

Deep and Crisp and Even – Carols in Caversham Court

A scene from a Christmas fairy tale! Caversham Court, floodlit in the snow, with the river shimmering in the background, was the perfect venue for Christmas carols on the evening of 20th December. Nearly 200 people braved the sub-zero temperatures and, as the church bells rang out, came along to the gardens to join the choir of St Peter's church singing traditional carols and to listen to some less familiar ones.

Mulled wine and hot chocolate flowed at the tea kiosk, candle lanterns twinkled and old and young alike forgot the cold and sang for all they were worth. Let's hope the weather will be kind next December so that this evening of carols in the gardens can become a tradition.

Many thanks to the singers of St Peter's choir under their choirmaster Ian Westley; to the bell ringers led by Doug Beaumont; to the Reverend Dan Tyndall; to the Ways & Means Trust and Duchess of Kent House charity, who served refreshments at the tea kiosk; to head gardener Emily Waters and her team; and to volunteers from the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens who helped make the evening run smoothly.



Photo courtesy Rob Hewitt, Freeze Frame Photography

Spring really is round the corner in Caversham Court!



February is the time to go to Caversham Court and admire the mass of snowdrops flowering under the yew tree – the bare brown earth really makes the white flowers stand out. The snowdrops should be followed by swathes of lilac crocus down near the river bank.

Look out for a new gardening project which will be starting in the allotment area in February. Berkshire Healthcare Foundation, in partnership with RBC, are working on a scheme to open up the benefits of gardening and open air activity to a group of people recovering from mental illness. The group, under the



enthusiastic leadership of Isla Goldsmith, a horticultural therapist, will use one of the community plots in the allotment area, carrying on a tradition of gardening there that goes back more than 500 years.

At the project's launch in November Isla had us all planting bulbs round the plot so the shoots from that first afternoon should be coming through soon.

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Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN

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

Church Secretary Tel: 947 9772

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,

Sonning Common. Tel: 972 3418

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Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the March 2011 issue should be sent to Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by Tuesday 1st February. The date for the April 2011 issue is Tuesday 1st March 2011.

Email address as above.

Advertising copy for the March 2011 issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 28th January 2010**. The date for the March 2011 issue is **Friday 25th February 2011**.

TALKING POINT

by

Paul Rhodes

"Daddy I know why we don't go to church ... It's 'cos we're not old!"

"I envisage a country where old ladies will still cycle to evensong".

The first quote comes from a newspaper columnist reporting something his young daughter said once, the second from a former prime minister. Neither comment was meant to be insulting or hostile but each - and they were from different ends of the political spectrum - makes the point that the church is an institution for elderly people.

A recent survey showed that few church-goers are now under 30 years of age. Considering most Christians responded to the Lord before they were 30, there is clearly a serious problem.

One reason why the church has become unattractive to young people is that the image they have of us is an institution which is still living in a pre-1950s culture. Whether this is fair or not, it seems to be the national perception and also the usual image if the media wish to portray a church service in a film.

In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul writes that he will identify with whatever culture he is seeking to reach for Jesus. A former Bishop of Reading pointed out that when a couple plan to adopt a child they change their home to make it child-friendly rather than expect the child to "take us as we are"!

Certainly most of the country's growing churches are lively and seek to worship God in ways which are understandable to the culture around ... But we have to be honest: we cannot compete with the professionals: the musicians who sell CDs in large numbers, the actresses and actors who entertain millions, the academics who argue and debate. We tend to lack their gifts and quality. So what can we offer that is relevant to this generation? I believe there is one thing: LOVE.

This is a nation with a broken heart - and I'm not speaking here about the state of the economy. The sense of community has been generally lost and even families rarely sit down together to eat. Loneliness is the experience of millions, even when surrounded by others. The church cannot guarantee to offer music, drama and oration of the absolute highest quality, most of us are amateurs. But we can offer love, because we have received love from our Heavenly Father.

What the world needs is Jesus. They don't need religion, they don't need a church which bends over backwards to be no different from the world in its morality, they certainly don't need hypocrisy. They need something different, something which only God can give them: LOVE.

Paul Rhodes was until recently the pastor at Caversham Baptist Church

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

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)
Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

St Margaret's, Mapledurham

11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP Meeting at Caversham Park School

11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)
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

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6.30pm Prayer Meeting

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11.00am Divine Worship

6.00pm Evening Service

The newspaper produced by the members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mapledurham for the local community.

EDITORS: Mr Eric Chappell, Mr Alan Bradbury, Mr Philip DeVill, Mrs Myra Emerson, Mrs Rhona Flower, Mrs Pat Williams, c/o Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham. RG4 8AX Tel: 947 1703. Email: office@ctmparish.org.uk

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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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Prize winners choose Caversham

There was much excitement in the centre of Caversham on Saturday 18th December. Caversham Traders' Association had arranged a prize giving ceremony for the winners of their "Twelve Days of Christmas" competition - with Santa there to make the presentations in the snow!

Mrs Susan Alexander of Brunswick Street, Reading, won a deluxe hamper sponsored by Warings Bakery, Jennings Butchers and Waitrose, and Max Munro from Buxton Avenue in Caversham was delighted to be presented with a family ticket for the pantomime at The Hexagon.

Traders' committee member, Chris Walton of Waltons Jewellers, said: "Many congratulations to our two winners. The competition was heavily promoted in the media, and we were delighted with the number of entries we received. It was a great way to encourage families into Caversham, and we hope they all had fun exploring our fantastic array of shops, cafes and restaurants. It was also encouraging to see that many people had downloaded the entry form from our new website - www.ChooseCaversham.co.uk. Whilst still in development, we are confident that this will soon become the ultimate guide to businesses and events in Caversham."



Photo courtesy Caversham Traders Association

Santa with members of the Association and the winners of the competition.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Reading Festival Chorus

Reading Festival Chorus will sing Handel's Messiah at Greyfriars Church, Reading on Saturday 26th February at 7.30pm under their conductor Conductor Janet Lincé.

They will be accompanied by the West Forest Sinfonia and the soloists will be Charlotte Beament (soprano), Katie Grosset (mezzo-soprano), Simon Gfeller (tenor) and Thomas Schütz (bass).

Tickets £12 and £10 concessions are available from Melanie Fone tel 940 3016, website (www.readingfestivalchorus.org.uk), on the door, and from chorus members.

Blues-style Requiem

A Requiem service featuring blues-style music composed by organist and choirmaster Len David will be held at St John the Baptist Church, St John's Road, Caversham, RG4 8EB, on Saturday 26th February, 2011 at 7:30pm. The choir, with soloists and instrumentalists, has been brought together from across Caversham - and further afield - especially to perform Requiem Indigo.

There will be a collection in aid of the Alzheimer's Society (Singing for the Brain) and St John's Church.

For further information, visit our website, www.achurchnearyou.com/caversham-st-john-the-baptist

Chief Scout Service Award

A very special presentation was made to the Akela of the Thursday Cub Pack (Wolves) from 3rd Reading (St Peter's, Caversham) Scout group at our first ever St Peter's Uniforms Carol Service.

On Tuesday 21st December, Barrie Newby (District President) was invited to join us at our service to award Pauline Semple with her Chief Scout's 30 Years Service Award.

Pauline really deserves this recognition and is a real inspiration to us all; it was lovely to see so many people there to share in this ceremony. Many congratulations Pauline!

Joy Blount



Photo by Collin Blount

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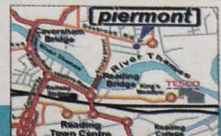
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From the Lookout Post

'Caversham 100 years on'

Plans to celebrate Caversham's heritage during 2011 are moving apace. Offers to produce mobile exhibitions are growing, many of the local schools, museums and libraries are involved, a grand picnic in Caversham Court is planned for 10 September and 'Readipop' has plans for a big event in July. A website, <http://www.caversham100years.org.uk> will be operational soon. In the meantime, you can contact friends@fccg.org.uk, Frances.Hill@CavershamRotary.org.uk or Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk.

Reading Station

Government funding of £9.6 million has been confirmed for changes to the road system around the station. The money is less than the £15m originally hoped for and the council and private funders will contribute another £3.6m to the scheme, which has been scaled down from the original plans. This will pay for bus and taxi interchanges and a pedestrian piazza outside the two new entrances. It will provide access to the widened and refurbished subway under the station, and eventually help fund improvements at the Norcot Road roundabout and for a bus lane nearby. This is aimed at making Portman Road and Richfield Avenue the main transport corridor in the west to take the pressure off Oxford Road once the Cow Lane bridges have been rebuilt by 2016.

At the time of writing, it is not yet clear what has changed from the earlier plans. However Pat Baxter, Head of Transport is outlining details at a meeting for CADRA members on 26 January 2011.

Nominate your favourite tree

Reading Borough Council has invited people to nominate their favourite tree. It does not have to be the biggest or the oldest, but one with an interesting story to tell. It could be a rare specimen, one that supports rare wildlife, is an outstanding landmark or linked to a significant event or a famous person. Nominations are open until June and should include pictures, ideally representing all four seasons. Send to Reading's Favourite Tree, Natural Environment Team, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, RG1 7AE, online at www.reading.gov.uk/treestrategy or email to planning.naturalenvironment@reading.gov.uk. At the end of the process the council will name the 12 trees with the highest number of nominations.

The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme celebrated its 20th anniversary at a special reception at the House of Lords and tree champions from Reading joined some of the 8,000 Tree Wardens working across the U.K. The Borough Council hopes to have a network of volunteer Tree Wardens in Reading to keep an eye on trees in their neighbourhoods and report any changes to the council.

Car Park Charges

Following the annual review of car parking charges, short stay car park charges in the town centre at Broad Street Mall, Queens Road and the public 'car park B' of the Civic Offices have been frozen. Long stay charges in Hills Meadow car park have been cut from £12 a day to £5 a day and in Kings Meadow car park from £12 to £7. The Cattle Market car park has been cut from £12 to £4 a day. Some medium stay charges will increase and some charging bands are abolished. Parking at Chester Street remains at 2010 prices.

Seven hours at Broad Street Mall car park costs £20, the Oracle costs £20 for more than eight hours but Queens Road costs £10 for over six hours and 24 hours at the Q car park in Chatham Place costs £14.

Christchurch Meadows

Government funding from 'New Growth Points' and 'Playbuilder' combined with developers' contributions (section 106) is providing investment in the Meadows following a public consultation. Improvements aim to benefit the large number of people who walk or cycle across the park, those who enjoy spending time by the river and the very popular play area. Currently, the footpaths through the meadows are in a poor state of repair in certain places and make it difficult for disabled people to use. Lighting of the path from Reading Bridge to Patrick Road/Gosbrook Road will be improved, repairs made to the river bank and new signs provided at the entrances to the Meadows. New benches, waste bins and more picnic benches are being installed. There will also be additional hedgerow and trees alongside general landscape improvements. The new funding will also allow an increase in the size of the play area and more play equipment. Overall, there will be a saving on maintenance costs for play equipment, benches and pathways.

Cultural Partnership

The Borough Council has so far had a limited impact with its launch of the new 'Cultural Partnership' covering the six themes of Arts, Sport, Health, Heritage, Learning and Sustainability. The process of community nominations and votes to fill the six community seats on the Cultural Partnership Board is now

complete. With fewer than 200 people registering as a member, it is difficult to argue the strength of their mandate but the list includes individuals with a strong track record who can act as a critical friend. There are interesting projects being launched under the banner of the Cultural Partnership. For more information see: <http://readingarts.com/artsdevelopment/yourculturalvoice/>

Caversham Police Team

PCSO Ian Chastin joins the team this month, being based in Lower Caversham. Ian worked for 10 years in the Reading CCTV centre before completing his PCSO training. There have been a number of residential burglaries in Caversham, many involved 'fishing' for keys through the letter box. Even more disturbing is the success of conmen in obtaining money from vulnerable older residents. We all need to be observant and report suspicious activity to the police, or if appropriate provide guidance to at risk neighbours.

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Mapledurham church tower wins gold award

The bell project and tower improvements recently carried out at Mapledurham church have achieved a "Gold Maintenance Award" from the Oxford Diocesan Guild (ODG) of bell ringers.

The six bells at Mapledurham range in date from 1623 to 1907 and hang in a beautifully crafted oak frame, probably built by local craftsmen in early 19th Century. Three 16th Century bells are listed for preservation and were cast in Reading.

During 2010 Mapledurham bells were removed by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry to complete a preservation project. The old bell construction method of casting iron or steel into the bell for mounting the clapper risks, over time, cracking to the bell structure. Four of the six bells were at risk. The work included correcting that problem together with other improvements and updates including new steel cannon-retaining headstocks and bearings, tightening of the bell frame and reconditioning the bell rope wheels. The project also included improved emergency and operating lights throughout the tower.



Photo courtesy Diana McClure

Mapledurham church belfry. Three of the six bells, with their new cannon-retaining headstocks and reconditioned wheels

The tower was tidied up and fumigated, in order to get rid of an infestation of Cluster Fly, and thousands of dead flies have been swept up. (Let's hope they now stay away!)

Following a final post-installation adjustment by Whitechapel in November 2010, Len Palfrey, an assessor on the ODG Towers and Belfries Committee, carried out a tower inspection resulting in a Gold Tower Maintenance Award, achieved because of the high standard of installation and tower maintenance.

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WEA READING

Annual meeting of the Reading branch of the WEA



Local volunteers from the newly formed Reading branch of the Workers' Educational Association are making a big success of offering a range of short courses in adult education, filling the day-time gap left by the closure of Reading University's Continuing Education Department. Oxford University have moved into Reading to close the corresponding gap in the evenings. In December sixty volunteers, tutors and course members gathered in the Kennet Room, Reading, to celebrate their success with wine, poetry, song, and make future plans for the academic year 2011/12. During the evening they were entertained by the women's poetry group the Brickwork Poets, and later a five man barber shop group the Vox Pop.

Chairman of the Reading branch Paul Kingston reported a successful year. He thanked Leslie Reilly, Head of Reading Borough's New Directions, who has helped this 'Big Society' project to succeed. In the autumn term (2010) twelve of the seventeen courses offered had been full, and none of the courses advertised in the brochure had been cancelled because of lack of students. Year-on-year the number of students attending was up 13%. During the past year the WEA committee had been busy taking action to handle classes cancelled because of the snow and bad weather, advising students with directions and maps to find new class venues, coping when popular tutors moved away, and even getting coffee to classes in a building whose water had been declared un-drinkable!

The branch's programme organiser John Beale asked for feedback on ideas for classes in 2011/12. He has proposed thirteen local interest classes, (including "Regency and Georgian Reading" and "Thames-side town walks"), eighteen art history classes, (from "Leonardo-his art and times" to "Looking at Paintings"), and courses in history, archaeology, literature and film, music, science and astronomy, and philosophy. WEA Reading Branch is also considering running new types of classes where tutors with different specialities could get together to explore different aspects of the same subject i.e. baroque-era music and painting. Starting in January a course will meet weekly at different venues featuring Reading's six museums and Berkshire Records Office. There are plans also being considered for classes which research a particular aspect of local history meeting each week with a tutor to monitor and report on their progress.

The WEA is the UK's largest voluntary provider of adult education. The local branch organises mostly morning and afternoon classes and day schools run at central Reading venues that are easy to access on public transport. Reading branch of WEA was the first to be formed in the country in 1904, and originally provided university-style 'learning for life' for workers who had missed out on higher education. When short courses for adults came under threat and Reading University's closure plans went ahead the Reading branch of the WEA was re-formed 105 years after its first founding.

Reading WEA's spring and summer brochure is available in all local libraries and includes a booking form. The next term started in January. You can contact Reading WEA by email: WEAreading@googlemail.com or by phone 0118 946 4137. For further information on Press Release :Lynette Edwell (01635 820445); or Reading WEA as above

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CHURCHES

Women's World Day of Prayer

How many loaves have you?

On Friday March 4th 2011 women from around the world will celebrate the Women's World Day of Prayer. The service has been written by the women of Chile. It is an appropriate theme representing bread eaten at every meal and is very much part of every-day life. The women of Chile offer what it means to them as they share this service with us.

Jean Hackett, president of the National Committee of the Women's World Day of Prayer Movement, said:

'This is always an exciting day as a great wave of prayer sweeps the world, beginning when the first service is held in Tonga and continuing around the world until the final service takes place, some 35 hours later, in neighbouring Western Samoa. By then the day will have been celebrated in over 170 countries and over 5,000 services will have been held in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.'

Stretching from Peru to Antarctica, the Republic of Chile

occupies a long, narrow strip of land 2,640 miles long and 110 miles wide. It is a land of incredible contrasts. It also has the highest incidence of domestic violence in Latin America and most women suffer from discrimination in some form or other. Equal opportunities are being pursued.

Although organised and led by women, this is essentially a day of prayer for everybody as we demonstrate our solidarity with our sisters and brothers in other countries and all are welcome to attend. Further information and resources, together with details of services in your area, can be found on the WWDP website at www.wwdp-natcomm.org.

The services being held locally on March 4th are at St James RC Church, Reading at 10.30am and St Anne's RC Church, Caversham at 8.00pm. The speaker at the evening service will be Heather Wilson, Baptist minister in training at Caversham Park Church. We look forward to seeing you at one of these services.

LENT 2011: JESUS, THE EARTHLY POWERS, AND US

Lent starts late this year, not until March 9th. Just two years ago, Good Friday was on March 21st.

A late Lent means there is more time after Christmas to make preparations for the Lenten season - and not least to sign up for Lent groups. The title of this year's 5-week course is JESUS, THE EARTHLY POWERS, AND US.

This is a course with a difference. It should appeal both to Lent group regulars and to readers who may not have taken part in a Lent group before. The course engages firmly with the world of today. It has been devised by Reading Churches Campaigning Network which is dedicated to fighting world poverty and economic injustice.

To deal with these issues, the course looks into the Scriptures, specifically at the example of Jesus himself, who said at the end of Matthew's Gospel: 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to the least of these my brethren, you did it to me'.

The Reading Churches Campaigning Network view is that these words don't ring bells as they might for a reason which is not often referred to - the Christian teaching on which many of us were brought up in mid or late 20th century did not portray Jesus as a challenger of the social system of his day.

The view of many is that Jesus shunned politics. Jesus didn't do politics, they say, so we aren't called on to do it either. But is this right?

Bible scholars and theologians over the last 30 years or so, including people such as Rowan Williams and Walter Wink, have given us a 'New Vision' of Jesus. They stand

the traditional view of Jesus on its head; their principal assertion is that, so far from not 'doing politics', Jesus centred his ministry on subverting the 'received wisdom' of his day and challenging the ruling upholders of the status quo. That is why, after a brief ministry, they had him killed.

This course will challenge both our accepted view of Jesus and our engagement with the world. It may lead to change, but the church - and that's the people who go to it - is always changing. The course may encourage us to give higher priority to making poverty history, to care as Jesus did for the poor and the oppressed, and to work for justice for all God's people.

Groups are being organised differently this year. Instead of a number of ecumenical groups, churches are running the course in their own groups, or organising a special group. It is most important that no one is left out. If anyone who does not attend a Caversham church wishes to join a group, please contact me. A group will be found for everyone who wants to take part.

The gifted Reading Christian, Hamish Preston wrote the foundation material for this course. It has since been shaped by Lesley and Peter Boardley, Owen Jewiss and myself. All four of us would be happy to lead a group, help group leaders, be on tap, or to assist in any way that a group wishes. An A5 course booklet for each course participant will be available in February, price about £3.

John Madeley, tel: 947 6063.
e-mail: john.madeley@gmail.com

THE USE OF GENETICS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN: A BISHOP SPEAKS

At its last meeting in 2010 the Reading Anglican Deanery Synod heard the Rt Revd Dr Lee Rayfield, Bishop of Swindon, who is the Church of England's advisor on genetics, speak about the challenges posed by the advances in this area of science and what is it to be human?. He is a former lecturer in immunology at Guy's and St Thomas's Hospitals, and is a member of the UK Gene Therapy Advisory Committee, as well as being a one time Area Dean of Windsor and Maidenhead.

Since the recognition of the structure of DNA over 50 years ago there has been a revolution in biological science leading to the development of biotechnology. Bishop Lee reminded synod how these developments have led to the treatment and management of diseases; he demonstrated his close association with this by reference to his pectoral cross that incorporates the double helix and is the symbol of the Society of Ordained Scientists.

He spoke about the complexities of the issues, the accusations of "playing God", tampering with nature and the difficulty in finding clarity in scripture but he said we do have the tools of what it is to be human. Before going into detail he asked the synod members what they felt about a series of questions: putting a human gene into a bacterium; selecting an embryo with genes that do not carry disease; selecting an embryo to help cure a sibling; and creating a human/animal chimera?

For some he said inserting a gene from another species altered the God given dignity of the "kind" in Genesis. DNA makes an organism what it is but Bishop Lee was unhappy about giving genes a quasi-religious status. At the molecular level there is a similarity in the DNA content between diverse organisms. The priestly interest in "kinds" in Genesis relates to purity but Bishop Lee would not rule out mixtures. We are to use our God given powers of discernment of when we do or do not do something.

Bishop Lee talked about test tube diagnosis of the patient carrying a recessive gene that could cause diseases such as cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anaemia, and thalassaemia. In relation to the use of IVF for such patients carrying these genes questions arise about the fate of unused embryos? Was the process of selecting embryos like "playing God"? Did such treatment devalue the lives of those who suffer from the disease?

He explained that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority play an important role in the decision of the selection of a sibling embryo whose tissues will provide a cure for an older sibling. Ethical and moral issues are involved; sibling embryos are selected because they do not have the disease of an older sibling but have compatible tissue types that can lead to the cure of the older sibling.

CHURCHES

Nearly the Goat

The Riding Lights Theatre Company gave a very entertaining and spirited performance of this puppet show at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on the Tuesday before Christmas.

An audience of nearly one hundred people, including many young children, were enthralled by the different take on the Christmas story.

We were amused and intrigued by the fact that 'Nearly' was the name of the principal character, the goat. He was called Nearly because he was 'all butt'! This gives you some idea of the tone of the show.

'Nearly' has to get to Bethlehem before the wolf in order to stop it eating the baby. This isn't his only problem - the Kings lose their camel and cannot return to Persia without it. However nothing daunts the ever-cheerful and resourceful goat and he foils the wolf, finds the camel and all is well.

The set was stunning in its simplicity - a shed, reminiscent of a Tardis that became the hills where the shepherds were, the manger and the city of Bethlehem, complete with doors that opened and shut - hiding and revealing the wolf and the goat alternately. The angel Gabriel, suspended on a fishing line, talking to the shepherds, with the city of Bethlehem appearing from a drop-down shutter on a garden shed and 'Nearly' riding to the city in the basket of a self-constructed hot air balloon, all added something quite different from the usual run of performances. As in all good pantomimes, there was audience participation and the children loved it.

The incredibly talented puppeteers, Raywyn and Dave are masters of their art and are much to be congratulated on their performance.

SVP party at Our Lady and St Anne

In December, the members of Our Lady and St Anne's SVP Confraternity arranged a party for the older members of the parish. Lifts were arranged for those who needed them, particularly those parishioners who were unable to get to church. Festively laid tables were set out in the Cenacle and soon all the guests were seated around them, glad to meet old friends whom they did not see very often.

A plentiful supply of savoury and sweet food was handed round by the helpers, fresh supplies appearing as fast as plates were emptied.

When all had had their fill, the choir from St Anne's arrived to lead the singing of familiar carols and also to sing arrangements of some less well-known ones, including the Cowboy Carol. The choir members enjoyed this just as much as the audience.



Jane Shaw

Finally everyone was given a raffle ticket and as the numbers were drawn, a neatly wrapped parcel was handed over to the corresponding ticket holder. Every one was a winner!

Christmas at St Peter's

The Christmas period saw large congregations gather at St Peter's church to celebrate the Nativity.

On the Sunday before Christmas, the fourth Sunday in Advent, the ever popular Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols was held, when a congregation, somewhat diminished by the weather conditions, enjoyed fine singing by the choir, with a number of carols in which the congregation participated. During the service the Peace Light, which had travelled across Europe, was presented (see below). After the service mince pies and drinks were served to an appreciative congregation.

On Christmas Eve two Christingle services were held. In previous years the crowds have been so great that some people were unable to get in, due to Health and Safety concerns. In the event the experiment was successful and both services were well attended and every

one was accommodated. During the service Rev Graeme Fancourt dressed the rector, Rev Dan Tyndall, as a Christingle. Following the singing of 'Away in a Manger', the lights on the Christmas tree were lit. Then all the children were given a Christingle, which comprised an orange, with a lighted candle, a red ribbon and sweets on four cocktail sticks, each part acting as a symbol of the Christian faith. For many children this service is a fitting start to their celebrations of Christmas.

As in previous years Midnight mass was well attended, with extra chairs being needed to seat all attending.

A Festival Communion Service was held Christmas morning, again with a large congregation, who were reminded of the birth of Jesus. Mince pies and drinks were served after the service.

In all over 1000 people attended services on these two days.

Presentation of the Peace Light to St Peter's



Photo Collin Blount

The 2010 "Peace Child" was Stefan Ivatovic, a ten year old boy from Attnang-Puchheim in Upper Austria. Stefan collected the light from the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem on 23rd November 2010 - the "Peace Light" a symbol of the Christmas message of peace was then passed to 30 European Countries with the aid of International Scouting and Guiding movements.

On Sunday 19th December 2010, at the service of Nine Lessons and Carols, a scout from 3rd Reading (St. Peter's, Caversham) Scout Group presented the Peace Light at St Peter's Church.

Stephen carried the lantern down the centre aisle and placed it on the table of the main altar while the choir sang 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'.
Joy Blount

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SHOW OFF YOUR LABEL IN FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 28 FEBRUARY TO 13 MARCH

Reading was first recognised as a Fairtrade town by the Fairtrade Foundation in 2004 but this status has to be renewed every two years. To achieve this, it must demonstrate a significantly increased fairtrade activity each time. In granting the latest renewal in December 2010 the Fairtrade Foundation was full of praise for the work done in Reading in recent years and singled out for special commendation the fairtrade activities of local churches and faith groups; the programme of fairtrade events in Reading in 2009 and 2010, and Reading's new fairtrade website (<http://www.readingfairtrade.org.uk/index.php>). Almost all the churches in Caversham hold the Fairtrade Church Certificate.

This year during Fairtrade Fortnight the Fairtrade Foundation is, in their words, wanting the whole nation to get loud and proud about Fairtrade by asking everyone to *Show Off Your Label*. Show off your passion, your favourite product and the story behind it. It is, the foundation says, two weeks to load the Fairtrade mark with meaning and get more people excited about the difference their everyday choices can make. Most of all, the foundation want to show off Fairtrade cotton and

highlight the injustices that make Fairtrade and trade reform so vital for cotton farmers in West Africa and India. The foundation emphasizes being loud and proud for two weeks – by showing off a different way of doing trade and why it campaigns for this. There will be more about the cotton trade in a subsequent issue.

Traidcraft is using the *Show Off Your Label* theme to tell the story of honey and how Fairtrade has helped thousands of beekeepers in Chile, Guatemala, Tanzania and Kenya build better futures for themselves and their communities by providing much-needed business development support, equipment and a route to the UK fairtrade market. In the UK we only produce 12% of the honey we eat. What a difference it would make if all of the honey we imported was fairly traded.

Each year Traidcraft encourages organisations to draw attention to Fairtrade Fortnight by a Big Brew event; this year it has suggested that the event might create a buzz by showing off the label of Fairtrade honey. St Barnabas Church will be showing off these labels and other fair-traded products at a Big Brew and Traidcraft stall after the main Sunday service on 6 March. Details of other local events will be published later. *Owen Jewiss*

Why should you buy from the church Traidcraft stall?

For many years, we encouraged our customers to ask for and buy fairly traded goods from high street retailers. This has helped to move fair trade from a marginal issue to being a mainstream matter that most supermarkets and some major manufacturers now consider as normal business. People sometimes say to me that they can buy a particular item for less in a supermarket now, so why do we need a Traidcraft stall? The following response is based on a leaflet produced by Traidcraft.

Your Traidcraft stall needs your support

We know you can buy Fairtrade products more cheaply in the supermarket – but where does the profit go? To shareholders.

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The three billion people living on under \$2 a day have hope in the Traidcrafts of this world, which work to bring the benefits of trade to those who need it most. Supermarkets play a role by increasing volumes of purchases from existing Fairtrade producers – but these fair trade groups would not be there at all if Traidcraft and similar organisations had not invested in and worked with them.

There are millions more who still need this chance. Just take a look at the pioneering achievements of Traidcraft and its supporters over the last 30 years. Traidcraft stalls are the backbone of everything that Traidcraft does. If you already support your stall - thank you! If not – why not start today?

John Sentamu, Archbishop of York said: "If you choose to buy the non-Fairtrade product, you are actively choosing to contribute to the poverty of others".

If you buy products from your church Traidcraft stall, you can be sure that you are not only helping to support the producers by paying a fair price, but also contributing to Traidcraft's work in helping new producers access markets and existing producers to improve their products and to diversify.

Phil Chatfield

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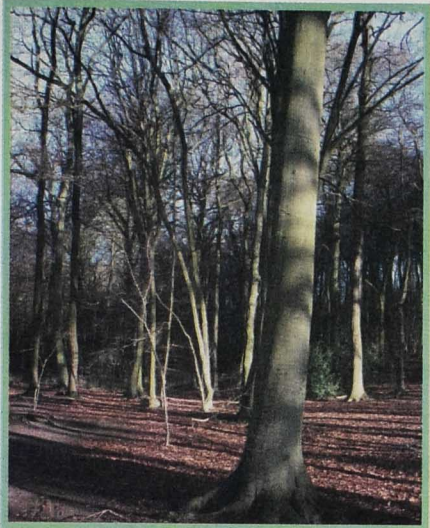
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ENVIRONMENT

OF BOOKS AND BEECHES

A walk in a beech wood is a joy at any time of year. The bright green of the young leaves is amazing, and the oranges, golds, yellows and bronzes of the old leaves can be equally so. 2010 was the best year I can remember for autumn colour. But winter is the best time to appreciate the smooth grey bark, and the gracefulness of the fine twigs.

The extent to which beech trees are native in Great Britain is uncertain. Because Julius Caesar said that there were no beech trees in the island, it was long assumed that they must have been introduced after his time. Beech pollen found in datable peat deposits has proved that they had reached here before the English Channel filled up, making them native, botanically speaking. But under their own steam, they appear to have stopped at the proverbial imaginary line from the Bristol Channel to The Wash. Beyond the line, they have been extensively planted.



There is a modern belief that global warming will cause beech trees to grow further to the north, and that there is no point in planting them in southern England, because the climate will soon be too warm and dry. This is hard to believe, if you've ever seen beech forests much further south in Europe, in Spain and Portugal. They seem to get their roots down to find enough water in much warmer and drier places.

The name of the tree is thought to be connected with the word "book". The Old English word for "book" was spelled "boc" and pronounced something like "boke", but its plural was "bec", pronounced something like "beech". The theories are that the pages of the first books were of beech bark; that the pages of the first books were thin boards of beech wood; and that the bindings of the first books were also thin boards of beech wood.

The first theory puts me in mind of the "Poem Tree" at Wittenham Clumps, where a verse was carved into a living tree in 1844 by Joseph Tubb. As the decades rolled by, the bark expanded at different rates in different directions, so that the letters became curiously distorted. The trunk of the tree is still there, though dead.

Although the Chiltern beech woods gave rise to a furniture industry, this was a fairly recent occurrence; during the Middle Ages, the main use made of beech trees was as firewood to heat hearths, ovens and kilns. The woods were extensively coppiced for this purpose.

The beech-mast, or beech-nuts, were also prized as food for swine, and on some manors the people had a right of "mast and pannage" - they could turn their animals into the woods in the autumn, to feed on beech-nuts and acorns.

Incidentally, I can remember as a child a brand of chewing-gum called Beech-Nut. It was widely available from slot machines, selling for two pence (old money) a packet. What an extraordinary name to choose! I wonder if beech-nuts were used in its manufacture.

Happy Wanderer

Blue bells and bats!

The Berks and South Bucks bat group erected some new bat boxes in various trees around Clayfield Copse on Sunday 12th December.

The group have been able to buy a mix of summer and hibernation Schwegler boxes, which have very small openings just the right size for bats, and are made of woodcrete to prevent rotting and woodpecker beaks and grey squirrels from nibbling. They are attached to suitable trees according to the latest recommendations.

Bird boxes were also put on the same trees where possible, to discourage birds from using the bat boxes (a problem encountered at this site).

All the boxes were numbered and logged on their records with a GPS location. The bat group will undertake regular checks and use these as a training exercise for their many bat licence trainees.

The bluebells are always a beautiful sight later in the year. Please help us keep the bluebells growing in Blackhouse Woods. The brambles are taking over! Every year we have a battle with the brambles. Meet the

Friends group on Sunday 6th February, 10 am in the car park. Gloves are provided

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Caversham WI

Winter weather, combined with seasonal ailments, kept the numbers low for the Christmas/birthday party. Entertainment was provided by Rebecca Holmes with her guitar. Members could sing along to a selection of Christmas carols and songs. After supper and the drawing of the raffle Rebecca played more songs while members ate a slice of birthday cake. Luckily the expected freeze did not happen so everyone got home safely.

Emmer Green Townswomens Guild

In November, the ladies of Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild welcomed back Angela Spencer-Harper talking this time on the history of Highmoor and Stoke Row villages. She had lots of old photographs and interesting tales to tell, which tied in beautifully with the display of ancestral photographs brought by Guild members.

In December Gwen Barton talked of reminiscences of Christmas in the USA, Africa and the Middle East, interspersed with poetry and prose, a lovely start to Christmas. The vote of thanks was given by Marion Cooper. A Christmas raffle was held in aid of the Alexander Devine Children's Trust.

Members had attended the carol service at St Martin-in-the-Fields for the National Union of Townswomen's Guilds and the Berkshire Federation's UK winter event. Four tables displayed items relating to the four countries of Great Britain and mulled wine was served, Scottish dancing demonstrated by the St Andrew's Dancers and Guild members joined in and food was served relating to each country. The morning was enhanced with poetry and prose readings of Christmas and winter, some serious and some amusing. Thanks were extended to the Federation.

On 8th February 2011 we will be Going Shopping with the Victorians led by Tony King. The Guild meets on the second Tuesday of each month, 7.30pm at St Barnabas Church Hall, Grove Road, Emmer Green and visitors and new members are always welcome.

Please consult our website for more details
www.readinggardenersclub.org.uk

Caversham Heights Society

In December Councillor Fred Pugh gave the group an entertaining talk on the role of the Mayor and of the highlights and occasional mishaps of his year of office.

On 15 December, the Methodist Church opened its doors for a superb Organ Recital and carols to help set the scene for Christmas. The church's principal organist, Peter Bernard, gave an inspiring recital of 10 musical gems ending with Widor's "wedding march". The audience had the chance to sing old favourites, ending with Hark the 'Herald-angels sing'. Peter is also an accomplished pianist and is accompanist for the Thames Vale Singers. Afterwards, the hall was packed with members enjoying the party side of the evening.

On 2 February, Dr Chris Corti will speak on *Gold - Past, Present and Future*. He was director of technology for the World Gold Council concerned with jewellery and new industrial applications. Dr Corti has awards for his outstanding service to the Institute of Metals, Minerals and Mining. It promises to be a fascinating talk. On 16 February, we have a talk on Swan Upping by David Barber, The Queens Swan Marker.

The secretary, Beldon Bensley, can be contacted on 0118 934 5004, or you can find the full season's programme on our website at www.cav-hts-soc.fsnet.co.uk.

Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

The first meeting of the year for Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club will be its AGM on Wednesday 9th February starting at 7.30pm. at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Rd, Caversham, followed by a talk entitled "Say it with Flowers" given by Joy Boddington. For further details contact Berna Macdonald on 0118 9477400.

Royal British Legion

This time of year is always very busy for the Branch but social events still go on - the fact that they do seems to spur people on to do more collecting for the Poppy Appeal and for more welfare work.

The Annual Armistice Supper for men who have served was enjoyed by about 50 at the Reading Golf Club.

About 50 members enjoyed a trip to Cirencester Christmas Fair on one of the coldest days of the winter so far.

The Christmas Party was attended by nearly 60 people. The Branch thank the Caversham Working Men's Club Chairman and Committee for allowing the Branch to use their Function room for this and their monthly socials throughout the year.

The Branch would like to thank the whole Caversham Community for giving them so much support throughout the year and hope that 2011, being the 90th Anniversary of the start of the British Legion (now Royal) will see this support continue.

Chazey WI

It was a pity Santa didn't come. Derek Parkes, an actor who has worked as Santa Claus in Lapland, had been booked to share some of his humorous recollections. Nevertheless, Chazey WI began Christmas early with mince pies, crackers and plenty of (non-alcoholic) punch at their December meeting. Quizzes, raffle and a lucky dip made it a jolly evening for members and their visitors and everybody agreed it was just the thing to get us all in the Christmas spirit.

In February a stunt woman will talk about her life in the film industry.

Chazey WI have an interesting and varied programme, with something for everyone. We meet on the first Tuesday in every month (7.45pm) at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. Visitors and new members are always given a warm welcome.

Reading Gardeners

Our meetings are in Caversham Primary School at 7.30pm. February 9th. We have 'Gardeners' Question Time' and our own panel of experts will attempt to answer your queries.

February 23rd Beatrice Krehl, head gardener at Waltham Place, will give a talk entitled Biodynamic Gardening.

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Remembrance 2010 in Caversham

The way dates fell last year meant that 11.11.10. was held first. In Caversham several Service Standards were lowered at 11 O'clock on the 11th November. The President of Caversham Branch, Mr Ron Jewitt, a former Mayor of Reading, said a few words and the Exhortation and the Kohima Epitaph. As usual, the people of Caversham responded magnificently and the centre of Caversham was silent for two minutes. Shop tills stopped and people stood silent to remember all who have died in conflict - the ongoing sad toll in Afghanistan has made people all the more aware of the suffering that conflict of any kind, at any time, brings.

On Remembrance Sunday the usual parade through Caversham took place and the Service of Remembrance, conducted by the Branch Chaplain, Rev Derek Chandler, was held at Caversham's War Memorial. Over 700 people attended.

The Branch would like to thank the police who made the whole parade and service run so smoothly. Thanks also go to Mr. J. Day and Mr A. Priest for the public address system, Mr. Will Rand and the university boat club for use of their power supply, Drummonds, Estate Agents, for the printed orders of service and Waitrose for the 'Green Button' collection proceeds towards the upkeep of the War Memorial.

The Poppy Appeal in Caversham has already banked over £36,000 into the central appeal with more to come from business boxes. Every penny collected goes to the Appeal - nothing being deducted in Caversham for any expenses. This year, with the economic situation as it is, the Branch is especially grateful to all those who helped. Thanks go to The House of Cards for their poignant window display, Waitrose for allowing collectors on their premises, Farmer & Dyer, Drummonds and Philip Baker for all the printing over the Remembrance period, all the collectors - ranging from 18 - 95 and of course, everyone who gave.

The Royal British Legion in Caversham always welcomes new members or people who would just like to help - if you want to know more ring Ron on 9481147.

CORRESPONDENCE

Alan Saunders writes:

In "The year of..." section of Ex Libris (Bridge 552 January 2011) I read with interest about the change of years in the animal calendar. Unfortunately, the author got it wrong! The difficulty is that the Chinese (Buddhist) animal calendar, used also by the Mongols, Tibetans and Bhutanese, has a twelve-year cycle. It follows the phases of the moon, the first day of the lunar new year falling on different days from year to year. In our year 2000, for example, the year of the rabbit (or hare) running from 1999-2000 changed to the year of the dragon 2000-2001 on February 5. Twelve years later, the year of the rabbit 2011-2012 will be followed by the year of the dragon 2012-2013 on February 3. The rabbit in 2000 was yellow, but in 2012 will be white, while the dragon in 2000 was white and in 2012 will be black.

Hazel Andrew writes:

I was very interested in the article on medlars and particularly Happy Wanderer's doubts of seeing in medlars again. We have had a medlar tree in our garden - planted by my husband - some thirty odd years ago. This year's crop was bountiful but only the birds and squirrels eat them. If HW would like to have some of next year's crop, please get in touch around October time. The tree is a great shape on which to hang bird feeders. In winter it has twiggy branches and looks beautiful when frosted or covered with snow. In spring it is covered with white, wild rose size, blossoms and in summer it shades that end of the garden. It is a pleasure all year round to view it from my kitchen window.

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