possible for people to reframe painful experiences and manage their emotions.

Brain imaging studies show that putting feelings into words helps regulate emotions. Naming emotions has multiple benefits. It calms the amygdala, a cluster of neurons that detects threat and triggers the fear response: fight, flight, freeze or fawn. It also engages the prefrontal cortex, a part of the brain that supports goal setting and problem-solving.

In other words, the simple act of naming your emotions can help you shift from reaction to response. Instead of identifying with your feelings and mistaking them for facts, writing can help you simply become aware of what's arising and prepare for deliberate action.

Even mundane writing tasks, like making a to-do list, stimulates parts of the brain involved in reasoning and decision-making. Researchers have long documented

how writing is a cognitive activity – one that people use to communicate, yes, but also to understand the human experience. Writing is a form of thinking – a practice that people never stop learning. It has the potential to reshape the mind continually.

Building resilience through writing

- 1. Write by hand whenever possible.** In contrast to typing or tapping on a device, handwriting requires greater cognitive coordination. It slows your thinking, allowing you to process information, form connections and make meaning.
- 2. Write daily.** Start small and make it regular. Even jotting brief notes about your day – what happened, what you're feeling, what you're planning or intending – can help you to get thoughts out of your head and ease rumination.
- 3. Write before reacting.** When strong feelings surge, write them down first. Keep a notebook within reach and make it a habit to write it before you say it.
- 4. Write a letter you never send.** Don't just write down your feelings – address them to the person or situation that's troubling you. Even writing a letter to yourself can provide a safe space for release without the pressure of someone else's reaction.
- 5. Treat writing as a process.** Any time you draft something and ask for feedback on it, you practice stepping back to consider alternative perspectives.

Brain imaging studies show that putting feelings into words helps regulate emotions...

Local Clergy and Church Services

ANGLICAN

Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry

St Margaret, St Peter, St John

Rev'd Mike Smith,

The Rectory, 20 Church Rd, Caversham RG4 7AD

Tel: 0118 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810

penny@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Rachel Ross Smith Tel: 07884 371688

rachel@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Dr Catherine Radcliffe Tel: 07740 475697

catherine@ctmparish.org.uk

Contact: admin@ctmparish.org.uk or 0118 996 8836

Correspondence address: Church House,

59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX

Current services

St Margaret's Church

Mapledurham – 11:15. 1st, 2nd, 4th Sunday Holy

Communion, 3rd Sunday Service of the Word.

St Peter's Church

1st Sunday of the month: 9:30 All Age Service of the Word, with music group and choir

18:30 Holy Communion with prayers for healing, with choir

2nd and 4th Sundays: 8:00 said BCP Holy Communion

9:30 Holy Communion with choir and activities for young people, primary and secondary age

3rd Sunday: 9:30 All Age Holy Communion in a shorter format, with choir – 18:30 Choral Evensong

Wednesday: 9:30 said Holy Communion

All services live streamed on Zoom. For Zoom details go to www.ctmparish.org.uk/services/online/

St John's Church

Gosbrook Road Sunday services

9:30 1st and 3rd Sunday Holy Communion,

2nd All Age Worship, 4th Service of the Word

Sunday Club for children on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays

Thursday: 10:00 Holy Communion

St Andrew's

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.

Tel: 0118 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current services

St Andrew's weekly services are Sundays at 8:00 and

10:00. The 10:00 is also livestreamed on the St Andrew's

YouTube channel. Prayer Book Communion at 11:30 on

the first Sunday of each month. More info on the parish

website. www.standrewscaversham.org/services

9:00-9:20 Daily except Sunday:

Silent Prayer/Meditation/Mindfulness

St Barnabas, Emmer Green and Caversham Park

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk

Church Office Tel: 0118 947 5214

Current Services

Sundays: 8:00 BCP Holy Communion (1st Sunday only)

9:30 Parish Communion (Service of the Word on

2nd Sunday)

11:15 All Age Worship (Café Church or Family Communion)

Wednesdays: 10:30 Midweek Communion

Morning Prayer: Tuesdays 8:30 in church; Mon/Weds/

Thurs 8:00. online at

www.facebook.com/StBarnabasEmmerGreen/live_videos

Full details at www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church Caversham

Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

www.cavershammethodist.org.uk

Current services

Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road

Sunday: 10:30 – Also on YouTube

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

1st and 3rd Sundays: 10:30

Worship on Wednesday: 10:00-10:30

Third Thursday - Thursday Night Live: 19:30

New Testament Church of God

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson

Tel: 0118 946 3009

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

United Reformed Church, Caversham Park

Contact: Dr Alison Johnston

Tel: 0118 947 5152 www.cavershamparkurc.com

Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube

Details on their web site at:

<https://cpurc.org.uk/live-stream>

BAPTIST CHURCH

Caversham Baptist Church

Pastor:

Church office Tel: 0118 954 5353

Email: secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Current services

Sunday worship 10:30 each week, including groups for children and youth

Sermons are recorded and uploaded to

www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Grace Church (formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Elders Nick King and David Steed

Tel: 0118 947 4529 www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

See their web site for details:

www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Riverside Church (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne

Fr Joe McLoughlin, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue

Tel: 0118 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for services at:

www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

St Michael, Sonning Common

(including Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village)

Deacon Brian Theobald, The Presbytery, 18 Peppard Road,

Sonning Common RG4 9SU – Tel: 0118 972 3418

<http://saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk>

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



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