

CAVERSHAM THEATRE

BOWS OUT

Caversham bade farewell to a much-loved organisation on 13th November when members of Caversham Theatre took their final bows after nearly 30 years. They went out with a bang, ensuring that the only tears were tears of laughter, as they put on a special gala performance for one night only. Seating was cabaret-style, with a meal served during the interval. The evening was in aid of charity, with Reading Youth Theatre and the Newman Trust receiving more than £600.

The evening had two one-act plays. In 'Motivation' by Lynn Britney a group of bank employees was planning a company quiz night, but there was a bit of manipulation going on – a play with gentle humour, and a twist in the plot. After the interval subtlety was thrown out of the window, as Evelyn Hood's 'Curses, Foiled Again, took us to the rehearsal room of an amateur drama group as they prepared to perform a Victorian melodrama.

These two plays represented something of the versatility of a small group that had won a devoted, loyal following attracted by the solid



standard of performance – yet never losing the sense of fun in putting on the show. Some local people attended almost every production, and it was good that so many were able to attend the last show.

Caversham Theatre was founded by Dorothy Byers, a music teacher who had a special gift for unearthing hidden talent. Many a graduate of the theatre will testify to the way Dorothy cajoled them into performing and discovering

that, actually, they enjoyed it. Dorothy had a bold approach, not afraid to put on large-scale productions. She would use her wide social contacts to draw in extra performers beyond the core membership of the group which never numbered more than about 30. The musical 'The Boyfriend' and Shaw's 'St Joan' were two of these productions.

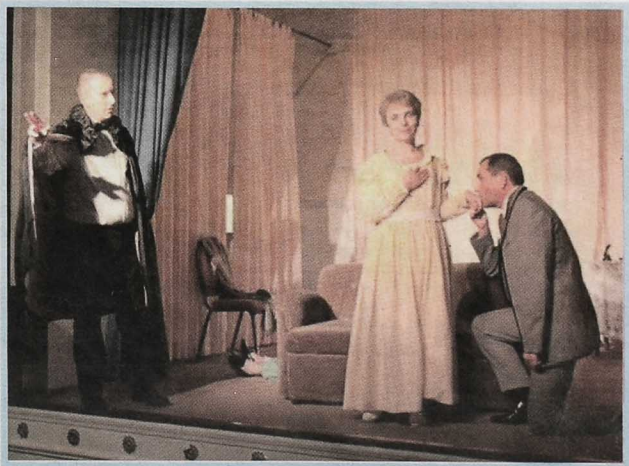
After Dorothy died the

direction of the Caversham Theatre passed to Bob Green, another notable local figure and former mayor of Reading. Over more than a decade he developed Caversham Theatre into an effective, well-directed team performing a corps of plays suited to a small group. These included murder mysteries, comedies, melodramas and plays with a serious message. In all, Caversham Theatre has performed about a hundred plays, regularly putting on at least three productions a year until recently.

The small size of the performing core was beginning to tell in the last few years. Added to that were problems finding space in the booking schedule at the hall. The number of productions was reduced, then after Bob Green died the impetus to keep going faded.

And so the time has come for the curtain to fall on Caversham Theatre. The players bow out with a sense of pride in what they have done – and relief at no longer having to learn lines!

Story and Photos: Jonathan Brown



WE WISH OUR READERS A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

INSIDE

Caversham Celebrations	page 3	Clubs.....	page 8
Ex Libris	page 4	Happy Wanderer	page 9
Churches	pages 5, 10	CIRDIC Celebrations	page 11

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Caversham Clergy

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Revd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road.
Tel: 947 8239.

www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

Revd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,

Harrogate Road. Tel: 947 2788

www.standrewscaversham.org

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

Revd Dan Tyndall

The Rectory, 20 Church Rd, Caversham RG4 7AD

Tel: 947 9505

Revd Keith Knee-Robinson

8 Hewett Close, Caversham RG4 7ER Tel: 947 7868

Revd Jeremy Tear

St John's Vicarage, St John's Road, Tel: 946 2884

Caversham RG4 5AN

Revd Graeme Fancourt

18 St Peter's Avenue, Caversham RG4 7DD

Tel: 947 8450

Revd Marion Pyke

26 Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7RZ Tel: 947 5834

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Revd Margaret Dimmick, 12 Lowfield Road,

Caversham Park. Tel: 947 0258

Heather Wilson, 15 Northbrook Road, Caversham

Park. Tel: 947 5152

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.

Tel: 947 2223

Deacon Becky Lovatt, 1 Forge Close, Caversham RG4

8BG. Tel: 948 2530

BAPTIST

Paul Rhodes. Tel: 954 5353

GRACE CHURCH (formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Colin Gault. Tel: 948 4151

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Fr Giles Goward, The Presbytery,

2 South View Avenue.

Tel: 947 1787.

Deacon Mike Walker, Tel: 07786 836146

Fr Christopher Bester, 18 Peppard Road,

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St Barnabas Centre
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Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the February 2011 issue should be sent to Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by Tuesday 4th January. The date for the March 2011 issue is Tuesday 1st February 2011. Email address as above.

Advertising copy for the February 2011 issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by Friday 31st December 2010. The date for the February 2011 issue is Friday 28th January 2011.

TALKING POINT

by

John Ogden

Wherever I look I see questions. Behind every promising proposal from government my private antennae detect more questions. Very often these questions cluster around the so-called law of unintended consequences. Some desirable outcome is being sought, but with it comes a risk of quite different and undesirable outcomes—the unintended consequences. It's a very useful law in some circumstances, such as the care of the dying. It all depends on people being totally and absolutely honest, that they really are working towards the good outcome.

But today I'm not thinking about the care of the dying. I'm thinking about an issue that has caused a real public stir: tuition fees for higher education. I'm wondering about the (possibly) unintended consequences. My question is: Will industry be prepared to pay more for graduate labour?

When I was a university teacher I formed the impression that industry regarded the costs of higher education as being met by the government—in short, that graduates came 'free' from general taxation. Following the withdrawal of all government subsidies of university tuition fees, that view clearly has to change. Will industry and commerce be willing to rethink their attitude to graduate pay in the light of the huge burdens of debt that graduates will bear?

We understand that graduates whose income is less than about £21,000 will not have to pay back their student loans. Will this lead to a situation whereby employers divide their graduate staff into two: on the one hand the very able who show outstanding leadership potential; and on the other, the many ... Will there be a perverse incentive for employers to pay 'the many' less to exempt them from the burden of repayment, while paying the outstanding few more in order to help pay off their debts?

Perhaps the employers might be willing to pay more for the privilege of employing graduates provided they, the employers, have more control over what is taught, and the academic subjects in which they are willing to take an interest. This in turn will move university education firmly towards an instrumental model: it is to serve a very specific objective, and an economic one at that.

How, I wonder, will subjects like theology, history and biblical studies fare in such an environment? It's easy enough to speculate that these subjects will vanish entirely from the universities' prospectuses, simply because no one will be able to afford them.

But I can think of one very good reason for sustaining them. We are talking now about negotiating with radical religious groups in one form or another. I see a continuing argument for understanding and respect in any such negotiations. To study theology in depth, embracing a range of perspectives, (and indeed history and languages) is to enter a world where dialogue with radical religious groups may be possible. I'm not advocating respect for the violence and injustice often pursued in the name of religion. But if we understand better how people tick then negotiations may be more fruitful.

Rev Dr John Ogden is a retired Methodist minister

SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am	Holy Communion
9.45am	Parish Communion
6.30pm	Evensong

St John's, Gosbrook Road

10.00am	Parish Communion
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St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am	The Eucharist
10.00am	Parish Eucharist (Sung)
	First Sunday, Family Eucharist
11.30am	The Eucharist
6.30pm	Evening Prayer (as announced)

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

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

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am	Parish Communion
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CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP Meeting at Caversham Park School

11.00am	Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sunday)
	Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)
	All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.30am	South Street
3.45pm	Hymn Café (3rd Sunday)
6.00pm	Usually at 191 Kidmore Road

GRACE CHURCH Old Peppard Road

10.30am	Worship and Ministry, Children's Church
6.30pm	Prayer Meeting

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

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10.30am and 6.30pm

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

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Church Street, Caversham

9.30am	Sunday School
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11.00am	Divine Worship
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6.00pm	Evening Service
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The newspaper produced by the members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

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

The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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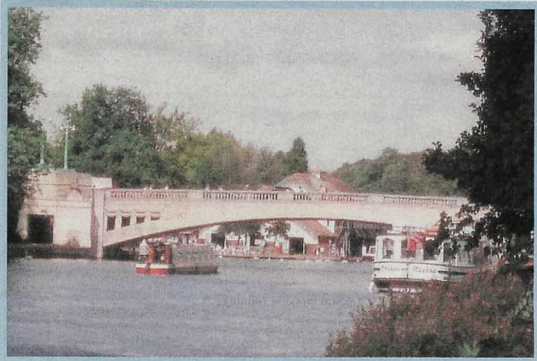
Caversham 100 years on

The year 2011 marks a very special, but in some respects controversial centenary, for Caversham: the anniversary of the expansion of Reading borough to include Caversham and Tilehurst.

Caversham was a busy and fast-growing commercial centre in 1911, with a population of well over 9,000, including nearly 700 shopkeepers and other traders. This meant there were increasing employment opportunities in the village itself, while almost a thousand Caversham residents worked in Reading, many with big employers such as the Great Western Railway and Huntley and Palmers.

Before 1911, Caversham was a separate urban district with its own council, though affairs relating to police, highways and education came under the jurisdiction of Oxford City Council. At the end of the 19th century, however, connections with Reading were close: gas and water were supplied by Reading, many Caversham youngsters attended schools south of the river, and the Royal Berkshire Hospital was the nearest medical centre.

Caversham had the reputation of being a desirable place to live, a noteworthy "riverside watering place" with attractive residences built on the "bracing highlands", as one contemporary description put it. It had three Anglican churches and a number of non-conformist chapels, including a fine Baptist chapel built by the well-known architect Alfred Waterhouse. With its own library, police station, schools and even a new cemetery (in Hemdean Road), the village was a thriving community in its own right.



Caversham's prize for joining Reading.

Caversham did have its problems. Communications with the rapidly-growing town of Reading were hampered by the poor transport connections. There was only one bridge across the Thames, a narrow iron one built in the late 1860s. The only other way to cross was by a footway over the old weir close to where Reading lock is today. A new bridge was badly needed to take vehicular traffic: even the tram routes from Reading had to stop at the river because the bridge was too narrow to take the trams.

Caversham urban district council had kept the local rates low, but had not kept up with the community's needs. Some educational establishments in the village had a poor reputation, and no provisions had been made for tackling infectious diseases. The standards for the slaughter of animals and food hygiene which Reading had put in place did not apply north of the Thames.

By the end of the 19th century, Reading needed space to expand, and looked west to Tilehurst and Theale, and north to Caversham. The formal process, which had to go through parliament, began in 1908, and the Confirmation Bill was passed in 1911. There was a great deal of opposition from some sections of the population of Caversham. With feelings running high, the urban district council at first refused to cooperate with the enquiries or even attend meetings at which negotiations between Berkshire and Oxford county councils took place.

Under the incorporation agreement, Caversham gained not only a wider Caversham Bridge, but a new bridge as well. Reading Bridge was built in 1923, which allowed work to start on rebuilding Caversham Bridge, which was re-opened in 1926. Readers with Internet access may be interested to watch a brief British Pathe news video clip showing Edward, Prince of Wales, opening the new Caversham Bridge during an industrial visit to Reading that year: <http://www.britishpathe.com/record.php?id=25466>

Some may feel that the Thames marks an unbridgeable division, and regret that Caversham lost its status as a separate village north of the river. However, the centenary presents an opportunity to celebrate the history of Caversham as a whole, and to explore our diverse 21st century community. Various Caversham and Reading organizations are working together to co-ordinate a programme of events and exhibitions focusing on Caversham and its heritage. The plan is to have a loose framework, entitled 'Caversham 100 years on', which will allow wide participation. A common website is being set up which will help to provide shared publicity.

If you are interested to take part or lend support, please contact the Friends of Caversham Court at friends@fccg.org.uk, Frances.Hill@CavershamRotary.org.uk, or Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk. We would be particularly interested to hear from someone who would be willing to follow up leads from the museums, libraries and public record office and pull together material.

INFORMATION WANTED

I am trying to find information about an old shop in Caversham called George Povey's Store. I am wondering whether any reader has ever heard of it? The item I am researching is a bottle which may date from before 1920. If any one can help can you please telephone me on 0118 948 2594 or email me at LEagleton@aol.com

Martin Turner

The Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club 26th Annual 10k Run

The Lions are hoping Sir John Madjeski will be available to come along on the day to be the "official starter". The run starts at 10.30am on Sunday 9th January 2011 by the entrance to Langtree School in Woodcote and they are expecting about 600 runners to take part. You may remember that in January this year this annual event was cancelled for the very first time due to heavy snowfall blocking most roads in the area.

Organised by the Lions, this next run is in aid of both the local Air Ambulance and Macmillan Cancer Support. Every penny raised from the public by Lions is used in community projects and none is taken up in administration costs.

John Grimwade

John and Anne Grimwade, having had their 90th birthdays this year, feel they can no longer write a Christmas letter but hope those in Caversham who remember them will have a joyous Christmas and happy New Year. They are always glad to hear from old friends.

Gill Madeley N.A.Hort.

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THE YEAR OF ...

Do you remember 1st of January 2000? We waited for the millennium bug to bite. It didn't. No great silence above as planes feared to fly, no stock market crash as computers and the banking system failed, no panic as rumours of war and terrorism swept the globe.

Well 2000, according to Chinese astrology, was the year of the rabbit giving way to that of the dragon. Ten years on, and we are again in the year of the rabbit but move into that of the dragon. We move from a sign that values affection, gentleness and strong family ties; that is caring and hates conflict. We move to a symbol of confidence, hard work and striving to be at the top; a symbol of energy and determination which shuns routine and welcomes new projects.

I never read my zodiac sign, I don't believe in astral influences. Some of you may disagree with me. What I do know is that we are at a start of a revolution. The wheel is beginning to turn and it just may be that society will never be the same again.

...THE BIG SOCIETY

And here we are in 2011. Last year saw a general election where, by the rules of our democracy, we voted for a change of government. Or did we? We saw the manifestos of the parties and cast our ballot papers accordingly. So we got what we voted for. Or did we? The cynical among you may say we didn't actually vote for some of the key policies being promulgated. In fact we voted against them. But of course we all know that election promises are mere aspirations; the main one being to get into power.

The coalition wants a participatory society, the "big society." If you are happy with the election result, if this is what you feel you voted for then it is your civic duty to participate in this, the new politics. Follow the symbol for the coming year, the dragon.

If you feel cheated and think you voted for one set of policies but are being given another or if you didn't vote for either of the coalition parties then once again it is your civic duty to oppose. And give the coalition its due; it is giving us the chance to have our say in many areas.

THE CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

One of these areas is in the cultural life of our town. The cultural partnership is the epitome of the big society.

Here is how its website describes the venture:

The cultural partnership brings together culture in Reading in its widest sense covering the six themes of arts, sport, health, heritage, learning and sustainability offering real opportunities for communities in Reading to build on the existing community work they are involved with as well as developing new projects.

<http://readingarts.com/artsdevelopment/>

It is open to all to join, individuals, groups, corporations. I would also encourage you to join your local residents' group such as CADRA or EGRA, support community ventures such as The Caversham Bridge and get your friends involved.

CAUTIONARY WORDS

Always read the small print. A trained public speaker knows that to get the message across you have to start by telling the audience what you are going to say, then say it and finish by telling them what you have said. Here is my small print and mantra.

'The times they are a changing.' History does have lessons for us and the prime lesson of history is that what finally emerges looks nothing like what those who initiated the change originally envisaged.

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MISCELLANEOUS

News from the Parish of Our Lady and St Anne

Christmas Fayre

The Christmas Fayre was held in a different venue this year because St Anne's Hall was not available. The Cenacle meeting room and the Narthax at the back of the church were decorated and filled with stalls and were busy all afternoon.

The cake stall soon sold out and those who wanted their cake to eat there and then were able to have refreshments as usual. Alternative refreshment was available on the mulled wine and mince pie stall.

A tombola for soft toys vied with the customary bottle tombola and the plant stall was selling beautiful festive candle arrangements. The Piety stall was able to display its full range of goods in its usual "after mass" position. The raffle prizes this year were several luxury hampers and a further raffle took place for five home-made decorated cakes. A little mental stimulation was available on the "How many words from CENACLE AND NARTHAX" stall. Those who could face the cold could consume hot dogs and burgers cooked on the barbecue outside.

Father Christmas arrived during the afternoon and this year children could have official photographs taken (with parental permission, of course).

Altogether a very friendly atmosphere prevailed making this a very successful social event as well as raising a useful amount for the church building fund.



Skittles

Members of the parish of Our Lady and St Anne enjoyed an evening of skittles at the Gardeners Arms during November. They were joined by some members of St Michael's parish, Sonning Common. It was particularly pleasant to meet the new parish priest of St Michael's, Father Bob Devanney.

All present were able to bowl two scored rounds before refreshments were brought in and then, after the interval, take part in a Killer "score or lose your life" session with one ball each to find the winner of the evening.

After many people were knocked out, the final handful contested closely to much banter, cheering and noisy heckling until only three were left. Because time was running out it was agreed to call them joint winners so Anthony, Mary and Sally shared the honour of being "Killer" for the night.

Although this was a social and not a fund-raising event, a raffle raised £80 for the Wells in India appeal which is the charity of the year for St Anne's parish.

Rediscovering Kingdom Healing!

If you would be interested to hear about how Jesus taught His disciples to heal the sick, and how His healing power is still available today, then come along to Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, Caversham on Tuesday 18th January to see a short promotional DVD and listen to a brief talk on Kingdom healing. Tea and coffee will be available from 7.30pm, and we aim to start at 8 pm. If it is a problem to get to this meeting, we can lend you a copy of the promotional DVD and (hopefully) answer any questions.

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Due to lack of support the Churches Together in Caversham Link group has regretfully decided to curtail its activities. Funds raised will be donated to four local charities leaving a reasonable balance to ensure that the popular monthly tea parties for the elderly will still take place. Any requests from the various charities supported by our members can be circulated through Church CTC representatives. We would like to thank all the local people who have supported our activities over the years.

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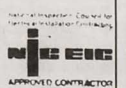
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TRIBUTES TO MARY KIFT 1921 - 2010

Margaret Baily, retired editor of Caversham Bridge writes:

The death of Mary Kift, briefly reported in last month's Bridge, was sad news for this paper, in which she had kept readers enthralled with the history of Caversham and Reading from almost its first issue. Her monthly articles were so keenly enjoyed that they soon became her first book, later enlarged with more information and more pictures.

John Grimwade writes of his last meeting with Mary in Bibury. We drove her there with Bill Vincent and we had a most marvellous trip. Mary talked us through the route we took; it seemed that she knew every dwelling, tree and field. We heard of her early days with her mother and three children- we passed near her house. Then we drove through countryside, with Mary pointing out fields still carrying out the medieval system of leaving one fallow. We passed hedges that she and a friend had dated 25 years ago. It was wonderful. Her memories during lunch were as John has recorded - and there were no repetitions.

She was an admirable lady who will be remembered by all.

Pat Preece writes:

Mary worked weekly for 30 years with the late Marion Fallowfield and myself on local landscape archaeology for the South Oxford Archaeological Group. Her knowledge of the district and her enthusiasm was infectious. Personally I shall miss her greatly and even now when looking through all the papers on my desk her writing keeps popping up. Miss you, Mary.

Kathleen Hardy, a friend and neighbour writes:

With the death of Mary Kift, Caversham has lost one of its great personalities. She had a natural affinity with children which became very obvious when she was in their presence.

She started her involvement with children as a pupil teacher at St Peter's School - long since demolished.

This was followed by four years' service in the Land Army, spent on farms in the Compton, Yattendon area, and the remaining two years in the Lambourn valley.: Long hours, long walks to and from work and bitterly cold winters were her lot. Most of her work was with cows, milking mainly by hand but also by machine and eventually she was in charge of the whole dairy. She often had to spend the rest of the day helping with haymaking, harvesting or whatever work was needed on the farm. I'm sure this all contributed to her extensive knowledge and love of the natural world.

After the war, Mary returned to St Peter's School for a while before moving on to teach in Checkendon. By the early 1950s it became necessary to have a qualification to teach so off she went for 2 years to Offley Froebel College near Hitchin. After gaining her Certificate of Education she taught at schools in Checkendon and Wallingford, before ending her career as Head of Mapledurham Village School.

Much of Mary's life was spent thinking about other people and what she could do to help them. Not very

Canon J G Grimwade, former Rector of Caversham writes:

One of the first visits I made after my institution at Caversham in September 1962 was to the Kifts' home in Darell Road where Mary's parents and bachelor brother lived. Mary at that time was a much-loved head of the small church school at Mapledurham living in the charming small house attached to the school. Her connection with St Margaret's church dates from that time.

After some years she returned to look after her ageing parents and remained at Darell Road until she died there in her 90th year. A keen gardener she delighted in tending the sizeable garden.

Soon after *Caversham Bridge* started in the autumn of 1964 she began a wonderful series of articles about the history of Caversham and Mapledurham. She enjoyed researching in the library of Christ Church Oxford, which as patron of the living of Caversham provided her with some interesting material and her last article appeared only a few months before her death. My final memory of her was about three years ago when she was driven over for a pub lunch at Bibury and I only wish we could have recorded her flow of reminiscences which held us enthralled.

Among her many friends was Marjorie Burnside whose obituary for this paper I wrote recently. Until Marjorie moved from Ilkley Road to sheltered accommodation at her son's she and Marjorie were avid scrabble players together.

She was a great character and devoted worshipper until she suffered the stroke from which she never recovered.

many years ago she could be seen on her bicycle taking home made food to a friend in need, or just to have a chat with a lonely person known to her- typically these people were often much younger than her! She sent many a card to housebound people who "might like to receive something from the postman".

This caring aspect extended more widely through the many charities she chose to support, both at home and abroad. While thinking of others, she was quick to express her gratitude to those who did things to help her, whether it was a thank you note for the time she spent in their homes or her ready smile and a few words of thanks to the postman for delivering her mail.

Mary had a phenomenal memory being able to recall with ease relevant information when needed, often adding "I heard about it at a lecture in the 1970s" or "I remember that from a book I read before the war".

A drive through the area would bring forth a running commentary about the history of the various houses that

were being passed and the people who had lived in them.

But perhaps Mary was most at home when working in her garden. She had a wide knowledge of flowers and shrubs and enjoyed passing to others spare plants that she had grown. Many a local garden must have a flourishing plant as a reminder of Mary.



Mary Kift in 2009

Photo Rachel Williams

REMINISCENCES OF HER LIFE AND TIMES

John and Lindsay Mullaney write

It was in autumn 2007. Lindsay and I were planning our spring holiday to France. Mary said she would love to see France one more time before she died. To say we were taken aback is an understatement. We had taken Mary on several outings but this would be altogether something else.

It was a brave soul who contradicted Mary in identifying some obscure plant. We enjoyed Mary's company, her tales from before the war, her time in the Land Army, her time as a teacher and head-teacher, her passion for archaeology, history and botany; all interests we had in common.

Often we talked about her two books, *Look Back at Caversham and Life in Old Caversham*. Mary was rightly proud of these works but too modest to acknowledge just how important they have become for so many, newcomers and long term residents alike. When Mary decided to revise the original 1979 edition of *Life in Old Caversham* in 2004, we had long discussions about various aspects of Caversham and its history.

Mary was keen to link the past with the present. So as you drive up Peppard road and come to the junction of Surley Row you will see a new road called Notley Place. Notley Abbey had been important in the medieval history of Caversham. The council recognised this by taking up Mary's suggestion to name the road

after Notley Abbey. The last time I took Mary back home we passed this road and I know it gave her great satisfaction to see the sign. It is a lasting memorial to her work as a local historian.

So back to that trip to France. We were thinking of Burgundy and several months later off we went. It was the first time Lindsay and I had taken the car through the Channel Tunnel. Mary, as intrepid as ever, was as excited by the prospect as we were. And her interest never stopped. As we drove down the A26, past the Field of the Cloth of Gold, through Reims, down to Burgundy, Mary gave us a running commentary on the changing landscape, the variations in the local flora and finally the vineyards. How Mary loved the vineyards!

Burgundy isn't just the land of the vine. It has meadows and mountains and Mary fell in love with its unspoilt countryside and wild flowers which reminded her of her childhood. It also has ancient abbeys, monasteries and churches. Mary admired the architecture and at one point was helped in her wheel chair by some young French students so she could visit the ruins of Cluny. Most of all, Burgundy is famous for its wine and food and Mary charmed her French hosts with her wonderful smile and appreciative taste for French cuisine.

Our memory of Mary is of a lady with strong opinions but ready to discuss anything and to try anything no matter how new. We shall miss her conversation and friendship.



In Burgundy fields

Photo J Mullaney

Mapledurham Jubilee Club

Mary founded the Mapledurham Jubilee club for older people in the area to have companionship with others and enjoy activities and talks together. She took a large part in the running of the group for most of the next 45 years. She was involved in all aspects of the club making cakes for the monthly afternoon tea, writing birthday cards, helping with jumble sales, giving talks about her life in the village school, and inviting members to her home and garden, especially in the summer for afternoon tea. The list is endless.

Mary was devoted to the club and when she retired from the committee she continued to be a welcome member.

Betty Smith

Mapledurham School

Mary taught five of my brothers and sisters and me at Mapledurham school and we have fond memories of our time there. Mary was very caring and made learning fun. We would often go on nature walks to collect leaves and other things.

I remember her asking us what we would do when we were older. I said "I would like to look after people". Mary asked if I would look after her. It turned out that in the last couple of years I have helped her with cleaning, shopping and other jobs. My mother enjoyed many years with her at the Jubilee club.

Mary has remained a very special person in our lives since school days. It has been a pleasure and privilege to have known her. She will be sadly missed.

Julie Deaton
(Durrant).



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Caversham WI

It was a sweet evening for members and three visitors when Mr and Mrs Whelpton came with a large selection of continental chocolates. We were told the history of chocolate and the various types produced in different countries. Then it was purses at the ready for Christmas presents to be bought.

The speaker judged the competition for chocolate brownies. Beryl Newbury was first with Ishbel Nicholson and Sylvia Myztor second and third.

Notices included reminders of the Christmas meal and the combined birthday and Christmas party in December. The raffle ended a delicious evening

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Chazey WI

When local artist John Yeo agreed to give a masterclass to Chazey WI, members brought their friends for a very interesting evening.

He set up his easel, prepared a selection of pastels to work from, and, with a woodland scene already captured on film, he began to mix colours. First the trees, with added depth in the foreground, then a winding path receding into the wood, and as the picture gradually came to life he talked about light and shadow, impressions of detail, and his enjoyment of teaching art.

It was fascinating to watch. 'Anyone can paint' he said. 'I had no formal training'. He studied the history of art, travelled, and from these inauspicious beginnings he eventually exhibited at the Royal Academy. He now teaches experienced artists and beginners.

His finished picture was donated to Chazey WI as a raffle prize, won by a delighted Christine Carter.

Chazey WI meet at 7.45pm on the first Tuesday of every month at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall. Visitors and new members are always very welcome.

Rosehill WI

Brenda Caborn president, welcomed members and visitors then introduced Adrian Jefferies. He gave a most informative talk on the History of Costume Jewellery from the 1800's to the present day, with a mixture of slides and pieces of jewellery. He showed a modern piece of Ming mounted in silver. This was recovered from one of the old sailing vessels which have been recovered from the sea. These pieces of broken Ming had been used as ballast in the old vessels and were now being recycled again to make jewellery. He explained about the variation in the quality of gold and how rolled gold was produced. A piece of marcasite which is a mined mineral was shown.

Another popular Victorian stone was jet which is used for mourning. This is found in the sea and is fossilised wood found mainly at Whitby. It can be carved and polished to make brooches and other decorative pieces.

Adrian had brought along a collection of jewellery which was on sale and members were able to show him their own pieces and find out what stones they were made of.

The Walking group had enjoyed walks at Aston near Henley, and at Shiplake Woods and a pub lunch.

The Scrabble group had held two meetings. A lot of knitting was brought along to the meeting for Buscot baby ward.

Meetings are held at St Barnabas Church Hall Emmer Green on the 1st Wednesday of the Month starting at 2p.m. Visitors are very welcome.

St Peter's Wives Group

Our AGM was held in November, when two new committee members were elected.

Mrs Jean Pugh, one of our long-standing members (and wife of Cllr Fred Pugh, who was Mayor last year), gave a very interesting talk on her year as Mayoress.

Her life as Mayoress was extremely busy, with numerous invitations to accompany the Mayor being received from various organisations, and in addition to the many civic functions they attended. All these engagements were organised by a very efficient PA, whom they met with once a week to discuss their programme of events, together with a list of duties and advice on suitable clothing.

There is no longer an official car for the Mayor, but instead a most efficient car hire firm is used to drive them to

functions. Jean took the opportunity to augment her wardrobe, going primarily for mix and match outfits and two warm coats; she also stressed that comfortable footwear is essential for a Mayoress, as long hours are spent standing or walking around at events. Her main duties were to help the Mayor, accompany him to engagements and talk to the people they met, which she enjoyed, but found quite tiring.

They attended a variety of events during the year, including a visit to Caversham Court Gardens, opened by Fred after its refurbishment, and a visit to Ireland, where they attended a St Patrick's Day dinner at Clonmel. Visits to the University, Guides and Brownies events, school assemblies, various churches and a Buckingham Palace garden party were also enjoyed.

They were very proud of the Mayor's Parlour and invited many people to visit during their year in office. They raised nearly £11,000 for the Mayor's Fund which was shared between two charities, Diabetes UK and Sue Ryder.

Our next meeting will be at Church House on Tuesday, 21 December at 8.00pm when we will be holding our Christmas Party, with a "Magical Entertainment" performed by Mr Keith Churcher.

Reading and District
PROBUS Club

Geoff and Diana Hayes, members of the regional committee of the British Legion, gave a history of the Legion. The Royal accolade was awarded in 1919.

Soon after that, every village, town and city erected a war memorial, usually in the public square, which recorded the names of those who died, adding more names of those who died in conflicts that followed. Parades by the British Legion and service personnel have become part of the annual Remembrance Sunday.

Why the poppy? The fields and countryside, devastated by shell holes, trenches and mud sprang to life when the poppy seeds, which had been dormant, germinated and bloomed to become the symbol of both Remembrance and of the Royal British Legion.

The first commercial sale of the poppy was in America, and in 1921 the British Legion created the first Poppy Day and started a workshop employing disabled servicemen to make poppies. In 1945 the sale of poppies reached over £1 million, used now, for welfare support and services, homes, recovery units, rehabilitation, financial support and training workshops.

Probus is for men 'demobbed' from industry and commerce who meet once a month for lunch with a variety of speakers. For more information ring the secretary Raymond Head on 0118 941 1445 or email raymond-head@supanet.com

Reading Gardeners

We wish everyone a Happy New Year.

We begin our programme for 2011 on 12th January with a talk given by Stefan White, entitled 'Skulduggery in the Shrubbery' about the Tradescant family. On 26th January Graham Pattison will be talking about 'Mexico – a land of contrasts'.

Our meetings are held at Caversham Primary School and start at 7.30pm.

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MEDLARS

This month I'd like to report on what was for me a new gastronomic experience, which came from a tree which was once reported as growing wild in hedges in Berkshire, though the fruit I sampled came from an old orchard.

One evening last October I was chatting to a friend, a carpenter by trade, in the bar of a Caversham public house. He'd been restoring an old house in a nearby village, and in his lunch time had wandered into the orchard, since it was a fine day. There he'd seen a tree with some delicious-looking pears on it. On trying to bite into one of them, he'd found it woody, with a sour taste. I thought it was probably a quince, as eaten by the Owl and the Pussy-Cat.

He went on to describe another tree, loaded with what



looked like small apples with little points and a hollow at the end opposite the stem. I realised that these must be medlars, and that the orchard was probably one of some antiquity, so I asked about old apple trees as well.

A few days later, my friend returned with a bag containing a quince, about a dozen medlars, and examples of several varieties of apple.

After sampling some of the apples, the rest were used to make apple pies, flavoured with slices of quince. All I lacked was a runcible spoon with which to eat them.

I hadn't tasted medlars before, and so turned to Jane Grigson's "Fruit Book." Apart from making medlar jelly to accompany rich meats, her only suggestion was to leave them to "blet" and eat them as they were. So I left them till late November, when they had "bletted" and gone soft. The flesh was brown, and curiously dry. The skin and cores had to be sorted out but the flesh was palatable, tasting of something between an apple and a prune. Suitably encouraged, I invested in a small pot of cream, and couldn't help mixing in a few drops of liqueur.

Medlars have long been cultivated in England. They are referred to in the works of Chaucer and Shakespeare – but under their vulgar Anglo-Saxon name, 'openarse', which was first recorded over a thousand years ago. According to the old doctrine of signatures, medlars were supposed to cure looseness of the bowels. Maybe the apothecaries of old kept them dried or preserved in syrup, ready for use when required.

The more polite name for the fruit arrived here in the Middle Ages, from Greek and Latin via the Old French name mesple, turning to medle, medler and medlar in English.

I wonder if I shall ever have the chance to try medlars again – I think I'd have more chance of finding them in France or Spain than here. I'm told that the fruit of the wild service tree, a relative of the quince, also has a fine flavour, but that hasn't been cultivated and is a very rare tree indeed.

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CHURCHES

CONFIRMATION PROMISE OF A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

The feast of Christ the King on 21 November was the occasion of the 2010 Confirmation for the Anglican Group of Parishes in Caversham. The practice is for the venue to circulate around the churches and 2010 was the turn of St Barnabas Church where, before a large congregation, the Rt Revd John Bone, a former Bishop of Reading, confirmed 13 people, 7 young people and 6 adults, one of the latter being baptised before being confirmed. Bishop John spoke of the great witness it is when an adult comes forward for both baptism and confirmation.

The confirmation was followed by the first Communion of the newly confirmed, the congregation also joining in the Eucharist.

In his sermon Bishop John used his own experience as a life saver, and the importance of donor surgery in maintaining life, particularly in relation to heart

transplants. He then quoted the memorable verse from Ezekiel 36. 26 where God promises "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you" saying that this is a promise to those being confirmed. God loves us so much; he longs for us to have a new beginning, a new heart. Jesus had to die in order to bring us new life. Through confirmation the new heart becomes part of our daily lives but confirmation is only the start.

The photograph shows Bishop John with the newly confirmed, just before they left the church for refreshments in the Parish Centre. There are three young people and one adult from St Barnabas, one young person from Caversham Park Church, one adult from St Andrew's, three young people and three adults from the Caversham Thameside Parish (St Peter's St John's and St Margaret's) and one adult from All Saints, North Ascot.



THIRD GROUP OF STREET PASTORS COMMISSIONED

Six months ago at the time that the second group of Street Pastors were commissioned we reported on their work. Now they are patrolling the Town Centre each Friday and Saturday night from 10 pm to 2 or 3 am. Street Pastors first appeared in Reading a year ago and up to the time of the third Commissioning service on 5 November 2010, some 52 Christian volunteers from 22 different churches in the Reading Area have given 1700 hours by caring, listening and helping those in need. They are supported by 9 committed Prayer Pastors who are engaged in prayer in St Laurence's Church while the volunteers are on the streets, additionally there are 26 other Prayer Partners. The volunteers have chatted to over 2800 people, calmed 75 aggressive situations, supported over 175 vulnerable people, picked up over 640 glass bottles, dealt with over 10 First Aid incidents, prevented hypothermia by handing out over 50 Safety Blankets, protected more than 155 pairs of bare feet by giving away flip-flops, handed out over 20,000 lollipops helping to reduce anti-social behaviour by boosting sugar levels, handed out 100s of widgets to prevent drinks being spiked.

During the Commissioning Service in Greysfriars Church, which was led by Pastor Nev Hollands, Leader of the LifeSpring Church, a DVD was shown illustrating the work of the Street Pastors and the reactions of the young people in Reading. Also

Sergeant Simon Wheeler of Thames Valley Police, with whom the Street Pastors are in partnership spoke affirming their role, as did the Mayor, Councillor Gul Khan. The Revd Jonathan Wilmot, Vicar of Greysfriars, in his sermon said that, those who go out do so because of Jesus' sacrificial unconditional love; they go out with that love to people who are very vulnerable. He said that Jesus was a man of the streets, the first Street Pastor, and those who go out do so with his authority.

Major Iain Hudson, Leader of the Central Reading Salvation Army and Chairman of the Street Pastors' management Committee, commissioned 14 more Street Pastors and a smaller number of prayer partners; the Revd Chris Russell of St Laurence's Church led the prayers.

The Street Pastors welcome new volunteers and committed Prayer Partners in addition to other support in prayer and by committed regular givers. For further information on how to support, train or pray with Street Pastors contact Matt Hearn (tel: 075 333 25504, e-mail: reading@streetpastors.org.uk).

The picture shows the newly commissioned Street Pastors. Pastor Nev Hollands is at the rostrum; Major Iain Hudson and the Revd Chris Russell are stepping off the dais. On the left of those commissioned is Mrs Sylvia Chumbley of St Peter's and Secretary of Churches Together in Caversham.



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CHURCHES

CIRDIC CELEBRATES 20th ANNIVERSARY AND LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

There was a large congregation in St Saviour's Church (now All Nations Christian Centre) in October to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the opening of the Churches in Reading Drop in Centre, affectionately known as CIRDIC. This is a Centre that has an open door for the homeless and needy in Reading. Originally it was a welcoming place that provided food and clothing but it now provides a wide range of additional support services including bath and shower facilities, a safe postal address, use of a telephone, provision of confirmation of identity and links to specialist services. It is open during the middle of the day on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays and on Saturday evening. It caters for the spiritual needs of "Guests" on a Sunday morning and there is a midweek club on Wednesdays and Thursdays that provides opportunities for "Guests" who are ready to move on. Further details may be found on the website: www.cirdic.org.uk

Principal among the founder members present at the Anniversary Service was Constance Gooding, whose inspiration started it all; others no longer living in the town had made a special effort to be there, along with the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jenny Rynn, and Reading West M.P. Alok Sharma. Volunteers, supporters and the "Guests" were present in large numbers. In the Service, led by the Revd Nigel Hardcastle, lessons were read by Constance Gooding and Mabel Boyd, who jointly manage CIRDIC and the Churches in Reading Women's Centre. A notable feature was the showing of a lively DVD entitled "A Story to Tell", which was made by the "Guests" and testified to the difference that CIRDIC had made in their lives. A moving part of the Service was a procession of volunteers carrying symbols, ranging from the Holy Bible, to paint pots, pies and gardening tools, representing the activities at CIRDIC. While this was



The 20th Anniversary Cake is cut in the Drop-in-Centre. Those present are from the left: Councillor Jenny Rynn (Deputy Mayor), Rita Browne (Volunteer), Alok Sharma M.P., Constance Gooding (Founder Member), Lorna Edwards (who made the cake), David Turner (Chair of the Management Committee), Mabel Boyd (Centres Manager), Angela Hall (who prepared all the food), Tom Ward (Administrative Assistant) and Clare Palmer (former Chair).

taking place the Chairman of the Management Committee, David Turner, read Archbishop Romero's famous prayer that includes words about laying foundations for future development. After the Service, which ended with a blessing from the CIRDIC Chaplain, the Revd Sylvia Knight. Those present filled the St Saviour's Hall for refreshments, the cutting of the anniversary cake and words of appreciation and anticipation for future developments from the Chairman.

Preliminary details were given of plans for the extension of the centre to the rear of the property, largely to provide a food store at ground level; this will also enable other improvements. At present, all food has to be stored upstairs, resulting in a great deal of manual handling. The possible cost will be around £250,000 for which a 20th Anniversary Appeal will be launched in due course. Until now there has been an annual grant of £10,000 from the Reading Borough Council to help with CIRDIC's operational costs of around £60,000 a year, but in the current financial climate funding from the Council is by no means certain and CIRDIC will need to tender for financial support for the services it provides. The great proportion of the income comes from the generous support of businesses, the local churches and private individuals, for which the CIRDIC Management Committee are most grateful. The mainstay of

CIRDIC is through the work of manager, staff and volunteers at the Centre, and the financial and prayerful support from the community. Over the past 20 years it has done a tremendous amount for the disadvantaged people of Reading and looks forward to continuing Christian Service to the community for another 20 years.

Our readers will wish to congratulate CIRDIC.

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