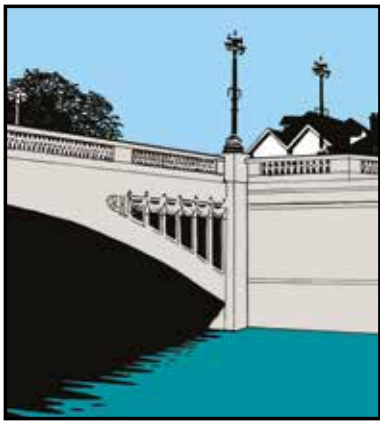




Caversham Bridge

No 736

www.cavershambridge.org

June 2026

‘New’ Caversham Bridge Centenary

by Helen Lambert

THE OLD Caversham Bridge, dating back to the 13th century, was patched up over the centuries, and the iron bridge which replaced it in 1869 was soon inadequate for a growing population. The Reading Extension Order in 1911, bringing Caversham into Reading, provided for a new or wider bridge. Was this to be a new bridge? Should it be in the same place? How should it be built?

It soon became clear that widening the existing bridge was not an option, nor a bridge terminating on Church Street. The benefits of reinforced concrete, with the latest techniques, won out over a steel suspension structure. Reading Bridge was to be built first. The two bridges had to allow for navigation and for the same volumes of water to pass through. Small islands were removed, and dredging started, along with plans to enlarge the weir.

Plans were drawn up for both bridges and progress made to widen Church Road, Church Street and Bridge Street, but all worked stopped with the outbreak of WWI.

Sir Henry Tanner, a prominent architect, was engaged to prepare a general design which included moulded concrete ornamentation in the form of swags and ribbons. The bridge would have two

relatively flat arches, and the two spans would meet on the island near the middle of the river which was severely cut back. A new pedestrian bridge was to link what we now call Pipers Island. Bronze lampstands were to be produced by the Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts, famous for the main gates to Buckingham Palace.

Reading Bridge was completed in 1923 and, in March 1924, work started for Caversham Bridge with the construction of the 6-foot-wide footbridge and the transfer of gas, water and electricity mains. As demolition of the iron bridge began, an old flint arch from the early bridge was uncovered and, later, an old masonry foundation, the foundation of the old chapel.

...unveiled the plaque...

Plans for a formal opening on 12 May had to be postponed for the general strike. The bridge opened to traffic on 8 May, and the formal opening was rescheduled to 25 June, as part of a visit planned by Edward Prince of Wales to various industries in Reading. The Prince travelled along the Thames by barge and unveiled the plaque on the bridge.

The bridge had cost a total of £70,649 5s 5d, just £18 over budget. Construction was completed in 25 months, five months over plan due to additional work to make deeper foundations.



Work is nearing completion with ducts laid for utilities, granite parapets are being installed, to the right is the temporary footbridge and beneath, the new link to Pipers Island can be seen. **Courtesy of Reading Libraries**

Sumer is icumen in

by Phil Chatfield

IT IS TIME to make the most of long June days and hopefully balmy summer evenings, although this is written in mid-May and it has been unseasonably cold! We recently visited Reading Museum to see the manuscript which includes the ancient song *Sumer is icumen in* (Summer has arrived), on loan from the British Library, so the title seemed appropriate!

We lead this month with the centenary of Caversham Bridge, a physical connection across the Thames which is vital for our community (above). The Thames itself features in an article celebrating the joys of ‘messaging about in boats’ (p8) and the beautiful river on our doorstep. We do have much to offer in our area, both in terms of environment and independent businesses. Our local environment is the subject of Happy Wanderer’s introduction to St John’s Wort and its historic uses (p7),

and our contribution from Roslyn Weaver looks at links between trees and fathers (p10). Our regular *Ecotip* article outlines events in June which are part of Reading’s Climate Change Festival (p11).

Local independent businesses are a part of our community which both serve us and bring in visitors. Our report on Record Store Day (p8) and our Local Scene painting from Janina Maher of the *Serdio Iberico* delicatessen on Prospect Street (p9) highlight a couple of these. Other regular contributors include Laura Harmsworth, with the latest of her *First Impressions* series (p14), and Ami Roy on wellbeing, with a focus on feet this time (p15).

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.



Reading Amateur Regatta 2025

photo H Lambert

INSIDE



Our kind Community – Serena Swainstone

p2



Live and Local – Richard Wells review local music

p5



Creative Caversham – Kate Findlay

p12

A Political-Religious Spat and its Solution



Talking Point

by
Revd Dr Alan Race

CONFESS THAT, as I write this column, I have been 'enjoying' the recent spat between the President of the United States and leader of the largest Christian denomination in the world, Pope Leo XIV. Much of this has been defined in terms of disagreement over the legality, morality, and conduct of the war initiated by the American-Israeli decision to destroy the leadership and governance of Iran. The disagreement is profound. The Pope has said God does not listen to those who wage war, and further, "Woe to those who manipulate religion and the very name of God for their own military, economic and political gain, dragging that which is sacred into darkness and filth". It was a clear shot across the bows which enraged the President. His response was a long screed declaring that the

Pope was a loser, and then a tweet showing himself as a robed Jesus beaming healing light.

The Pope has declared his colours in other ways too. Christians, he says, should be embracing the stranger, feeding the hungry, and standing up for the neglected poor – actions that the current regime in the White House dismisses as being unworthy of government or even faith's attention. The differences between the leaders are stark.

...status quo...

All of which raises the issue of whether Christian or, more broadly, religious faith, is a force for maintaining the status quo as defined by political rulers, or a movement for the transformation of accepted cultural norms. Political leaders tend to opt for the former, while more socially aware religious voices opt for the latter.

This same tension was reflected for me recently when a conversation with a Muslim friend turned to a discussion about what are often called Gandhi's Seven Social Sins. (They were in fact penned by an Anglican priest who preached about them in Westminster Abbey in 1925, but Gandhi, being better known, brought them to a wider public). The Seven Social Sins are:

- **Wealth without Work**
- **Pleasure without Conscience**
- **Knowledge without Character**

- **Commerce (Business) without Morality (Ethics)**
- **Science without Humanity**
- **Religion without Sacrifice**
- **Politics without Principle**

The initial concepts specifying how we frame our social lives – wealth, pleasure, knowledge, commerce, science, religion, politics – require to be shaped by values (the 'Without'... phrases) that provide us with purpose and render our social lives meaningful. Take science for example. Science is good and to be celebrated as a means for discovering how the world works at basic physical levels but, if it forgets the humanity which it is intended to serve, it becomes impersonal and even potentially misguided. Think of both the potential and the dangers of artificial intelligence which are coming to dominate much of our daily lives.

I suggest that the Seven Social Sins as they stand define rather well the presidential outlook on life – a suggestion that I feel sure would attract agreement by Pope Leo. Referring, for example, to the final 'Sin' – 'Politics without Principle' – many would agree that what we need is a whole lot more 'principles' if politics which can be trusted is to be once again assured of its decent and proper place in the hearts and minds of populations around the globe. Our social and cultural lives surely deserve this.

Revd Dr Alan Race, Reading Minster

Our Kind Community

text and photo Caroline Gratrix



Serena Swanston: Celebrating ten years of giving a second chance



Serena Swanston

special is its fostering programme. Serena works with foster carers of all ages, including a brilliant 93-year-old, and supports them with food, vet bills and insurance costs. It is a genuinely wonderful way to give a dog love and stability while finding them their forever home.

...brilliantly supported...

The rescue relies on fundraising, donations and volunteer dog walkers, and is brilliantly supported by The Pet Barn, Jollye's Pet Store, and Cherry Orchard Veterinary Services in Gallowstree Common.

When Serena does get a rare moment to herself, you will find her at her allotment, although quite how she finds the time is anyone's guess!

Serena's dream is to find a piece of land to build seven rehabilitation kennels. If you can help, or would like to get involved, visit www.forgetmenotreadingrescues.com

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SERENA SWANSTON is the heart and soul behind Forget Me Not Reading Rescues, and this year celebrates an incredible ten years of giving dogs a second chance at life.

It all started when Serena rescued her own dog from Romania and became curious about her history. What she discovered when she travelled there changed her life forever. Witnessing the scale of animal suffering on the ground, she came home determined to make a difference and Forget Me Not Reading Rescues was born. Since then, Serena has rescued over 500 dogs, from both Romania and the UK – some of them pulled back from the brink of euthanasia.

As if that were not enough, Serena spends her working days as a nurse. Caring really is her superpower!

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Ooops!

WE TRY hard to ensure our content is accurate, but mistakes can happen. So apologies to RABBLE Theatre regarding the caption for the photo in our May edition.

The Theatre bookkeeper, Ania Haskins contacted us:

I am just writing to draw your attention to a misdescription on page 14.

The photograph is captioned 'Mrs Ren Kapur (centre), High Sheriff of the Royal County of Berkshire, at the after-show party in Reading'.

The photograph does not feature Mrs Ren Kapur and was not taken at the after-show party, rather it was taken at the after-show Q&A at the Minghella Theatre at Reading University.

The photograph features Pam Stubbs, who was the Berkshire subpostmistress on whose story the play is based.

With thanks to Ania, the caption should have read:



Toby Davies, RABBLE Artistic Director; actor Naveed Khan; Glitch writer Zannah Kearns; subpostmistress Pam Stubbs next to the actor who played her Joanne Howarth; actors Sabina Netherclift and Laura Pennycard; University of Reading School of Law Associate Professor Elizabeth Conaghan.

The Editors

Raising plants to raise funds

DESPITE THE unseasonal weather, the annual plant sale in May organised by Pam and Phil Chatfield in support of Water Aid and the Red Cross in Ukraine, raised more than £2,500. A marquee and gazebos in the garden protected plants and customers from the worst of the weather, and the well-stocked tables were soon in need of replenishment. Pam had grown more than 100 tomato plants from seed, as well as hundreds of others, including the ever-popular cosmos. Generous friends donated plants and baked cakes, and Tricia Marcouse provided plant advice throughout the sale.

They also sold Fair Trade food and crafts from around the world, as well as Pam's crafts. Plenty of tea, coffee and cakes were enjoyed and friendships renewed. Pam and Phil would like to thank everyone who helped with donations, serving refreshments and washing up cups. And of course, all who gave the plants new homes. They hope to see you next year.

Follow the Caversham Fair Trade Facebook page [@cavershamfairtrade](#) for details of future sales.



A full marquee

by
George Grubb

photo J Brownlee



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News from the Editors Join Our Team

WE HAVE several roles available for volunteers who would be interested in being part of the team which keeps the Caversham Bridge running. We are seeking a volunteer treasurer to take the reins from our current treasurer, who is due to retire. We are also seeking someone who could manage our What's On sections.

To find out more, contact Phil Chatfield at chair@cavershambridge.org

Email headache

As a result of changes implemented by our server provider at Easter, we have been unable to send emails out. We are receiving your messages, but there may be a delay in acknowledging them, for which apologies. We hope the problem will be resolved by the time this paper is printed.

Subscriptions renewals - £7 for 2026/7

More than three quarters of subscriptions have now been renewed, thank you. Prompt payment really helps reduce the administrative burden! The annual subscription is unchanged at £7 for 12 editions and runs from 1 April 2026 for all our subscribers. You can pay by bank transfer, or by cash or cheque to your deliverer or by post.

Payment details are as follows:

Cheques for £7 should be made out to Caversham Bridge News. Writing your postcode and house number or name on the back of the cheque is helpful. If you prefer to post a cheque, it should be sent to Caversham Bridge News, Church House, Church Street, Caversham, Reading RG4 8AX

For direct bank transfer or standing order, our bank account details are:

The Caversham Bridge News Ltd – Sort Code: **30-67-99**
Account Number: **72808960**

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The proposed membership payment facility on our website has been delayed as a consequence of our IT problem. However, this should go live within the next month, allowing you to register your details and to pay by credit card. The system will also enable automatic subscription reminders if appropriate.

If you have any queries about your subscription, contact subscriptions@cavershambridge.org

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Baskets

photo L Kujawa

Blessing the Baskets

OUR MARCH edition included an article by Leszek Kujawa about the Polish traditional Blessing of the Baskets service at Our Lady and St Anne's Catholic Church. Following the service, Leszek sent the following update and photo:

'At the Blessing of the Baskets this morning at Our Lady and St Anne's, we had over 40 baskets to be blessed, and about 100 people attended from a wide range of nationalities in addition to those with a Polish heritage. It certainly was the highest number since we started about ten years ago. There was a lovely aroma left in church from all the smoked sausages and herbs!'

Dogs to help Raise the Roof

by Barbara Pearson

ST PETER'S CHURCH, the oldest church in Caversham, dating back to 1162, has launched a Raising the Roof appeal. In an article in our November 2025 edition, Francis Serjeant reported on the problem of tiles falling from the roof. The appeal aims to raise £180,000 to restore the roof and stop tiles sliding off. As a first step, snow guards have been fitted to catch slipping tiles. In common with so many ancient and historic buildings, a great deal of regular repair and maintenance is needed to protect the building and keep it open.

A fundraising event is planned for a Summer Fair, featuring an Artisan Market and Fun Dog Show, on Saturday 4 July in Caversham Court Gardens. Entry is free and refreshments will be available. For details, see the attached poster.

In the meantime, anyone wishing to contribute to the fund may do so at:
raisingtheroof@ctmparish.org.uk

A Handy Sum

by Wendy Howell

A GREAT DAY out was had by all who attended the Household and Handyman sale at St Barnabas, Emmer Green, on Saturday 2 May. There was a great community feel to the whole event, with bargains galore. The items sold on the day included bicycles, garden clothes, a picnic table with stools, and a set of old-fashioned scales with weights. For the first time in years, the plant stall sold out.

Progress Theatre acquired props for a period drama, and Greenshoots in Sonning Common (part of the Ways and Means Trust) benefitted from some of our leftovers. In total we raised around £1,600 for our charities, Education for Life and Masicorp.

...setting up...

None of this would have been possible without the volunteers who helped with setting up on Friday, manning stalls on Saturday, and clearing up afterwards. Thanks are also due to Handy Andy for advertising the event on Facebook, with help from Christine Bartlett, who took photos.

We are now looking forward to our Summer Garden Party, which starts at 14:00 on Saturday 18 July. There will be the usual tombola and various side stalls, including cakes, preserves and a Hamper Raffle. Refreshments will also be available.



Household and Handyman sale

photo C Bartlett



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Simon Jones
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by Vicky Barnes



For your bookshelf...

Welcome to the Fourbears Book column!
I'm so excited to share some great reads with you once again.

WHEN IT COMES to inspiring a passion for reading in children, we love seeing a revival of classic children's literature. Following the new film adaptation of Enid Blyton's *The Magic Faraway Tree*, the children's pick for the month needs little introduction. First published in 1943, the second book in *The Faraway Tree* series remains one of the most beloved children's fantasy tales. Blyton was very much a product of her time, and modern editions of her work have been updated to remove outdated language. However, the enduring magic of the worlds she created is a testament to the power of the imagination and how this can ignite a lifelong love for reading. It's the perfect story for those aged 7+ to read independently, whilst younger readers can still benefit from reading with parents at bedtime.

We've been enjoying translated fiction in the shop recently so, to follow suit, the adult pick of the month is *Strange Buildings* by Japanese author Uketsu, translated into English by Jim Rion. I can

truly guarantee you will have not read anything like this before.

Uketsu (real name and identity unknown) began as a Youtuber and creator of short, surreal horror films, and has now written three books, *Strange Buildings* being the latest (published in English in 2026). The book is comprised of a series of deeply unsettling, mysterious and masterfully crafted stories. The narrative is an amalgamation of diagrams, maps, floor plans and images that are as crucial as the writing itself. Each story is connected and, by the end, a terrible conclusion is reached that you would have never seen coming. As a reader you are encouraged to play detective, spotting subtle links between each chilling tale, making for a totally immersive and gripping reading experience. I'm also fascinated by the way in which Uketsu taps into the more disconcerting aspects of modern society in Japan with a folklore-inspired edge. *Strange Houses*, *Strange Pictures* and *Strange Buildings* are all in stock. Uketsu's work is some of the most original I've come across in years; I can't wait to see what comes next.

www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk



Two bears, two books!

photo V Barnes



Thank You For The Music

Thunder Hammer Presents Monsters of Rock

The Facebar – 11 April 2026

Thank You For The Music

The Hexagon – 12 April 2026

text and photo Richard Wells

HAD A very busy weekend in April, with tickets to two wildly contrasting shows over the weekend of the 11th/12th. We had some classic rock on the Saturday, and a tribute to Sweden's finest, Abba, on the Sunday.

Starting strong with a visit to one of my favourite small venues in town, The Facebar, my friends and I saw Thunder Hammer from Stoke on Trent who have been wowing audiences around the UK since 2016 with their incredible Monsters of Rock show. The band, certainly in the instance of flamboyant frontman, Simon Ward, shows no signs of slowing down after celebrating their 10th anniversary. Ably covering artists such as Black Sabbath, AC/DC, Guns n' Roses, Bon Jovi, Led Zeppelin and many more, there's plenty for any rock fan to sing along to and rock out to!

Simon's voice is incredible, and both he and the extremely talented band had the audience in the palms of their hands from the outset to the encore.

All preorder tickets for this show were sold out with only a few left on the door so, if you fancy seeing the show next time it's in town, be sure to book early!

...up and coming...

Also, make sure you check out The Facebar socials for updates of shows from up and coming and established artists and more tribute shows too.

On Sunday we headed to The Hexagon to see Abba tribute show *Thank You For The Music*.

As you might imagine, the show is fun and camp and covers all the songs any die-hard Abba enthusiast would want to hear. The band is amazing, especially the multitasking Connor, AKA Bjorn who, whilst providing some laughs in between songs, made humorous comments about the original Abba's colourful love lives! They brilliantly mimic the music, moves and costumes of the original group, and the voices of 'Agnetha' and 'Frida' are note perfect.

If you fancy being transported back to a classic Abba show for an evening, keep an eye out for their next show. Also keep an eye on The Hexagon socials and website for anything else that might take your fancy.

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What's On

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 13.
A listing of *Baby and Toddler* groups can be found on page 14.

Until Saturday 27 June – Exhibition: *Aftershocks & Echoes: Healing Through Making* – Art as Therapy and Transformation – 10:00-16:00 Tuesday – Saturday, The Caversham Picture Framer, 5a, Church Road, Caversham RG4 7AA. A group show featuring Imy Moon, Jenna Fox and Paul Askew. Website <https://cavershampictureframer.co.uk>

From Monday 1 June – The Reading Climate Festival – Various events throughout the month. See Ecotip article on page 11 for details. The events are listed on Eventbrite at <https://tinyurl.com/4rzm2tv5>

Tuesday 2 June – Caversham Women's Institute – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel: 0118 947 5176

Wednesday 3 June – Rosehill Ladies – 14:00 at St Barnabas Hall, Emmer Green. Tel: Sue 0118 947 7570 or email suegreen@hotmail.com

Wednesday 3 - Saturday 20 June – Secret Shakespeare present *Julius Caesar* – 19:30 The Abbey Ruins. An 'immersive' (mobile) production, where the players (and therefore the audience) move around the Abbey Ruins for different scenes. Matinees on Saturdays and Sundays. To book tickets visit www.secretshakespeare.co.uk

Friday 5 June – 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 6 June – Mindfulness, learn and practise some of the methods of mindfulness – 09:30-13:00 St Andrew's Church, Albert Road RG4 7AW. Led by Tim Stead, Mindfulness teacher, author and former vicar. The cost is £20 – although if cost alone would prohibit attendance just say: financial assistance is available. Meanwhile, if you want to practise meditating with others, a few of us (4-10) meet every Monday to Saturday at 09:00 in the church for 20 minutes when we are 'Silent Together'. Contact office@standrewscaversham.org

Wednesday 10 June – Growing Roses with Alan Goad (Henry Street Garden Centre – 19:30 at Caversham Baptist Church, opposite Waitrose. Caversham Horticultural Society. £3 non-members. Light refreshments. For details visit www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/talks

Wednesday 10 June – The Peoples Emergency Briefing – 19:30 Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. Chris Packham and Jennifer Saunders, along with leading scientists, invite you to watch their film based on the Briefing presented to 1,200 MPs and national leaders in Westminster. The film sets out where the UK is heading – across food supply, water security, public health, economic stability, and national security – and what we can do about it. Details at www.nebriefing.org Free event. For more information and to reserve a place: <https://PeoplesBriefingCavershamHeights.eventbrite.co.uk> See also 16 June

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

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June – Reading Amateur Regatta – River Thames at Thameside Promenade. A brilliant day out for spectators, with plenty of space for picnics in Caversham Court Gardens and along the Promenade. For details, see www.reading-amateur-regatta.org

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June – The Regatta Vintage Fayre – 10:00-19:00 Saturday, 10:00-17:00 Sunday. Caversham Court Gardens. A chance to watch the Reading Amateur Regatta boat races and to enjoy garden games, a craft market and live music. Food and a bar on site. Entry free. See www.angelbar.co.uk for more details

Tuesday 16 June – The Peoples Emergency Briefing – 19:30 Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road. Details as 10 June.

Monday 22 June – Haridans, Hedwig and Hawks - *Birds in Literature* by Ailsa Claybourn – 14:00 Reading u3a, Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. Non-members welcome, free entry. See www.readingu3a.org.uk

Friday 26 June – Fête de fin d'année – Join us for food, wine, chat and some games – 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 readingcerclefrancais@gmail.com

Saturday 27 June – Reading Water Fest – 11:00-17:00 The Forbury Gardens, Abbey Ruins and along the River Kennet. For details see <https://whatsonreading.com/venues/reading-borough-council/whats-on/reading-water-fest-2026>

Saturday 27 June – Summer Concert – 19:30 – St Andrew's Church Albert Road, RG4 7PL. Concerts in Caversham present CinC Ensemble with pieces by Beethoven and Brahms. Tickets £18-£26 – www.concertsincaversham.co.uk for information and tickets through the online Box Office

Coming Soon:

Sunday 5 July – Love Bade Me Welcome – 16:30 St Barnabas Church Emmer Green RG4 8RA. Join Glass Ensemble for a summer concert celebrating love. This varied programme brings together a mix of beautiful music for upper voices, including music by Felix Mendelssohn, Sarah Quartel, Ralph Vaughan Williams and others. Tickets £16 include refreshments and programme. Retiring collection for the RNLI. Contact Glass Ensemble on 07930 690873 or asusied@btinternet.com

Wednesday 15 - Saturday 25 July – Shakespeare in the Abbey Ruins – *Hamlet* – The Progress Theatre return to the Abbey Ruins for an outdoor production of *Hamlet*, directed by John Goodman. Matinees on both Saturdays (18 and 25 July). Tickets are now on sale online via Ticketsource: www.ticketsource.com/booking/whats-on?q=Reading+Abbey

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 ENQUIRY into 70 new homes in South Oxfordshire on **Land West of Kidmore End Road** took place in early May. Strong arguments for dismissing the appeal were put to the inspector by North Reading community groups and individual residents, as well as South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) and Kidmore End Parish Council. The development conflicts with the SODC and Reading Local Plans and the Kidmore End Neighbourhood Plan. Concerns were raised for the sustainability of the location, given residents would need to travel by car for SODC services, including schools and GP surgeries, or else rely on Reading's already oversubscribed ones. Traffic congestion in Caversham and the safety of pedestrians and cyclists was also raised, along with the impact on the landscape and ecology of the area. The inspector will now weigh the harm caused by the development against SODC's failure to meet its Local Plan housing supply targets.

In other local news, at **Caversham House and Park (PL/26/0204)**, the Condition requiring sufficient wastewater network capacity has been met, following confirmation by Thames Water. However, it is understood the Environment Agency noted the downstream treatment works are at capacity, raising the risk of sewage discharge into the Thames. Also for **Caversham Park (PL/26/0311)**, Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Transport Development Control said the Construction Method Statement was satisfactory, although the planning officer is still considering other matters.

At **Hemdean House School (PL/26/0138)**, there has been significant local objection. RBC Transport Development Control is recommending refusal due to highway safety concerns, insufficient parking, and lack of footways. At **2 Mill Green (PL/26/0252)**, this retrospective house extension and HMO application was refused due to the harm to this Locally Listed building.

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 costs just £12 for three years – see membermojo.co.uk/cadra for details.

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St John's Wort

A GOOD DEAL of folklore surrounds the various wild species of St John's Wort, which have yellow flowers that open around the feast day of St John the Baptist, 24 June.

The botanical name, *Hypericum*, was arrived at in ancient times. They were plants which were hung above icons and statues to repel evil and bring good fortune in Greece and Rome. In later times, in Christian England, the plants were associated with St John because of the time they flowered, and because their red sap reminded people of the beheading of St John. People hung bunches above their doors, put sprigs under their pillows, and carried pieces around under their left armpits to keep evil away. The plants were also burned on bonfires. Traditionally, they were gathered before dawn on 23 June, and burned on the eve of St John's Day, when people jumped over the burning embers to bring good luck. In the West Country, the bonfires continued into the twentieth century.

...side-effects...

If you search for 'St John's Wort' on the Internet, before you find anything about the plants you will be faced with a barrage of advertising for different herbal preparations – pills, tablets, capsules and potions, varying in price from £3 to £30. They are said to relieve anxiety and depression, promote emotional wellbeing, help wounds to heal, and help you to sleep. Reading a little further, you will find warnings about side-effects, especially if you are already taking anti-depressants.

The species you are most likely to come across is the Perforate St John's Wort. It's unmistakable if you hold one of its leaflets up to the light. The leaflets aren't exactly perforated, but have translucent cells. These cells produce oils which deter insects from eating the

If you search for ‘St John’s Wort’ on the Internet, before you find anything about the plants you will be faced with a barrage of advertising for different herbal preparations – pills, tablets, capsules and potions, varying in price from £3 to £30...

leaves, and apparently the cells release more of these oils if a single leaf of a plant is damaged.

There is also an Imperforate St John's Wort, which looks similar but hasn't the translucent 'dots'. The two species can hybridise. The plant I've photographed is the Hairy St John's Wort, which can also be found around here, in chalky places. If you look at the flowers closely, you can see that the sepals – the leaves immediately below the petals – have tiny black dots round the edges. There's a species called Tutsan which I've found in woods just north of Caversham. It's a woody shrub, with larger flowers than the others, and in autumn it has black berries. Then rather farther away, I remember photographing the Marsh St John's Wort, growing with its roots under water in the New Forest. It has downy, water-repellent leaves.

In this article I've said something about the botanical name, and the association with St John, but what of the word 'wort'? It's an Old English name, meaning a root, a plant or a herb, especially one with culinary or medicinal properties. So we had Lungwort, which supposedly was good for the lungs, and Liverwort for the liver. In the case of St John's Wort, though, the plants are probably best left alone!



St John's Wort

photo Happy Wanderer

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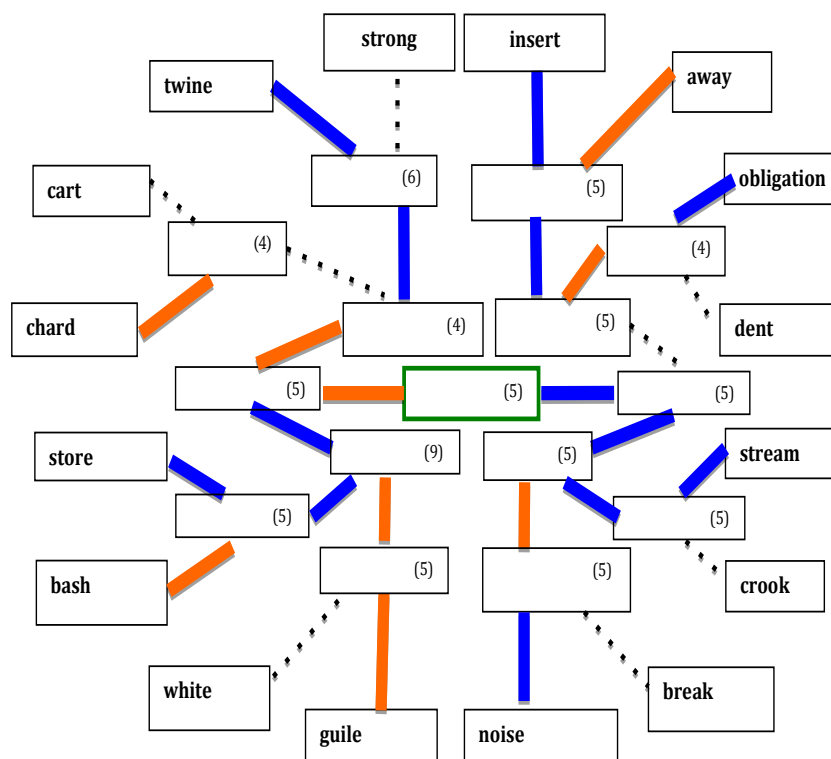
Puzzle Corner

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 14**

Bridges over the Thames

Can you find 22 names of bridges over the Thames in the grid?

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

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Messing about in boats by Jean Harper



Ratty's Cottage

BELIEVE ME, my young friend, there is nothing – absolutely nothing – half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats.' So, on Bank Holiday Sunday, we decided to take Ratty's advice to Mole in Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and booked a trip with Thames Rivercruise.

We chose to take the 90-minute round trip to Mapledurham aboard *The Alexandra*, under the expert guidance of our friendly and informative captain and crew who pointed out the various sites of interest along the route, both historic and more recent.

...chalk heights...

We passed the delightful Caversham Court Gardens, with its Gazebo built in 1663, and the gardens of The Warren, where in the early 20th century the successful businessmen and professionals of Reading built their villas on the chalk heights to escape the industrial activity of the town below.

We cruised past the peaceful fields of Little John's Farm, the site of the Reading Festival over 50 years, and through Purley with its riverside gardens and faux post box in the embankment wall, which has fooled many a boating holidaymaker. *The*

Alexandra turned just before Mapledurham lock and weir, but not before we were lucky enough to spot a couple of kingfishers to add to the cormorants, herons and other birdlife spotted along the way. We were also able to take in some lovely views of Mapledurham House, site of many a film location, as well as its church, St Margaret's, with its unusual arrangement of having a Catholic aisle within an Anglican parish church.

There was a bar aboard *The Alexandra* to keep you going with tea and coffee, or something stronger if needed, but other vessels in the fleet offer trips with lunches, cream teas and live music. We are so fortunate to have the River Thames on our doorstep, so do take the opportunity to see Caversham and its surroundings from the water. It offers a very different view. We even saw the house that provided the inspiration for Ratty's cottage so, in the words of the song, 'If you take my advice, there's nothing so nice, as messin' about on the river'.

You can check out their website at
www.thamesrivercruise.co.uk

Record Store Day

by Damian Jones



Vinyls bagged!

all photos M Apar

ON SATURDAY 18 April, Caversham's very own Pop Classics Record shop hosted their annual Record Store Day event. This is a day when independent record shops come together around the globe to sell exclusive vinyl-only releases from some of the world's biggest names in music. This year the list included Madonna, Taylor Swift, Pink Floyd, John Lennon, Bruce Springsteen and many others.

A queue began to form outside the shop from 18:00 on Friday, with vinyl enthusiasts eager to bag these future collectibles. By the time the shop opened at 08:00 on Saturday, the queue snaked along Church Street towards the bridge, with hundreds of excited customers waiting in line.

Record Store Day really is a great event which brings shoppers into Caversham from a wide area, as it is the only shop in Berkshire to host the event...

Local legend, Tobias Grønvald, has documented his experience of the day on his YouTube channel, it's a great watch. See

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HumJylu5Ps

Later in the day local bands, Midsolis and Cheap Suits, played live in-store shows and packed the shop out with supporters.

Record Store Day really is a great event which brings shoppers into Caversham from a wide area, as it is the only shop in Berkshire to host the event. Many people visiting Caversham for the first time remarked what a wonderful place it is, saying they'd be back.

Roll on Record Store Day 2027.



Record queue

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Serdio Ibericos/Miss Crocquetas

Since 2023 Esther has worked tirelessly to bring the tastes of Andalucia to our High Street

ESTHER SERDIO opened her Spanish delicatessen in Prospect Street in 2023. Previously she had worked in London, but her passion for home cooking and the traditional food of Seville inspired her to start a market stall to sell her delicious products. For a few years she set up her stall in local markets and became a regular at the Sunday Market in Caversham. As her business developed she needed a bigger kitchen and eventually took over the premises at 8 Prospect Street.

...delicious...

Since 2023 Esther has worked tirelessly to bring the tastes of Andalucia to our High Street. She fills her counter cabinet with freshly made dishes to eat in or take away. The shop also stocks a wide range of products imported from Spain – great for gifts and treats at home. A particular favourite with customers is her traditional Basque cheesecake which I can thoroughly recommend. Another speciality is her range of homemade croquetas, delicious crispy balls with different ingredients.

Esther runs a supper club, a Tapas club in the Angel Bar, and supplies many local venues with her croquetas. She provides dishes for private parties and events or you can enjoy eating in or just drop in for coffee and a nibble and feel the atmosphere of the south of Spain.

The building started life as a private home but, by 1900, had become occupied

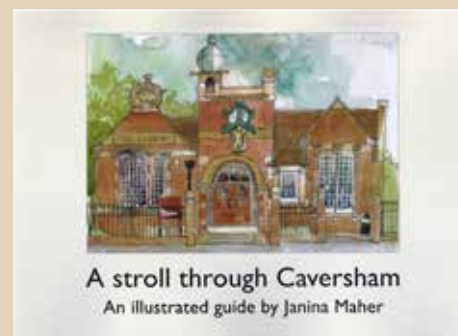


Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

by William Smith's, newsagents and tobacconists – a business which continued up to the 1970s under different proprietors. Before Esther took it over it was a shop servicing computers and mobile phones.

We are very lucky to have such a wide range of cafés and restaurants in Caversham and a chance to enjoy cuisines from around the world. Many are independent businesses which bring a special atmosphere to Caversham and we must support and encourage them in these difficult times. Thanks to Esther for working so hard to bring a taste of Spain to Caversham.



A Stroll through Caversham

Janina's popular 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



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Les Cooper



Wellbeing...

...gardening supports our physical and mental wellbeing

I WAS READING an RHS article that made me appreciate how lucky we are to have gardens to work in. The article told how scientific research backs up the belief that 'gardening supports our physical and mental wellbeing'.

I think I am a reasonably happy man, but I do get miserable at times, and the garden is a great place for cheering me up. Perhaps there are moments when I notice too many weeds but, generally, there is always something to boost my morale. Even in winter, a beautiful robin following me around will make me realise there is some peace to be found in the world.

My pleasure comes mostly from growing flowers, especially when I grow them from seed. Don't misunderstand me, I would not be without my trees and shrubs, but with flowers there is more for me to do, especially when a plant is yours from the very beginning. It makes you feel like a real gardener, not just a garden centre customer. Yes, you sow a speck and, a few months later, you have a six-foot flower proudly standing before you. I am thinking here of delphiniums which are easy to grow from seed. I suspect growers fail to appreciate the lengthy period of flowering a delphinium has.

There is the main stem with its florets gradually opening from the bottom, followed by lateral flowering stems and, when these are over and have been trimmed away, a second flowering can occur in the autumn.

Echinacea Purpurea doesn't take a lot of effort to provide a long-flowering attraction for you, and the bees and butterflies. Also known as Coneflowers, they have attractive big daisy-like purple flowers with distinctive large cone centres. Not difficult to grow from seed, and the wildlife will appreciate your thoughtfulness.

I know I have mentioned *Erigeron Karvinskianus* before, but it is worth repeating how, with a small effort in raising plants from seed, it will give you masses of white flowers to enliven your garden for weeks.

Last year's drought made me appreciate *Sedum*. With their large glossy leaves, they survived happily and, as ever, flowered in due course. I think I would recommend *Sedum* for most gardens, although I admit I have never grown them from seed.

I have mentioned a few plants, but there are so many others to try and to satisfy your gardening ego.



Un-named Delphinium seedling photo P Booth

Fathers and Forests

text and photo Roslyn Weaver



Westfield Park

WITH FATHER'S DAY approaching on 21 June, attention turns to celebrating those men who positively influence and care for their children, and those who may not be 'fathers' but still play a crucial fatherly role in the lives of those around them.

Although the usual images for Father's Day tend to stick to golf, cars, beers and gardens, there is another more interesting link – a tree. And not just any tree, but one of the oldest trees in the world, or so it is claimed, found in Chile and said to be more than 5,000 years old. 'Said to be', because verifying the age of ancient trees is difficult, and others usually named among the oldest include the Biblically named Methuselah bristlecone pine in California, while the UK has yew trees said to be several thousand years old. This Chilean tree is the *Alerce Milenario* (Millennial Larch), also known as *Gran Abuelo* – meaning Great-Grandfather in English.

Caversham may not have trees of quite the same age, but trees of any age can feel important. Some readers may have noticed a longstanding tree cut down in April near

Elizabeth House on the edge of Westfield Park – or if not, may have noticed the trunk blocking the park path over the Easter weekend. This was no Sycamore Gap crime but a Council removal for safety reasons as the tree decayed, according to the council's Streetscene team, with plans to put a new oak into the complex.

...welcome sight...

In the meantime, the relatively new and younger trees lining paths of Westfield Park and Christchurch Meadows are a welcome sight, and bring us back to the idea of family, grouped together. Giving a 'Great-Grandfather' name to a tree might seem odd, but no odder than forester Peter Wohlleben's claims that trees function like human families, with parent trees supporting child trees via fungal networks (in his book *The Hidden Life of Trees*). It is too fanciful for some, yet if nothing else it serves as a reminder of the importance of good fathers and good father figures in their communities: steady, strong, and supporting those around them.

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Bike Hub doing brisk business

photo F Smith

Beanpoles and more

ECONET ORGANISED another successful event in Caversham Court Gardens on a sunny Saturday 18 April. Despite access difficulties following the damage to the main gates, stallholders were able to set up in plenty of time for the 10:00 opening.

The good weather seemed to encourage visitors, and the stalls were busy throughout the day. Many people commented on the friendly, community nature of the event.

...maintenance check...

There were 17 stalls, which included garden plants from Green Shoots which nearly sold out, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, who fielded questions about bird feeders, Caversham Fair Trade, and Sue Ryder fundraisers. Reading Tree Wardens were selling trees and providing advice, and the local seed swap did a brisk trade. For the first time, Reading Bike Hub attended and worked all day to give cycles a spring-time maintenance check. They even took away three donated cycles for full refurbishment and resale. The tool sharpening raised nearly £300 to support the repair cafés in Reading, and Econet raised around £240 from the sale of 30 bundles of beanpoles.

**by Tricia Marcouse
and Phil Chatfield**

The good news is that we understand Reading Borough Council now has the money to start the repair of the walls and putting in new main doors, and this work should start soon.

Econet's next event is Meadows' Day on Saturday 4 July, at Clayfield Copse, Emmer Green, RG4 6AA, from 10:30-13:30. It celebrates the traditional hay meadows that once thrived across the countryside, home to a rich variety of plants, insects, and wildlife. There will be guided walks, including one for families with small children, and some stalls, including the local wildlife groups.

Econet continues the regular work parties to maintain open areas around Reading and improve them for biodiversity and carbon storage. New volunteers are always welcome.

**Upcoming tasks are listed on the website
www.econetreading.org.uk
where you can sign up for a weekly e-newsletter
giving task data and other activities as well**



The Reading Climate Festival

Not an EcoTip from me this month, but information on a whole host of environmental events during the Reading Climate Festival this June.

STARTING THINGS off on 1 June is a resourcing event for churches in Reading at St Laurence Church, Friar Street 19:00 to 21:00. This is a marketplace for energy efficiency with stalls including Heat Hack, Reading Community Energy, EcoChurch and Green Christians, followed by talks and Q&A on the science of climate change and efficient, sustainable energy options for churches and funding new projects. The evening is aimed at incumbents, PCC members, EcoChurch leads, and anyone who would like to help their church reduce bills and care for the planet. For enquiries or to book your free place, please email reading@greenchristian.org.uk

Continuing the energy efficiency theme are two Zoom offerings on creating a warmer home (8 June) and conversion of gas boiler systems to heat pumps (11 June). On Saturday 20 June (11:00 to 17:00) and Sunday 21 June (11:00 to 16:00) the Bicycle Hub, King Street, central Reading hosts a drop-in advisory session. Here, local experts in draughtproofing, insulation, energy systems, boiler controls and retrofit options will provide general information but also, more importantly, answer your specific questions and problems in the detail you need whilst your kids use pedal power to recharge their phones and tablets.

It's not all about energy; a community lunch in Forbury Gardens (from 11:30 to 15:30, Sunday 14 June), offers tips on how to grow your own food, a seed swap, live music and local, climate-friendly groups, as well as a special visit from Commando Jugendstil, who will help Reading residents respond to the *People's Emergency Briefing* (see What's On page 6 for details of local showings of this film).

Also on offer over the three weeks are lectures from university specialists, a fabric reuse workshop, visits to the wind turbine in Green Park, a climate change cabaret, paddleboarding river clean-up, a creative writing course, and introduction to community-led circular economy initiatives in the town. Something for all ages and interests.

Close to my interests are three events: the first is a Zoom talk *Hedgehogs, Swifts and Martins: Bringing them back from the brink* at 20:00 on 10 June; a walk to Fobney Marsh on 14 June at 11:00; and a film, *The Little Things That Run The World*, followed by an expert panel discussion on the problems and solutions to the loss of insects at 18:00 on June 16 at the Biscuit Factory.

That's a quick taster; there's lots more listed on Eventbrite at <https://tinyurl.com/4rz2tv5>

By June, they will also be under 'events' on the Readingcan.org.uk website. Everything is free entry and booked through Eventbrite (although voluntary donations are welcome).

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Picking up the thread



Intrigued by **Kate Findlay's** incredible textile art when it appeared at the Picture Framers last December? Her work is currently on show at Greys Court...
Elestr Lee reports

TEXTILE ARTIST Kate Findlay vividly remembers the moment her passion for art was kindled: when her mum took her to London to see a Turner exhibition. "I remember looking at his work and his sketchbooks and I thought, 'Wow, this is what I want to do!'" says Kate.

Nurturing her interest throughout her schooldays in Andover she went on to do a degree in textile art in Wolverhampton and worked as a designer in the carpet industry. However, after she was made redundant, she retrained as a teacher and moved to this area where she worked at Blessed Hugh Faringdon, becoming Head of Art, subsequently teaching art at St Mary's prep school in Henley. Taking a break from school teaching she was keen to exhibit

her paintings; active with the Henley Arts & Craft Guild, where she became Chair, she also helped set up the Henley Arts Trail with the aim of attracting more people to see the extraordinary range of art being created in the South Oxfordshire area.

It was as Kate was spending time at home when her son was little that she was to discover the medium that nowadays has become her own. "I was asked to make some new banners for my church, St Nicolas in Earley, and I really loved it. I thought to myself, I just want to work in fabrics – so doing this took me back to textiles. It really was a 'lightbulb moment' for me!"

Kate created a pair of banners for each of the Church seasons; after this she also went on to make stoles for the vicars of St



Kate's vibrant use of colour, as in *Sea of Blue* (above), and *Chiltern Woods* (right)

all photos K Findlay

"I thought to myself, I just want to work in fabrics – so doing this took me back to textiles. It really was a 'lightbulb moment' for me!"

Nicolas. However, Kate's next project with quilting techniques was a world away from the work now associated with her.

"Very different to what I am doing now!" she recalled. "I started my Large Hadron Collider series of pieces made using quilting techniques. I became fascinated by the project at CERN in Switzerland and was inspired by the huge circular shapes. Making large art quilts enabled me to make pieces two metres square. Over the course of four years, I built up enough work for a series of solo shows round the country.

...journal quilts...

"But then, as a member of the Quilters' Guild we were asked to create 'journal quilts' which were all very small. The idea was to produce one a month, to cover the 12 months of the year. I decided to do birds... everything I do now emerged from this series of 12 small 'journal quilts'."

From a practical point of view Kate realised that creating smaller pieces that were relatable were both popular and saleable. She was also commissioned by organisations such as the National Trust and Oxfam to create designs. "Since I started creating the work I do nowadays, inspired by birdlife and nature, my way of working has evolved, and I have moved away from quilting; it's a lot more aligned with embroidery. I mainly do machine embroidery, not so much hand embroidery – partly due to the added speed when I use a machine. I use a collage technique, dyeing much of my own fabric, then cutting pieces of fabric, bonding the pieces, then embroidering over the layers. My works tend to be around 50-60cm square, it's hard to go much beyond that size, for manoeuvrability under the sewing machine. I think people can relate to this kind of size of a piece, and it works well when hung on their walls."

...leading workshops...

Nowadays Kate tours the country both exhibiting and selling her textiles, as well as leading workshops where she teaches adults her craft. Many will have spotted her eye-catching exhibition at the Caversham Picture Framers at the end of 2025: "The exhibition at the Picture Framers went very well, I was surprised to sell as many pieces as I did!" For the past five years she has also taken part in the summer celebration of local art and artists which takes place at Greys Court at Rotherfield Greys during the summer months.

"The first time I showed my work at Greys Court it was part of the Henley Arts Trail," Kate explained. "It was very successful for me; I sold all the pieces I had exhibited! Then my friend painter Sarah Pye suggested that we approach Greys Court and ask if we could put on a joint exhibition, after the arts trail. This worked really well for us, and we have done this ever since. This summer Sarah and I are being joined by jeweller Janet Richardson.

"It is perfect for us, I love being there, and I find it so inspirational. While I am there, I



Works inspired by Greys Court will be on display



Kate's take on autumn, *Hidden Beauty*

take lots of photographs, and I will be exhibiting pieces of work which are based on Greys Court itself."

Kate also loves leading workshops and the teaching aspect of her work. "I teach both quilting and working with mixed textiles," she said. "However, I am now trying to balance all these commitments, as I do need to have the time to make my own work!"

Find out more:

artsfindlay.co.uk

Darling Buds of May Exhibition

Greys Court, RG9 4PG, ends June 6

nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/oxfordshire-buckinghamshire-berkshire/greys-court
(admission fee for non-NT members)

cavershampictureframer.co.uk

prints of Kate's textile works
are available





An Opportunity to Serve!

CHURCHES IN Reading Drop In Centre (CIRDIC) aims to meet a range of needs to Reading's homeless, poor and those living a marginal existence. It was established in 1990 because a group of local Christians wanted to respond to the needs of the homeless and clearly disadvantaged people in Reading. Originally the aim was to provide a welcoming place in which to offer food and clothing. Now, in response to growing needs, the Centre offers a wide range of support services to our guests.

In addition to hot nutritious meals, clean clothing and toiletries, there are bath and shower facilities. CIRDIC also provides services such as a safe postal address, the use of a telephone and confirmation of identity, as well as regular access to, and links with, visiting services such as health care and housing. The team also provides listening time and moving-on projects designed to help our guests to improve their lives and

happiness. For some guests, contact with CIRDIC has been a first step to rebuilding their lives.

CIRDIC's Centre in St Saviour's Hall, Berkeley Avenue, Reading RG1 6JT and its work depends on prayer, financial support and volunteers. Although there are more than 70 volunteers involved every week, there are opportunities in the week (Monday, Tuesday and Friday lunchtimes) and also on Sunday mornings, where we serve breakfast from 09:00-10:00. Volunteers assist preparing and serving a cooked breakfast and crucially communicating God's love through being present, and demonstrating non-judgemental hospitality. We aim to have as many volunteers as possible to minimise rota demands.

If you would like to know any more about this, please contact Cathy Bull on 07877 899102 or cathybull900@hotmail.com
For more information, visit www.cirdic.org.uk/what-cirdic-does--when.html

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 – Rivariate Choir – Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. 19:30 in term time. Enjoy singing together. For details see rivariate.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/CAFMmarket

Sundays – Nordic Walk (or just walking). Free to all.

Tel: 07931 754096 or email Pat at Wiralbird@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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First Impressions Matter *by Laura Harmsworth*

You don't have to work the room: networking advice for introverts



WALKING INTO a room full of strangers, name badge on, sixty-second pitch ready, is not my idea of a good time. I'm an introvert. Not shy, not unfriendly, not bad at conversation. I can hold a conversation, present to a room and meet new people perfectly well. But afterwards, I need time alone to recharge. Large, noisy events full of small talk and elevator pitches drain me completely.

...do it differently...

For years I thought this made me bad at networking. It doesn't. It just means I do it differently.

Introversion is about energy, not confidence. Extroverts gain energy from being around people. Introverts spend it. Knowing this changes how you approach building professional relationships, and introverts often build stronger ones because we naturally gravitate towards proper conversations over collecting contacts.

Networking matters more than people realise when job hunting. A significant proportion of roles are filled through personal connections rather than advertised positions. Who you know matters, but so does who knows you are looking for a job.

Extroverts aren't wrong for loving a busy event and working

the room with ease. That works brilliantly for a lot of people. This is simply about finding what works for you.

For me, that's a one-to-one coffee. A good conversation, genuine common ground, no agenda other than getting to know someone.

If that sounds more like you, here's where to start.

Tell the people already around you that you're looking. Friends, former colleagues, people you've lost touch with. Warm connections are far more likely to lead somewhere than cold ones.

Use LinkedIn thoughtfully. A personalised note explaining why you'd like to connect removes the pressure of face-to-face interaction and often opens doors you wouldn't expect.

...one small goal...

If you do attend an event, give yourself one small goal. Have two or three genuine conversations, rather than collecting a fistful of business cards you'll never follow up on.

And always follow up. A short, warm message after meeting someone costs nothing and is often what turns a brief encounter into something which actually goes somewhere.

Networking doesn't have to be draining, just do it in a way that feels like you.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

Website: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email: contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

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(From left to right from the top)
string, inlay, card, debt, cord, inset, hoard, fjord, inlet, stockpile, creek, cache, brook, while, creak

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



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. 08:45-10:00. 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. 09:30-11:00. All are welcome, refreshments available.
www.facebook.com/groups/209815529592564

Fridays – Baby and Toddler Group – Church House, Church Road, Caversham, RG4 8AX. 09:30-11:00. Step-free access at the back. See www.ctmparish.org.uk/stpeter for details

Future editions:

Contributions for the July issue

should be submitted by 1 June and for the August edition by 1 July. These should be emailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy

are 1 June for the July issue and 1 July for the August issue. These should be emailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org



Wellbeing *with Ami Roy*

One foot in front of the other

I FOUND MYSELF marvelling at the variety of summer sandals on display; the colours and designs are very tempting. It's as if my feet are feeling joyful, emerging from their winter hibernation in socks and shoes!

Our feet are surprisingly complex. Each foot has 26 bones, 33 joints, and a network of nerves and blood vessels. Our feet also have more than 100 muscles and multiple connectors, called tendons and ligaments.

In addition to calluses, corns, bunions, and other foot infections, the health of our feet can reveal a number of things about our general health. If we pay some attention to these signals, we may catch discomfort early and learn to manage outcomes.

There are over 200,000 sensory receptors within the feet. This sensory feedback is crucial for development of balance, proprioception, and environmental feedback.

Here are some common signals that we can become more aware of:

- ✗ **Swollen feet:** Liver disease, heart disease, low haemoglobin, low kidney function
- ✗ **Ankle Pain:** Low vitamin D, high uric acid
- ✗ **Tingling and numbness of feet:** Vitamin B12 deficiency, insufficient vitamin E
- ✗ **Spider veins:** Oestrogen dominance, poor liver function, prolonged standing
- ✗ **Cracked heels:** Vitamin A deficiency, low iron level, deficiency of Omega 3, thyroid disorder
- ✗ **Cold feet:** Low iodine, Anaemia
- ✗ **Leg cramps:** Sodium deficiency, low potassium, vitamin B12 deficiency
- ✗ **Burning sensation in feet:** Diabetes, vitamin B12 deficiency
- ✗ **Frequent foot cramp:** Magnesium and potassium deficiency

Research suggests that regular grounding practices, placing our bare feet on the earth regularly, massaging them, and using simple acupressure points to keep the circulation in the feet running smoothly can increase the feedback we receive from our feet.

Reduced toe strength and foot pain are associated with falling. Exercises like calf raises, toe curls, and ankle circles increase foot strength and flexibility. Vitamin D3 is shown to have beneficial effects on foot health.

Appropriately sized, comfortable, and season-friendly footwear is another important consideration.

Reflexologists and podiatrists have expert knowledge about our feet and can offer advice and treatments accordingly.

Diabetics in particular should see their healthcare provider as soon as they notice any changes to the health of their feet, leaving no wound untreated.

And once again, challenging our balance as often as we can is a benefit to our overall wellbeing. It can start with one foot in front of the other....



Image by freepik.com

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: 09:30 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: 08:00 said BCP Holy Communion

09:30 Holy Communion with choir and activities for

young people, primary and secondary age

3rd Sunday: 09:30 All Age Holy Communion in a shorter

format, with choir – 18:30 Choral Evensong

Wednesday: 09:30 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

09:30 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 08:00 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

09:00-09:20 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: 08:00 BCP Holy Communion (1st Sunday only)

09:30 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 08:30 in church; Mon/Weds/

Thurs 08:00. 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

Deacon Sarah Wickett

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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