

# We've been to see the Queen

We asked our readers to send in their recollections of seeing or meeting the Queen, to help us prepare a special issue to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Her Majesty. Thank you to all who took the time and trouble to write to us. We were overwhelmed by the response, which included a number of reminiscences from former mayors or mayoresses of Reading. We are printing below and on pages 6 and 7 a selection of the memories that you, our readers, have provided.

## Her 80th birthday

We were in Windsor when the Queen did a walkabout as part of her 80th birthday celebrations. We arrived at Windsor by train and left the station to find an enormous crowd awaiting her appearance opposite the castle entrance, but on moving a few hundred yards along the designated route, we found a space at the front. The Queen looked resplendent in a red outfit with a matching hat, and approached very close to us, and smilingly accepted a posy of flowers from a small child standing alongside us. All such gifts were graciously received, and passed on with practised ease to her attendants to deal with, leaving her ready for the next one. She looked very fit for a lady of 80, able to perform her duties for many years yet.

Alan and Christine Bradbury



## When I met the Queen

At the end of WWII, I was assigned to public duties as a Guardsman in the Coldstream Guards. On more than one occasion I presented arms to Princess Elizabeth as she was then, at Buckingham Palace.

I stood close to Her Majesty at the celebration of the Triple Centenary of the Coldstream Guards at Windsor Castle.

In 1997, the year of our golden wedding, my wife and I were invited to a garden party at Buckingham Palace. The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh, attended together with other couples celebrating their golden wedding year

KV Potter

## On her wedding day

During the war, I was in the Coldstream Guards and I was on duty on the Queen's wedding day. I was street lining The Mall at the Buckingham Palace end when our young Queen and Prince Phillip came out in the state coach. She looked so beautiful in her wedding dress and as she passed by I was standing to attention presenting arms in salute to her and Prince Phillip and she smiled back at me and then waved to the crowd. On her return I was on guard inside the palace railings, and when they came on to the balcony people were walking down The Mall in their hundreds, walking right up to the railings cheering and smiling up at the happy couple. It was a sight I will never forget. I'm now 86 years: same as her Majesty and to this day I still remember, as a young guardsman on that day, being a very proud young man. I love my Queen. She works very hard for this country and I will be sending my best wishes card to her on that day.

G Heather

I have seen the Queen several times, but have never actually met or spoken to her. The first was on Coronation day, when I was in a school party taken to the Embankment where we sat on tiered stands to see the procession to the Abbey. Most of the boys were taken back to school, but the sixth formers were allowed to stay in London. We made our way to the Mall, and despite the warnings to be in position early because it would not be possible to move, we soon found a vantage point where we could see the returning procession to Buckingham Palace. The abiding memory is of the enormous Queen Salote of Tonga sitting alone in her open carriage in the pouring rain, waving to the crowds.

The next time was in 1957 when I was doing national service with the Queen's Regiment in Guildford. The Queen came for the 700th anniversary of Guildford's charter, and I was in the guard of honour. We were all kitted out in blue No.1 dress. As the Queen inspected us and stood in front of me, I was struck by how short she is. I am only 5'7" and looked over her head.

In 1977 the Queen opened the new

Reading civic centre and I was a new councillor. The Queen met the leader and committee chairmen. We back-benchers formed the crowd at the back of the chamber. True to form, the Duke of Edinburgh detached himself from the VIPs and came over to chat to us. As the royal party left by a far door to have lunch in the Kennet Room, the queen called "Come along, Philip". I can't say in print what his reply was but basically it was "I'm not ready yet, I'm talking to my new friends", although less polite.

I am sorry that the Queen did not come to Reading during the year I was mayor, although I did receive other members of the royal family. We did go to a Royal Garden Party where we, and about 3000 others, watched the Queen walk down the palace steps to the garden. We were not among the select few chosen to meet her, but minor royals circulated and we met Mark Philips. In my time as a councillor I attended three garden parties. Even if you don't meet the Queen, it is a privilege to walk through Buckingham Palace, and have complete freedom to walk around the huge garden.

Fred Pugh

## On the way to Wollongong

As a child I lived in Australia. Nobody there had TV, so we went to the cinema to see the Coronation.

When the new Queen came to visit in 1954, I was a pupil at Fairy Meadow Primary School. We lined the street outside our school in the morning to wave our flags as she went past on her way to Wollongong.

In the afternoon, we went to the Sports Arena in Wollongong and joined all the other primary school children in a display of PE games and exercises. Then we were lined up in order, marched onto the pitch, and on the signal we waved our red, white or blue flags to make a huge Union Jack.

Anne Mace

## Wedding at St George's

In 1946, not long after I had come over from South Africa to marry a Naval Officer, we were invited to the wedding of Lavinia Lascelles, the daughter of King George VI's equerry. She had been in the WRNS at a base camp where my new husband was also stationed.

She was marrying a Scottish musician, and the wedding took place in St George's Chapel, Windsor. After the ceremony the young couple, with the bridegroom wearing a kilt, were driven off in an open horse-drawn carriage, while we attended a reception in the great hall. This was cordoned off at one end, beyond which the Royal Family stood. At intervals, old retainers would duck under the cordon to chat with members of the Royal family. I particularly remember Queen Mary, looking as always, very upright and regal. This was a time of austerity and food rationing, and we were delighted to partake of the refreshments we were offered. A really memorable day.

Leslie Long

## Memorable shopping trip

Towards the end of 1982 I was a third year student at Leeds University. One Friday we finished lectures early and my friend Karen and I decided to wander into town and do a little shopping. We were chatting about our weekend plans and munching our way through a bag of lemon bonbons as we walked along.

As we approached The Headrow - Leeds's main central avenue - it started to get noisy. We noticed large groups of schoolchildren lining both sides of the road. They were laughing and cheering and waving mini union jacks. I asked a passer-by what was happening: "Oh, the Queen is coming to open the Art Gallery", came the reply.

So we joined the crowd to see what would happen next. After only a few minutes the cheering and shouting got louder and we spotted a black limousine crawling along The Headrow. In the back a tiny figure with black set hair under a hat, and wearing a smart coat and gloves, was clearly visible to us all. It was unmistakably The Queen, she waved and smiled as the car moved slowly on towards the City Art Gallery. That was it. We continued shopping, all the time thinking: Wow, we have just seen The Queen.

PS I have never seen The Queen since and life has brought me far from Leeds. But I am still very good friends with Karen who lives just a few villages away from Caversham.

Kathy McAleer

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www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

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www.standrewscaversham.org

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Rev'd Keith Knee-Robinson  
8 Hewett Close, Caversham RG4 7ER  
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St John's Vicarage, St John's Road,  
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18 St Peter's Avenue, Caversham RG4 7DD  
Tel: 947 8450  
Rev'd Marion Pyke  
26 Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7RZ  
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### CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Rev'd Margaret Dimmick, 12 Lowfield Road,  
Caversham Park. Tel: 947 0258  
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### METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

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2 South View Avenue.  
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18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common

**NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD**  
Rev H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

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.

Published by Caversham Christian News Ltd, Church Street, Caversham, Reading RG4 8AX Tel: 0118 947 1703.

Typeset by Caversham Print & Design, 2a Randolph Road, Reading RG1 8EB Tel: 0118 939 1981 Fax: 0118 959 8090  
E-mail: splat@cavershamprint.co.uk

Printed by Newbury Weekly News (Printers) Ltd, Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2DW.

## TALKING POINT

by

Graeme Fancourt

### The Church and the Postmodern Condition

I have attended many seminars and lectures on worship in the contemporary world, and have been instructed on numerous occasions that the Church must learn from the contemporary media in the way services of worship are conducted. Whilst I believe there are lessons to be learned, I do wonder whether making the Church look like the control centre of a television or radio station is really the best way of offering redemption in such a crowded world. More than that, I see time and again that a good story, without pictures or props, told well, can hold a room together in a way that television rarely does. It is this, a story well told, that is at the centre of the Church's worship.

The narrative itself takes the worshippers directly into the Upper Room, as Jesus confuses the disciples by offering himself to them in bread and wine; and so the congregation kneel or stand, not only looking on, but sitting with the other disciples, accepting this gift in faith without really understanding it at all. At the same time, this gathering around Christ in bread and wine fuses heaven and earth, so that the whole company of heaven, the living and the dead, are united in their common worship of Christ. Such connection through Christ also unites all of those on earth who are sharing in this 'one bread: even if they are physically separated. Finally, in receiving Christ in the bread and wine, communicants are taken into Godself, deeply into God's mysterious eternity, so that human time and space is lost as one becomes aware, however partially or fleetingly, of the richness and depth of the space that is to come.

Space is becoming an evermore luxurious commodity, yet the Church has been given the gift of eternal space in the Eucharist. It is given, not only that people would find their place in God, but that they would be enabled to allow God to make room in their own lives. It is impossible not to internalize the crowdedness of this world, and too easily people's lives are filled with non-stop action, so that living an examined life becomes less and less likely. At the Eucharist, as humanity enters into God, so God enters into each person to create room so that the Gospel will take root, and those who receive Christ in Communion will share Christ in their lives. This is an extraordinary gift bestowed upon the Church that offers, not only good news to a crowded world, but a challenge to re-order the way the post-modern world organizes life.

*The Rev Dr Graeme Fancourt is a curate-in-training in the Parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham. This is an excerpt from his forthcoming book, 'Brand New Church: The Church and the Postmodern Condition'.*



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## SUNDAY SERVICES

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#### 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 (except 2nd Sunday)  
10.00am All Age Worship (2nd Sunday)

#### St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am The Eucharist  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)  
First Sunday, Family Eucharist  
The 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

#### 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

10.30 am Worship at South Street  
7.00 pm. Worship at South Street (fortnightly)  
3.45 pm. Messy Church for the whole family at South Street (Last Sunday of the month)

#### 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**  
9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am and 6.30pm  
**Gosbrook Road**  
10.30am and 6.30pm  
**Woodcote Parish Church**  
9.45am (second Sunday)

#### ROMAN CATHOLIC

**Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue**  
Saturday 5.30pm,  
Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm  
**Mapledurham House** 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

#### SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

**Church Street, Reading**  
10.30am  
(House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

#### NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

**Church Street, Caversham**  
9.30am Sunday School  
11.00am Divine Worship  
6.00pm Evening Service

## Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the August issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Tuesday 3rd July**. The date for the September issue is **Tuesday 31st July**. The email address is below.

Advertising copy for the August issue should be sent to Mr A. Wright, Twigmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 29th June**. The date for the September issue is **Friday 27th July**.

#### PARISH OFFICES PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

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Tel: 947 6310 Website: www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

## Church Fete

The annual St Peter's Caversham and St Margaret's Mapledurham Church Fete will be held in Caversham Court Gardens on Saturday 14th July starting at 1.45pm.

We are delighted to announce that, in this Diamond Jubilee year, we have again arranged a flypast of a Spitfire from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.

We are very pleased to welcome for the first time the Wright School of Dance who specialize in Street Dancing. We welcome back the Berkshire Maestro's Holst Band, whose young musicians will entertain us with a fine selection of music.

We can guarantee you a wonderful afternoon exploring our many side stalls or trying your skill at our traditional sideshows. The top prize in our Grand Draw is a flat screen TV and there are many other great prizes.

Our many tempting stalls will feature old favourites such as cakes, plants and bric a brac as well as some new ideas such as a jams and preserves stall. Try your luck at our coconut shy, hoopla or even hook a duck.

Homemade cakes, tea, coffee, and ice cream will be available on the lawn all afternoon.

Fred in the Shed will keep the little ones entertained with a fun show for all ages, followed by children's races.

We hope you will have lots of fun while helping us to raise money to support our parish's work both at home and abroad.

## Caversham Festival

The Caversham Festival is to be held on Sunday 8th July at Christchurch Meadows, with a full program of activities starting at 11am with a worship service. Entry to the festival is free - no tickets needed!

The arena will be open until around 5.30pm with various activities, including various singers, bands and choirs on the festival stage, a fun pentathlon, Reading Football Club, Shinfield Cricket Club, Judo and Taekwondo, dance groups, and circus skills.

The event will finish by 8pm.

More details from Jeremy Tear, revjtear@btinternet.com, or Jan Beardsley, janet.beardsley@tiscali.co.uk

In addition to the festival, Churches Together is running a children's holiday club for primary school age children at a local school between 23-27 July. Details from Megan Temple, CTC Olympics Holiday Club Co-ordinator, megan.temple@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

## Methodist Vice President visits REInspired Caversham

Ruth Pickles, the Methodist Vice President, was the special guest at a REInspired session with Year 3 pupils from Thameside School at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church in May.

REInspired is a ground-breaking project, which began in Earley in the late 1990s and has recently been brought to Caversham. It enables volunteers from local churches to work with schools to support the delivery of the RE curriculum.

What makes REInspired unique among church projects working with schools is that the volunteers plan and deliver lessons from the RE syllabus that schools are required to deliver via craft, drama and other activities. REInspired also

guarantees to schools and pupils that it will not seek to change the children's own beliefs, but rather help them to learn about our religion. This makes it a very practical and safe way for schools to engage with local churches.

Rev David Shaw, the Methodist minister who organised Ruth's visit to Caversham, said: "I understand that Ruth was very impressed. I believe this project of RE-inspired is the best scheme for working with schools that I have come across in 25 years."

If you are a school interested in having support from REInspired Caversham, or an individual interested in volunteering, please contact Jane Borgeaud (caversham@reinspired.org.uk)

## Join our team at Sue Ryder!

We are searching for volunteer leaders to build fundraising groups in their local area to raise funds for our vital work caring for people with incurable illnesses and their families. Could you and a group of friends hold regular coffee mornings, lunches or dinner parties? Maybe you have some creative ideas for fundraising events you could hold either at home, work or in your area.

Leading a fundraising group does not have to take up a lot of time, but if we had a network of groups across the local area all holding a few events a year, this would make a huge difference to the money we can raise. We

will invite you to Nettlebed Hospice for an induction day, and can help you with fundraising ideas and supply collecting tins, banners and other materials.

We also need people with a few hours to spare each month to become Community Ambassadors. This role would involve helping to distribute collection tins and leaflets in your local area, accepting cheques on Sue Ryder's behalf, and helping us tell more people about our work and why we need their help.

If you want to help or find out more about either role, please get in touch with the Fundraising Team on 01491 641070 or email [bbbox.fundraising@sue Ryder.org](mailto:bbbox.fundraising@sue Ryder.org).

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
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## CAVERSHAM TRADERS

A big part of the work of the Caversham Traders Association revolves around our website. If you haven't discovered it yet, then do take a look at [www.ChooseCaversham.co.uk](http://www.ChooseCaversham.co.uk).

We are very lucky that one of our longest-standing members is Ken Good of Edge Impact Websites. Based in Priory Avenue, Edge Impact created and manages the website for us. Ken says "Our aim is for the Choose Caversham website to be the place to look for news, events and information about Caversham and Emmer Green. The website has a directory of local businesses, schools, clubs, charities and artists. Check and see if your details have been included and if not, register for free today. Or for a small annual fee you can choose to have an enhanced listing which will give you your own

editable page on the website for advertising purposes. Also, you will be interested to know that, if you have an event based in Caversham or Emmer Green, you can submit details for free via the Events tab."

In order to promote the website, the CTA run regular online competitions. This month, we are launching our summer sports competition, with a prize of £50 of Decathlon vouchers plus one month's free membership and a sports massage at Caversham Health & Fitness Club. The competition is free to enter. Just go to the ChooseCaversham website, click on the "Sports Competition" link and answer the five questions.

We will be back again next month with news from the Caversham Traders Association. In the meantime, you can keep in touch via [www.ChooseCaversham.co.uk](http://www.ChooseCaversham.co.uk).

### Emmer Green's local, ethical and fair trade food shop

*Sue Penson went along to find out more about Emmer Green's True Food Community Co-operative and talked to Chris Aldridge the marketing manager about this expanding community initiative.*

The country is experiencing economic downturn and many businesses having to cease trading, so it's heartening to discover that a local community co-operative True Food is thriving, and has plans to expand.

The True Food Community Co-operative evolved from a small organic food club. This was essentially a group of local people who were interested in sourcing good, affordable organic whole foods for their own use. They initially met once a month at the Reading RISC centre.

With increasing demand, participation and support, this gradually developed into the food co-operative which is housed in a sizable shop in Emmer Green and holds three weekly markets in different parts of Reading. The Reading Community Enterprise Agency (now Social Enterprise Berkshire), the Reading Primary Care Trust and Reading Voluntary Action organisations all supported the setting up of this enterprise.

The food co-operative is a not-for-profit community co-operative – that is to say any surplus made is used for the benefit of the whole community.

The issues of ethical business and fairly traded goods have been highlighted as key concerns to us as 21st century citizens. Schools tackle these issues, and pride themselves on becoming fairtrade and healthy eating establishments. There is a growing interest in shopping for healthy food and leading a healthy lifestyle; as a result, many of us are interested in shopping in a sustainable way, and fair-trade and ethical have become buzz words.

Food co-operatives can be found in other parts of the country such as Manchester and Brighton.

The Emmer Green shop was launched in 2010. I went along to talk to Chris Aldridge. I was amazed at the range of products. The shop sells a complete selection of general groceries, organic whole foods, local fresh fruit, vegetables and environmentally friendly household products. In fact, the shop stocks both the largest range of organic and sustainable groceries, and the widest selection of fair trade products within the Reading area. Chris also pointed out their large supplies of products catering for people on dairy-free, sugar-free and gluten-free diets. Last year the True Food initiative was the proud winner of an award for the Best Retail Initiative at the BBC Food and Farming Awards.

I was there when a community coffee morning was being held on the premises. I was warmly greeted with the offer of a cup of Fairtrade coffee. There was a very convivial atmosphere with a small group of people including a number of parents with babies and young children.

The coffee mornings are held every Friday, as part of the shop's community outreach. Other community outreach initiatives include making links with the local schools for educational purposes, and supplying prizes for school events as well as special events such as food tasting.

Chris Aldridge is in charge of mobile market operations, which are now an

established part of the enterprise. There are currently three indoor markets held in Reading. These take place on a Wednesday at Wesley Methodist Hall, a Thursday evening at Wycliffe Church Hall and at the Silverdale centre Earley on a Friday evening.

The markets are sourced by 15 local suppliers, both horticultural businesses and small growers within a 30 mile radius of Reading.

You can find more information, including contact details, opening times and news of community events, on the True Food website:

<http://www.truefood.coop>

I also found a delicious recipe for an Apricot and Almond cake!

*True Food Co-op has over four hundred members who each hold a single share and are therefore equal owners of the enterprise. Participation is a primary mission of any co-operative, and True Food members help run the business and develop the direction and aims of their community co-op. Of course, the shop and markets welcome everyone, members and non-members alike.*

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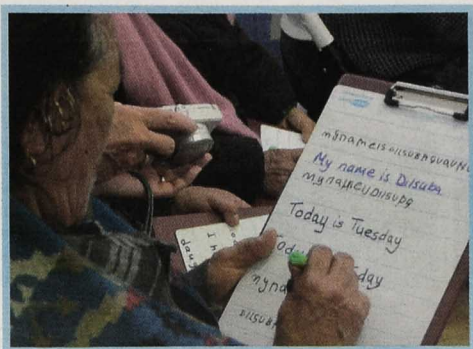
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## English project for Gurkha ladies a big success

In January many *Caversham Bridge* readers were interested in the article about the Gurkha Ladies project and as a result of that and some other initiatives, we were able to embark on the second phase with

an ample team of 28 people. The group consisted of at least seven qualified teachers and a group of helpers who soon proved to be quite exceptional in their ability and dedication.

The team became victims of their own success and within a week or two our class of 60 ladies grew to 120, stretching resources to the limit, as well as the stamina of the volunteers. While each class was hugely enjoyable, we all staggered out of the class exhausted – while the Gurkha ladies clamoured cheerfully for their homework!

Their enthusiasm for learning knows no bounds. Many have never been to school and were unable to read and write in their own language. No matter what their age, whether 30 or 84, they have approached the task with a level of motivation which puts many of us to shame. The reward for a volunteer of teaching a very old lady to hold a pencil, do the first shaky strokes and finally write her name is immense. We are being told of our students refusing to use ink pads to make thumb prints to 'sign' forms and declaring with pride that they will write their names.

The classes start at 1.00pm, and volunteers who are on duty report at 12.30 to prepare for the class. No matter how early we are, the ladies are always there before us, having gone into their groups, opened their group boxes and started work. While a 15 minute break is allowed, it seems that the volunteers are the ones in need of it, since the ladies sit determinedly carrying on with their work throughout!

This stage of the course has seen progress through the alphabet and counting, writing simple words and sentences, the weather, the calendar, days of the week, colours, parts of the body, clothing, family and lots more. They really enjoy singing and love to join the volunteers in performing such classics as 'One finger, one thumb'

### Albert Road Day Centre

A traditional Summer Fete is taking place in the grounds of the Albert Road Day Centre, on the corner of the Mount and Albert Road in Caversham Heights, on Sunday, 15th July, from 12 noon until 4 pm.

There will be stalls aplenty to browse, the opportunity to buy quality bric- a- brac, toys, books, plants, jewellery, local crafts and home-made cakes, as well as the chance to win great tombola, bottle and raffle prizes. BBQ lunch will be available and cream teas will be served all afternoon.

The money raised will be used to help continue funding a range of activities for the 50 senior citizens who attend the Day Centre, including Seated Yoga, Music and Movement and Arts and Crafts sessions.

## PRAYER BATON FOLLOWS THE OLYMPIC FLAME TO READING



MORE THAN GOLD

The Olympic Torch is making its way around the UK. So too is a prayer baton relay organised by More Than Gold, the co-ordinating body set up to help churches to serve and reach out to their local communities through the Olympic and Paralympic games. The idea is that churches in one area write prayers of blessing for the next area which are delivered by their church leaders via the prayer baton.

The prayer baton arrives in Reading from Oxford on Tuesday 10th July and will be welcomed at St Peter's Church, Caversham at 12 noon. People are invited to come and receive the prayers of blessing from the churches of Oxford, to pray for the Games and our More Than Gold events here in Reading, and also to bring their own written prayers of blessing for Salisbury. The baton will be delivered by local church leaders to Salisbury on Wednesday 11th July.

If you would like more information about the prayer relay please visit [www.morethangold.org.uk](http://www.morethangold.org.uk). Or contact Jeremy Tear at: [jeremy@ctmparish.org.uk](mailto:jeremy@ctmparish.org.uk)

Jeremy Tear  
Chairman, Churches Together in Caversham  
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and 'Ten green bottles', but undoubtedly, Top of the Pops is the 'Hokey Cokey' – which induces such hilarity that it is reserved for the end of a session.

We are really grateful to readers of the *Caversham Bridge* who have already shown a great amount of support by becoming volunteers and donating books and equipment. We are being told of young people who wish to join us before embarking on gap years and would really welcome such new members, even for short periods. However, the work continues and we really need more volunteers to back up our terrific team. If you enjoy working with people and can give some time on a couple of Tuesday afternoons a month (more if you can), you would be welcome to join us. The rewards are huge, and following the presentation of the traditional Gurkha yellow scarves and bone-crushing hugs at the conclusion of the last phase, one of the team who was moved to tears declared, "I have worked for years in all sorts of community projects, but I have never felt so appreciated or felt that the work was so worthwhile".

Thank you for your support, and please keep turning out your cupboards for books, games and equipment – and if you are free on a Tuesday afternoon, please contact me on [pamreynolds@talk21.com](mailto:pamreynolds@talk21.com) or 0118 9476956

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My wife and I visited the Royal Windsor Horse trials in May 2010, and found ourselves watching the dressage very close to where the Queen was sitting. She was almost unrecognisable in a raincoat and headscarf, and I do not think that many people noticed her! The attached photo that I took shows her very clearly. After the event, she got up and was surrounded by a small group of officials. One of those present was Alan Titchmarsh, who is also clearly shown. A memorable afternoon!



Alan Titchmarsh, who is also clearly shown. A memorable afternoon!  
Mike McGill

**Just like a nursery rhyme**

On May 23rd this year I was with friends driving through the evening rush hour traffic towards central London. The traffic was much busier than usual and as we got closer to our destination it got steadily worse.

We drove up Piccadilly past the park and the Ritz and saw lots of people standing on the pavements outside the Royal Academy and there were many police. We turned into Duke Street, parked our car and went in to an hotel for pre-theatre drinks and food. As the conversation turned to the Jubilee and the lovely decorations in the shops and on buildings, I said that I would really like to see the Queen in her Jubilee year and my friends agreed. We checked an i-phone to see if we could discover why all the people were waiting outside of the Royal Academy. The Queen was attending a reception there that evening.

We left the hotel and as we walked up the road we saw flashing blue lights and the gate of the Royal Academy open. We ran, hoping to catch a glimpse of the Queen. We then realized that, instead of driving along Piccadilly, the royal car was coming straight towards us! Ann, Jacquie, Karen and I stood at the edge of the pavement – just the four of us and a policeman. We all waved and the Queen looked towards us, smiled and waved back. What a wonderful close-up view and we had not been waiting around for ages in a big crowd. We then walked happily to the theatre.

It IS possible to go to London and see the Queen as the old nursery rhyme says!  
Pat Williams

**Receiving the OBE**

At 85, memories are tending to fade but every detail of my visit to Buckingham Palace in 1983 to receive an OBE from the Queen still sparkles in my mind. Every stage from entering the palace gates was superbly organised. My guests having been escorted to their seats in the ballroom where the investiture was to take place, I was taken to a reception area where the recipients were given meticulous guidance on what was expected of them. This was lightened with relaxing touches of humour. Even so, there was a general feeling of tension as we were led in groups to



a door at the side of the stage where the Queen stood with a magnificent assemblage of guards and equerries. A military band provided quiet background music and lent a feeling of calm to the occasion which included me until my name was announced along with the reason - contributions to veterinary research – for which I was being honoured. I could not think what I should say. However, Her Majesty smiled as I stepped forward and I seemed to have quite an extended conversation with her which probably lasted less than a minute before she pinned on my medal, gently shook my hand and offered congratulations. I was so astounded and enchanted that I nearly forgot to bow as I backed away – no easy task. In my world-wide career I have met many important people but none so charming and impressive as our Queen.

Outside in the Palace Yard a festive mood built up as the different parties were photographed and congratulations resounded as the crowds split up to set off home to celebrate.  
Peter Ellis

**I cooked for the Queen**

On the day of the coronation I was living in London, and as a member of the 6th Hackney Scouts it was our job to help line the route. At 4am we arrived in the pouring rain. We were placed in between the Royal Navy. As I watched the parade pass with great excitement, little did I know that I would see the Queen again.

In November 1959 I joined the Royal Navy, later I joined submarines as a chef. I was then sent to Buckingham Palace to learn the finer points of cooking. As a trainee I was on the travelling staff. We went to Epsom on Derby day to cook lunch for the Queen. When she heard that I had never been to a racecourse I was invited to the Royal Box and presented to Her Majesty, and I watched the race from the back of the Royal Box.

I went on to cook at five state visits, and Princess Ann's wedding to Captain Mark Phillips. In that time I met the Queen twice and cooked for her at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, Sandringham and Holywood, and I was still a submarine chef.  
T.Winter

**Three times at the palace**

I have had the great joy and privilege of visiting Buckingham Palace three times. First in 1955 when Her Majesty presented new colours to the RAF, it was a lovely day to sit on the terrace in the sunshine. In 1982 my husband Wing Commander N Royston was invested with an OBE. Walking up the grand staircase decorated on both sides with the most glorious flowers and guardsmen in full uniform and swords was a sight I'll never forget. Finally in 2005, when my youngest son, a sergeant in the Metropolitan Police was invested with an MBE.  
J Farmery

**By bus to meet the Queen**

One of the perks of being Mayor was that if the Queen happened to visit, then there was every chance of meeting her. On 6 March 1992, she came to the University as part of its centenary celebrations. I went by bus, and not just any bus: Reading Buses were introducing a new design (nothing changes!), so I travelled to Whiteknights in the bus to launch it. The new bus had the registration number MRD1, transferred at my suggestion from the former Mayoral car which had bitten the dust.

As the boundary between Reading and Wokingham runs through the University grounds, and very few people know exactly where, I shared the privilege of greeting Her Majesty with the Chairman of Wokingham District Council. The Queen very diplomatically chatted to us both about her experiences learning to drive heavy lorries, which she did during the war along the Wokingham Road.

Years later, I was able to hire the same bus to take guests to my wife's ordination at Christ Church, Oxford. But that's another story.  
Richard Dimmick

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### The Queen's day

On 19 May 1986, The Queen visited Reading School to mark the quinquenary of the school's refoundation by Henry VII in 1486. At the time, our elder son Richard was in the second year and my husband Michael, a parent governor and an Old Redingsian, was asked by the committee to write the history of the school for publication as part of the year's celebrations, and also to present the Queen with a specially-bound copy of it as the school's gift to her. On the day, to our surprise, delight and great pride, not only was Michael presented, but our whole family. Her Majesty was very gracious and spoke to us all. It was a day which none of us shall ever forget and 19 May has ever since been referred to in our family as 'The Queen's Day'.

Patty Naxton

### WRVS garden party

I am a volunteer for the WRVS and I was invited to a garden party at Great Milton House, Abingdon for the 60th Anniversary of the WRVS. The Queen is a patron of the WRVS and the party was held in June 1998. The Queen walked around the garden and afterwards went into the marquee for a sandwich and a piece of cake. She stopped to talk to several people. It was a most enjoyable day - I will always remember it.

E.A. Warren

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### Wedding day of Princess Elizabeth

Thursday 20 November 1947 was the day my life-long hobby of 'Royal Watching' began, the wedding day of Princess Elizabeth.

The media reports on preparations for the Great Day had been a welcome relief from the usual drab news of Post-War Britain. So many had responded, wishing to help the preparations at a time of rationing - even to posting half a pound of butter towards the wedding cake!

All schools were closed; and so my mother took me to London really early to watch the proceedings from The Mall, beautifully decorated with silver letters of E and P. The newspapers had photos of the groom on his stag night, with his best man, King George VI announcing that Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten RN had been created Duke of Edinburgh.

Time passed quickly. There were crowds, but as a child, I was allowed in the front. A cheer went up as a royal car went by in which we could just see Queen Mary, the bride's grand mother. It was easier to recognise the passengers in an open carriage - the Queen (later Queen Mother) and the bride's seventeen year old sister Margaret. Then - what we were waiting for - the carriage containing the bride in a beautiful dress with her father the King in the uniform of Admiral of the Fleet. A great shout went up, accompanied by the playing of the National Anthem. Then a long wait! There was no sound system in those days, but we were lucky! Someone

near us had a portable radio so we were able to listen to the service, including two well-known hymns 'Praise my Soul' and 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. There was a titter of surprise when we heard the Princess promise to 'obey'!

The return of the carriages was even more wonderful - the Princess looking radiant beside her new husband, followed in the next carriage by the King and Queen. The attendants followed in cars - eight bridesmaids and two page boys. Nobody wanted the day to end! We joined the big crowd down The Mall, came as near as we could to the palace and joined the shout of 'We want the bride'. What rejoicing when she came on the balcony with her new husband and the King and Queen and attendants.

I still wasn't ready to leave - my mother was! She agreed to wait to cheer the Princess and Duke as they left for the first part of their honeymoon, also in an open carriage.

I've attended as many big Royal events as possible since then - the Coronation, several Royal Weddings and, maybe the most poignant for me, the Queen and Prince Phillip's Diamond Wedding - so many memories! As a grand mother now, I'm delighted that several of my family share my great interests. My elder daughter and her son are counting the days with me until we go to London for the Diamond Jubilee.

Rosemary Carpenter, whose husband Bill is a former vicar of St Andrew's

### At the Coronation

I remember so well going with my father and aunt all the way to London for the Queen's Coronation - a big adventure in those days for a 15 year old, who hadn't travelled much. The rest of my family had been invited by the local school mistress to view the proceedings on her newly acquired television - a very small screen in a tall wooden cabinet. We travelled from Liverpool on a special overnight train and on alighting at Euston station about 5am were greeted by porters calling, 'Here come the scousers. Everest climbed'. On reaching our chosen vantage point, police were asking people who were stretched out in sleeping bags to get up and make space for others. By judicious moving into the gaps created we worked our way virtually to the front by the barriers. Then began the long wait. The crowd was good-humoured, always something to watch, empty carriages passing by, groups of horses followed inevitably by men with shovels!

Eventually the cheers grew louder and along came the procession with the Golden Coach bearing the Queen and Prince Phillip. That moment passed all too quickly but there was more to follow - the most memorable being Queen Salote of Tonga in an open carriage in the pouring rain having the time of her life waving to the crowd.

Later we joined thousands of others in the Mall where we saw the Queen on the balcony of Buckingham Palace surrounded by her family

Kathleen Hardy

### Royal Garden Party

One of the early engagements of every Reading Mayor's year is to attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham palace. The day for my husband Bill Mander, Mayor of Reading and I was 19th July 1977 in Silver Jubilee year. Our invitation included our daughter Karen and Councillor Michael Francis and his wife Pamela.

We were all picked up by the mayoral car complete with chauffeur and our Sergeant at the Mace and driven to London and into the Palace Yard. When directed we were driven to the steps so well known from TV pictures.

The Mayor was not wearing the Mayoral chain. It was replaced by a deep blue ribbon with the Borough insignia hanging from it. I wore the usual Mayoress' chain.

We walked up the flight of steps into the palace and passed through to the big double doors leading out to the lovely green turf and flower beds where tea tents were set up. We could see

flamingos on the lake in the distance. The Royal party came out smiling at everyone and speaking to a few selected guests (not us!) and moving towards their tea tent. This was signal for the rest of us to go to other tents for tea - tiny sandwiches, sausage rolls, canapés, cakes, strawberries and ice cream.

We talked to many people - other Mayors, people from charities and national companies, leaders of youth groups and many others who had given their service to the nation.

When the Royal Party went back indoors, we gradually moved back towards the palace and returned through to the room where people were waiting for official cars. When called we moved out to our car which was flying Reading's flag on the bonnet. We returned to our home through busy shopping areas with people waving. It was an end to a proud and happy day.

Margaret Mander

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**CHURCHES****Archbishop Bernard at Mapledurham**

At the beginning of May, on a day when it had poured with rain until the middle of the afternoon, the sun came out in time to greet His Grace Bernard Longley, the Archbishop of Birmingham, who came to Mapledurham House to bless the brass plaques on the new gates. Jack Eyston welcomed the Archbishop and explained to all present why the gates had been erected, what they commemorated and what the symbols on the plaques represented.

About 50 people attended the ceremony during which prayers were said and Deacons Mike Walker and Hugh Anscombe read appropriate passages, one from Isaiah, "Open the gates and let the righteous nation in" and the other from St John, "I am the sheep gate". Archbishop Bernard, assisted by his secretary, Fr Dominic Cosslett, then sprinkled holy water and blessed the gates and the new plaques.

There were eight brass plaques commemorating, among other things, the Pope's visit to Great Britain in 2010, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee this year, 50 Years of Jack and Lady Anne being at Mapledurham House and Our Lady's monogram. They were made by Hazel Morris from Brimscombe, Gloucester. The gate posts are topped with stone pomegranates which have strong Christian connotations going back to Biblical times.

After the ceremony at the gates, refreshments were provided in the old Manor House. Archbishop Bernard made slow progress getting there because he stopped to talk to many people and, when he did finally reach the house, he made a point of talking to the guests on every table before going off to his next appointment.



Archbishop Bernard talking to Jack and Lady Anne Eyston



The Papal visit plaque



The Archbishop blessing the plaques

**Blessing of the Sick at Our Lady and St Anne's**

The SVP Confraternity of the parish of Our Lady and St Anne organized the annual Blessing of the Sick service in May. Lifts were arranged and sick and housebound members of the parish were able to attend the service.

After introductory prayers and hymns, Father Giles went round the church and laid hands on all who wished, said a prayer and then anointed them with holy oil of Chrism. Hymns were sung by the congregation during the anointing. The Rosary was then recited followed by the Benediction.

Afterwards, all retired to the Cenacle where tables were laid out for tea, each table decorated with a floral centrepiece. Members of the SVP waited on the elderly and sick and all enjoyed an appetizing tea accompanied by a buzz of conversation as people had chance to speak to others whom they may not have seen for some time.

**Confirmation at Our Lady and St Anne's Parish**

The Most Revd. Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, came to Caversham in May to administer the sacrament of Confirmation to 21 young people. He was welcomed by Mrs. Nash, head of St. Anne's school, in the absence of Fr. Giles who was attending the funeral of his father in Yorkshire.

The Archbishop celebrated Mass, assisted by his secretary Fr. Dominic Cosslett and by Deacons Mike Walker and Hugh Anscombe. During Mass, Archbishop Bernard asked the candidates to renew their Baptismal Promises then prayed over them to the Holy Spirit, including the following words, "Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of right judgement and courage and the spirit of knowledge and reverence. Fill them with the spirit of wonder and awe in your presence". Each candidate and sponsor then went up to the Archbishop who made the sign of the cross in holy oil of Chrism on the forehead of the one to be confirmed.

Music during Mass was performed by the music group, led by Kathy Carr, and by a choir of children from St. Anne's school.

After Mass, the Archbishop posed for photographs with the children on the sanctuary and then posed for many more photographs with individual children. Refreshments were available in the Cenacle and the Archbishop eventually reached there stopping en route to talk to many people.. He cut the traditional confirmation cake with the help of many hands of the newly confirmed. After this, he continued to talk to as many as possible of those present before departing for his journey back home to Birmingham.



Archbishop Bernard with the children after Confirmation



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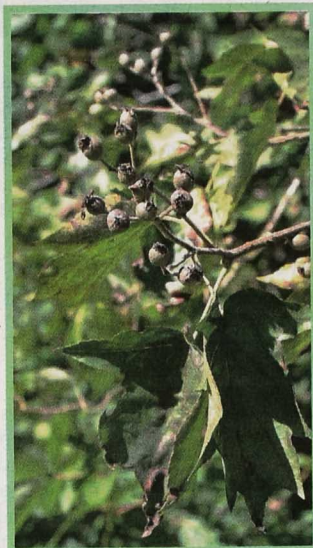
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## ENVIRONMENT

# THE WILD SERVICE TREE



This fairly uncommon tree, known also as the Chequer Tree, grows in a number of old woods near Reading – Pamber Forest, Lambridge Wood, and more locally, Clayfield Copse among them. The photograph shows what the leaves and fruit look like at this time of year, before the berries ripen.

You might notice its white flowers in spring, or its red and orange leaves in autumn, but at this time of year you might not give it a second glance. It looks a bit like a maple, but the leaves are rather more pointed, and different in shape from those of any other tree. Though not conspicuous, it turns out to have once had considerable

importance – cultural, culinary and medicinal.

It would be nice to think that when St Birinus was in our area, converting the Anglo-Saxons to Christianity, he stood under a Wild Service Tree, but there is no such tradition. Apparently the word “service” comes from the Anglo-Saxon word “syfre”, which is the Anglicisation of the Latin name of the tree, Sorbus.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a tradition that it was called the Service Tree because it was useful, and of service. The berries, known as “services” or “chequers”, were used to flavour alcoholic drinks, and other parts of the tree had medicinal properties.

I have heard it said that the name “chequers” came about because of the chequered bark, but most writers say that the berries were called “chequers” because of their speckled appearance, or because of their pitted surfaces. Some go on to say that a chequer-board was used as an inn sign because drinks flavoured with the berries were served there. Others say that the inn sign was to show that you could enjoy a game of draughts there. The chequer-board is one of the oldest pub signs, and the pattern currently features on the arms of the British Institute of Innkeeping.

The Reading telephone book currently lists three pubs called The Chequers – and also The Bull and Chequers at Woodley Green.

The full Latin name of the tree, *Sorbus torminalis*, points to its medicinal benefits. Tormina is the Latin word for colic, and according to John Evelyn, in his book Sylva: or, A Discourse on Forest Trees, published in 1664, water distilled from the flower-stalks and leaves was good against “gripe, consumption, green sickness in virgins, and ear-ache”.

So far, we have considered only the Wild Service Tree, but there is also the Service Tree proper, *Sorbus domestica*. Old books say that it was introduced from continental Europe for its fruit, but in the 1970s, it was found growing on cliffs by the sea around the Bristol Channel and Severn Estuary, so it is now considered native.

Like the fruits of the Medlar, the fruits of both the Service Trees have to be “blotted” or left to go soft before they become edible. The berries of the Wild Service were particularly popular with children, in the days before you could buy pineapples, bananas and strawberries all the year round in supermarkets. They were collected in October, and threaded on string, and hung up in the house, until they were ready. According to Richard Mabey, in his *Flora Britannica*, “the taste is not quite like anything else that grows wild in this country, with hints of apricot, sultana, over-ripe damson, and tamarind”. Definitely worth seeking out a bit later in the year!

Happy Wanderer

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## CLUBS

## Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club

"Hidden Gems" is the title of a demonstration by Kate Thomas to be held by Caversham & Chiltern Flower Club on Wednesday 11th July, starting 7.30pm. The venue as ever is Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Rd., entrance £4.50 for visitors. Plants, books and refreshments will be available, and also a floral accessories sales table. The Club meets on the second Wednesday of each month, so if you like flowers why not come along and be inspired! Visitors are always very welcome. For further details contact Berna Macdonald on 0118 9477400

## Reading & District Probus Club

More of Reading's history was revealed to the members when Linda Humphreys-Evans of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens told of the extent of the gardens beyond the now familiar restored gates. The garden is listed in the English Heritage Register of Historic Parks.

Recently restored and re-furnished, the gardens now show the beginnings of the park from the 12th Century Rectory of St Peter's Church, the Civil War, the Loveday family and, of course, the Simmonds family, bankers and now remembered for brewing beer. The park is now owned by Reading Council.

The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens have documented the "stolen stones" from the Abbey, used in various buildings with the compliments of Henry VIII, who gave the court to an Oxford College. Some of these stones were incorporated in the new tea-room and toilets. Mary de Pledge of the timber merchant family, who was a keen horse-woman with stables in Newbury and Lockinge, lived in the house in the 1800's.

Of interest to all ages is "The Time Line", a walkway showing names of residents against British history dates.

So, any chap whose job is now history and would like to add the next chapter, just give the scribe (sorry, secretary) Raymond Head a call on 01189 9411445 or read the Probus Doomsday on the website www.probusclub-reading.org.uk

## Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

The Guild held their 51st Birthday party in June, a ploughmans supper with a red white and blue theme. Songs from the shows were performed by Catherine Bulpitt.

Like the Queen, some of us took a river trip in June. We embarked from Henley on the Waterman and enjoyed a three course lunch on board.

The Luncheon club dined at the Bird in Hand, Social Studies were entertained by Mr Alan Stockwell with his Odd odes and True stories, and the Scrabble group continue to tax their brains.

There are plans afoot for a sponsored walk in August in aid of the Princess Royal's Fund for Carers.

Our next meeting is at the Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road Caversham on Wednesday July 18th at 7.30pm and will be "a Scottish Holiday" by Pat Cleare.

New members and visitors are always very welcome

## St Peter's Wives

Tony King was the speaker at our May meeting, with a talk on the history of the London Underground.

We heard about the development of the Underground, which was the brainchild of Charles Pearson in the 1840s. London at that time was extremely congested, with thousands of horse-drawn vehicles polluting the streets, and hundreds of pedestrians having to negotiate their way through the city. Pearson came up with the idea of an underground railway to solve this problem and work commenced in 1860.

The building of the Underground initially involved 'cut and cover' techniques, which meant digging up existing roads to lay the track and building the tunnels from bricks made from

the London clay excavated from the site. It also involved the displacement of people whose homes were on the proposed route or proposed station and 76,000 people were displaced in the construction of St Pancras.

Eventually a tunnelling shield was invented which operated underground. Behind came bricklayers and plasterers to construct the tunnels. It also involved the re-routing of sewers and water and gas pipes which were in the way.

Tony King told us so many interesting facts and figures about the Underground, and one of his final slides was a diagram of the tube lines under Piccadilly Circus, layer upon layer of them. Amazing engineering!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 19th June at 8pm at Church House, when we will be holding our annual Strawberry Supper. This will be followed by a talk on street pastors by Sylvia Chumbley.

New members are always welcome.

## Caversham WI

Holidays and an outing kept numbers lower than normal when members met for the resolution's meeting. After the business part and reminders of future events the resolution on the need for more midwives was debated. This proved popular and was agreed by everyone. After a welcome cup of tea the President produced one of her fiendish quizzes and then tested memories with a list of grocery items from 1961, the year of our founding. We had to guess the prices in pre-decimal currency which did seem a long time ago

## Caversham Horticultural Society

The society is proud to present two talks in July. Firstly Matthew Biggs (Channel 4's 'Garden Club' and panelist for BBC Radio 4's 'Gardeners' Question Time') is giving a talk to the society on 'Back Gardens of Britain'. Matthew will introduce us to some of the fascinating characters who have created their dreams from suburban back gardens to allotments and inner city roof gardens. This talk will be held on Thursday 5th July at Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road, starting at 7.45pm. Non member tickets costing £7.00 can be obtained from Val Taylor, tel. 0118 375 9106 or email val.taylor@csltd.com

Secondly on Wednesday 11th July Richard Reynolds is giving a talk to explain the idea of the international growing phenomenon of 'Guerrilla Gardening'. Gardeners have reclaimed "orphaned" land from neglected roundabouts and abandoned building sites right down to a patch of bare soil around a planted street tree. The meeting starts at 7.45pm at Caversham Primary School, Hemdean Road.

## Rotary Club of Caversham

The Reverend Derek Spears, who some readers will remember from his days as a curate at St Peter's in the 1980s, has been elected to be the President of the Rotary Club of Caversham from July 2012 till July 2013. He is currently vicar at St Peter's Church Earley and this will be his second spell as the Rotary Club President. Secretary for the year will be Frances Hill and treasurer John Armitage, both Caversham residents. The President of Rotary International for the year 2012-2013 will be Sakuji Tanaka, whose theme for the year is, "PEACE THROUGH SERVICE". He says, "However we define peace, whatever peace means to us, we can bring it closer through service."

The Club has had several new members recently, largely due to the success of the quarterly networking evenings it has been organising for the benefit of the Caversham Traders Association. At its AGM the Club again elected Sir Anthony Durant as an honorary member. He was our local Member of Parliament from 1974 till 1990 and held the office of Vice-Chamberlain of the Household from 1988 -1990.

The Rotary Club is completing its year by distributing £6,000 from its charity fund to a variety of charities, including Christian Community Action, Water Aid, Robbie the Robot scanner at the Royal Berks, the Sue Ryder Hospice at Nettlebed, Mukti, and Rotary's own project, End Polio Now.

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Our Programme of Summer Outings for 2012 will include the following.  
Thursday 16th August to Parham House and Gardens, West Sussex. Price £25  
There will be a stop for coffee at Guildford Cathedral.  
Tuesday 11th. September to Sussex Prairies and Nymans Gardens. For National  
Trust Members the price is £22 and for non-members £27.  
If you are interested in joining us on either outing please contact Mrs Hazel  
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**Rosehill WI**

President Margaret Pyle welcomed members to the May meeting, the secretary  
read out various announcements including minutes of the April meeting.

The president announced that the summer outing would be a steamer trip to  
Mapledurham on Friday August 10th. She then told members that two of the old  
members had died.

Irene Howlett will be remembered for her lovely knitting and always wearing a  
hand knitted cardigan or sweater to meetings. Irene also had a love of gardening  
and had enjoyed our talk in April with a speaker from Thrive. Bertha Gibbons had  
nearly reached 102 years. She will only be remembered by older members because  
she had not attended meetings for quite a while.

A discussion was held on this year's resolution which was "NFWI calls on the  
government to increase investment in the training, employment and retention of  
midwives in England and Wales, to ensure services are adequately resourced."

Margaret Pyle led the discussion and members gave their opinions, a vote was  
taken and the resolution passed and will be sent to NFWI for the Annual meeting.  
Brenda Caborn then gave a brief overview of the Berkshire federation Spring  
meeting which was held at the Corn Exchange Newbury. After this members  
enjoyed a cup of tea and social chat. The raffle was drawn and the meeting closed.

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at St Barnabas Church  
Hall Emmer Green. Visitors are very welcome

**Emmer Green Residents Association**

Twenty five EGRA members were lucky enough to visit the Thames Valley Police  
Museum at Sulhamstead in April. Situated in the White House, a former mansion  
set in glorious grounds, it's now the training and assessment centre for Thames  
Valley Police (TVP).

We were given a brief history of how over the years a number of town, district  
and county forces came together in 1968 to form TVP, before embarking on a  
guided tour of some of the working areas of the complex. First up was the Search  
Unit. TVP is one of the few forces to employ specialist dive teams whose role is to  
search for evidence and all too often bodies in some of the harshest environments  
imaginable not just in rivers and ponds. We were allowed into their specially  
equipped truck which had just returned from an assignment in Warwickshire.

Next came a visit to the dog kennels where some training is carried out, but  
which are more often used to board dogs while their handlers are on leave. That  
days' inmates ranged from a docile German shepherd to a number of the same  
breed, who were less happy to have their day interrupted by interlopers, and three  
utterly adorable spaniels deployed on various sniffer duties. The request not to put  
fingers through the bars didn't seem apt for them and tended to be ignored.

The museum contains a number of exhibits illustrating the development of  
policing techniques and communications over the years, together with exhibits  
connected with some of the more famous cases in which the constituent forces  
have been involved. Our guide had first-hand experience of the Hungerford  
shootings, which merited its own display, from his days as a forensics officer.

Everyone found the visit most enjoyable, helped to a large extent by the  
enthusiastic and humorous approach of the museum curator. Our thanks go out to  
him, and to Barry Prior who arranged the visit for us.

**Probus**

Mention of 'Money' and 'Penny for your thoughts' made sure that Alan Ford told  
of his passion for 'money' particularly coin collecting (old money worth something  
of course).

We all collect coins for a while before spending them. The old coins came in  
grades: proof coins were worth their gold or silver content. But what is proof?  
Untouched by hand and in sealed protective bags or wallets. Coins that have been  
handled immediately lose their value. Cleaning with vinegar, lemon juice or  
solvent does not destroy the print.

Pitfalls await the unwary - In Egypt - for the tourist - 'Genuine Roman coins'  
(made in a factory down the road!) Finding a real coin today is the real pleasure  
of collecting. Investigating (called research!) the history of coins from Herod's time;  
his haul of Jewish money on top of the mountain for a start?

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