

Caversham Bridge

No 686

www.cavershambridge.org

April 2022

Caversham Boat Services

by Martin Andrews

DURING THE dark weeks of winter, one of the joys that raised the spirits and made lock-down a little more bearable was the riot of Christmas lights festooned over the buildings on Fry's Island (previously known as de Montfort Island). As we walked over the suspension bridge, we had to pause and take in the fun and delight of the display put on by Caversham Boat Services. Their charming building is featured in Janina Maher's drawing this month.

Caversham Boat Services is very much a family firm, which has operated on Fry's Island for over fifty years. Boat building on Caversham's riverside has a centuries' old history, and boat hire for leisure has flourished since Victorian times. In 1231 King Henry III ordered wood to be delivered to Caversham from Windsor Forest to make a boat for 'ferrying poor people over the water of Caversham'. Until the 1920s there was a thriving barge building industry, with companies such as R Talbot & Sons, whose premises were on the Reading bank, and Messrs Lewis,

who had their building sheds on the island. These were large barges made from seasoned oak and used for carrying heavy goods up and down the Thames. There were numerous builders of smaller craft in Caversham – the Bonas, the Easts, the Tims, the Mosses, the Cawstons and the Freebodys, who went on building and repairing boats in Caversham until after the Second World War. They were some of the oldest families in Caversham. They claim to be able to trace their ancestors back to the thirteenth century, working on the Thames as boatbuilders, bargemen, fishermen, and ferrymen. Today the firm of Peter Freebody still operates on the Thames at Hurley.

Caversham Boat Services occupies a large part of Fry's Island. The island has a fascinating history as the site of the famous 'Trial by Combat'. In 1163 King Henry II presided over a duel of single-handed combat between two of his greatest knights – Robert de Montfort and Henry de Essex. Robert had accused Henry of cowardice during a battle in Wales. Essex was wounded and defeated in the duel, but nursed back to health by the monks of Reading Abbey. Henry was found guilty of the charge and was



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

stripped of his wealth and lands. He eventually took Holy Orders.

Caversham Boat Services was established in 1970 in premises built in 1893 which previously housed the Reading Rowing Club. An adjacent boatyard, Bridge Boats, was founded in 1958 and began hiring

boats in the 1980s, before being taken over and merging with Caversham Boat Services in 2009.

Still a thriving business, their fleet of holiday cruisers is a common sight on the Thames with families and friends enjoying the pleasures of life on the water.



Storm damage, Christchurch Meadows
photo P Chatfield

TALES – BOTH OLD AND NEW – FROM THE RIVERBANK

by Phil Chatfield

THE RIVER Thames features in a number of articles this month. Our painting by Janina Maher (above) features a long-established boating business based on historic Fry's Island. This is also the home of the Bohemian Bowls Club, which is holding several open days in May (p14). Our Happy Wanderer article (p7) features the Thames, and Creative Caversham (p12) looks at a stained-glass heron to be installed on Heron Island.

The February storms caused much damage, with trees uprooted or damaged (left), fences and walls demolished, and

the cladding along the side of Iceland in St Martin's Precinct blown off. There was also some flooding in the Precinct, although that was not due to the weather (p11).

For those who enjoy gardening, April is a busy month. Les Coper considers tomatoes for the new season (p10), and Louise Hampden advises us to ignore the advice on the back of the seed packet when planting seeds (p10) – which is probably a good point at which to remind you of our 'Brighten up your Street' competition (p3). And, if you are lucky enough to have rhubarb in your garden, Sarah Roy has an idea for jam (p15).

Our Community Connections item

focuses on Dan Smith, a designer whose work is about people and the impact the built environment around them has on their health and wellbeing (p11). We also celebrate local doctor, Andrew Brewster, who has served our community for 20 years at the Balmore Park Practice (p3).

Finally, we look at the response of local people to the war in Ukraine and the efforts to provide relief for the victims (p8).

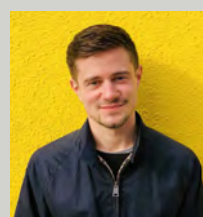
We welcome your contributions or ideas for articles, so please do contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org or leave a message on our answerphone, 0118 3282754

INSIDE

Sowing the seeds
– p10



Community Connections
Dan Smith – p10



Beanpole Day
– p13



What is Easter?

AS I AM WRITING, looking at my garden, I am seeing many signs of Spring, signs of new life: the last of the snowdrops are hanging on, and soon crocuses and daffodils and early blossom will give way to hyacinths and tulips. The seedlings are flourishing in the greenhouse, and it will soon be time to sow them outdoors. When you read this, there will be flourishing, sprouting crops in the fields and time for Easter holidays.

The churches will be preparing for our most important festival of the year, Easter. We may remember that the holiday includes hunting for Easter eggs and eating simnel cake and hot cross buns. It seems that we need food to remind us of what is happening. Easter has many symbols to help us, steeped in history, as the name of the festival itself came from the name of a Saxon goddess Aeostre, a fertility figure, a sign of Spring.

The French name for Easter is Pâques, related to Paschal, the time of Jewish Passover, when people ate a lamb to remember their liberty from slavery in Egypt. So it is traditional for us to eat lamb at Easter. Jesus is known as the Lamb of God. That cute baby of Christmas has grown up to be a courageous man, who allows himself to be killed by the occupying forces of his land to save the people.

When we say that he gave his life that we might live, we



Talking Point – by Margaret Dimmick

mean that in a spiritual sense. Jesus did not remain dead. He rose up and was alive again, giving us hope that we too could remain spiritually alive. It gives us hope that this is not a finite existence.

The cross we see on our buns reminds us of the cross on

which Jesus died. The egg reminds us of his grave, or tomb. The new life of the lambs we see in the fields and the flowers and plants reminds us of the new life we have in Christ. This gives us hope in the dark days of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

When I was at work, a colleague who had lived in the Netherlands told me about the Easter trees they have there. A small branch was fixed in a flowerpot and hung with small painted wooden eggs. I have collected some myself and some have been given to me. I have seen recently on the Traidcraft website that they will be selling small crosses painted with flowers to hang on the Easter tree. I think I will get some for mine, as a reminder that Jesus died for all of us to free us from death and bring us to new life.

All these reminders can help us to lead life in a different way. We have hope for the future, for something wonderful has happened. We can know we are loved and cared for by God. There is someone in whom we can trust for the future, and we don't have to be afraid of death.

In churches all over the world, the priests, pastors and ministers will greet us on Easter morning with the words, "Christ is risen", and we will reply, "He is risen indeed, Alleluia". We are united in him.

Happy Easter!

The Reverend Margaret Dimmick is an Anglican Minister at Caversham Park Church

Local clergy and church services

ANGLICAN

Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry

St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Rev'd Mike Smith, The Rectory, 20 Church Rd
Caversham RG4 7AD

Tel: 0118 947 9505 rector@ctmparish.org.uk
Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810
Rev'd Andy Storch Tel: 07365 555 905

Contact: admin@ctmparish.org.uk or 0118 996 8836
Correspondence address: Church House, 59 Church Street,
Caversham RG4 8AX

Current services

St Peter's Church –
1st Sunday of the month:
8:00 BCP Holy Communion
9:30 Service of the Word with junior choir and potential for baptism
2nd and 4th Sundays 9:30
Holy Communion using existing service booklets, with adult and junior choir and Sunday Club
3rd Sunday
9:30 Holy Communion in a new, shorter format with junior choir
18:30 Sung Choral Evensong.
St John's Church Gosbrook Road Sunday services
8:00 Online CTM Youtube channel (stays available to watch anytime)
9:30 1st and 3rd Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd All Age Worship, 4th Service of the Word
Sunday Club for children on 1st, 3rd and 4th Sundays
St Margaret's Church Mapledurham – 11:15
Wednesday – 09:30 – Zoom morning Prayer –
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/786384026>

St Andrew

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.
Tel: 0118 947 2788 www.standrewscaversham.org

Current services

St Andrew's weekly services are Sundays at 8:00 and 10:00. The 10:00 is also livestreamed on the St Andrew's YouTube channel. Prayer Book Communion at 11.30 on the first Sunday of each month. More info on the parish website. www.standrewscaversham.org/services
Wednesday 8pm Compline (in church/vicarage)

St Barnabas Emmer Green

David Howell (Churchwarden)
Email: churchwarden@saintbarnabas.org.uk

Current Services

1st, 2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays of the month at 9:30:
Parish Communion
1st Sunday of the month at 11:30: All Age Service
3rd Sunday of the month at 9:30: Service of the Word
Every Wednesday at 10:30: Midweek Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK CHURCH (LEP)

(United Reformed Church)
Contact: Dr Alison Johnston
Tel: 0118 947 5152 www.cavershamparkchurch.com

Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube
Details on their web site at: <https://cpvc.org.uk:5152/livestream>

METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Rev'd Martin Beukes, 72 Highmoor Rd.
Tel: 0118 947 2223 <https://cavhmc.org.uk>
Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

Current services

Sunday – Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road – 10:30 – (also available on Zoom – email: martin.beukes@methodist.org.uk for details)
Sunday – Caversham Methodist Church, Gosbrook Road – 10:30

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor: Colin Baker
Church office Tel: 0118 954 5353
Email: secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

Current services

Sunday worship is at 10:30 each week
A link is placed later on Sundays at:
www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk
and on YouTube channel
www.youtube.com/user/CavershamBaptist where the recorded service is shown.

GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Pastor Keith Saynor
Tel: 0118 947 4529 www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for details:
www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

RIVERSIDE CHURCH (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

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Mgr Patrick Daly, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 0118 947 1787 www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Current services

See their web site for services at:
www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

St Michael Sonning Common

Fr Michael Sharkey, St Michaels, Sonning Common
Tel: 0118 972 3418

At the time of writing, church services are affected by the pandemic restrictions, disrupting normal worship. However, church communities have adapted to the circumstances and are alive and active in new ways.

Our churches are open with some restrictions in place. Most have a range of on-line services, house groups and social meetings, using Zoom and YouTube. For current information, see the websites for each church (on this page) or on the Churches Together in Caversham website: www.cavershamchurch.org

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

Future editions:

Contributions for the May 2022 issue should be submitted by 1 April and for the June 2022 edition by 1 May. These should be e-mailed to: editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 April for the May 2022 issue and 1 May for the June 2022 issue. These should be e-mailed to: advertising@cavershambridge.org

Competition – Brighten up your street

by the Editors

APRIL IS the perfect time to plan your front garden or balcony container display for our 'Brighten up your street' competition. Can you bring something special to your neighbourhood with planted containers? The entry must

be visible from the pavement, and you have until the end of June to register. Enter our competition and you might bring pleasure to passers-by, and be in with a chance to win vouchers for Playhatch Garden Centre. For more details, see our website at: www.cavershambridge.org/competition



Winter colour

photo L Hampden



Dr Andrew Brewster

by Phil Chatfield

WE ARE sad to report the departure of Dr Andrew Brewster from the Balmore Park Surgery in Caversham. Dr Brewster has served the people of Caversham as a family doctor at the Partnership for more than 20 years.

In the letter sent to his patients he said, "It has been a privilege to be your family doctor; my decision to leave has not been taken lightly." Many of his patients have

contacted him to thank him for all his care for them over the years. In his letter he expressed his appreciation of the kindness, warmth and courtesy of his patients, continuing, "Thank you for being such lovely people; it has been a genuine pleasure to care for you".

Dr Brewster said he always wanted to look after his patients as he would wish to have his family cared for. He will be missed by his many patients, and we wish him all the best for the future.



Write to the editors

THE HAPPY WANDERER article in the January edition brought back happy memories to us as we had toured New Zealand in March 2006 after Richard Kingsbury had his sabbatical there with his wife Angela. After seeing the baby albatross on its nest at the Royal Albatross Centre in Dunedin, we drove down Baldwin, Asquith and Forbury Streets to find St Peter's Church, Caversham. Father Edgar welcomed us and gave us a guided tour of the Church and Hall, inviting us to chat in the vicarage. He had qualified in Oxford and then spent 20 years in England, so he was well versed in UK life, speaking of Father Brindley of Holy Trinity, Oxford Road, as well as Margaret Thatcher and other politicians. Father Edgar had been some 20 years in Dunedin. The church had no need to raise funds, having benefitted



Dunedin – St Peter's Church and hall photo P Asquith

from 2 legacies from people unknown, one for about \$(Aus)700,000! Some ladies from his parish had visited our St Peter's some years previously, and there was a framed photograph on the wall in the vicarage.

On our return we sent him a copy, for the church library, of Miss Kift's book entitled Old Caversham. He sent his thanks and best wishes.

Yours sincerely, Peter and Audrey Asquith

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Green, opposite St Barnabas church

A Prayer Journey

by Penny Cuthbert

WALKING A LABYRINTH is like going on a pilgrimage – it's a prayerful walk during which we seek God and listen for his voice. Labyrinths are an ancient design, dating back 3,000 years, and were a feature of many medieval cathedrals. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has only one path and no dead ends – you can't get lost! The path twists and turns around a central point and, if you follow it, you will reach the centre. You follow the same path to return.

The walk can be seen as a three-stage reflection. The inward journey a time of opening your heart and mind to God – pondering the issues in your life and allowing God to speak into them. Perhaps asking for cleansing, healing, or freedom from anything hindering your walk with him, or allowing him to show you something you hadn't noticed. Time at the centre to just 'be' in the presence of God – to rest in him, to listen to him, to allow him to give you what you need. Savour this time – there is no hurry. The outward journey is often very different, as you bring with you insights you have gained, and step

out into the world, taking those insights – and the presence of God – with you.

Others may walk the labyrinth with you – you may overtake them, they may overtake you, or you may pass people on the return journey. We don't travel the Christian journey alone, and you may find yourself reflecting on your travelling companions: those you love, and those more difficult to love. God may show you something about them. We travel in silence, focussed on our own conversations with God, but the outer boundary of the labyrinth reminds us we are all safely held within his love.

There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to walk a labyrinth, nothing which 'has to be done', except to remove your shoes (so please bring socks!). You find a pace that feels right for you - on average people



The Prayer Labyrinth

photo P Cuthbert

take around 45 minutes. Many people have found walking a labyrinth can be a powerful spiritual experience, drawing them deeper into the heart of God.

The labyrinth shown here will be on offer at St John's Church on:

Tuesday 12 April 19:30-21:00;
Wednesday 13 April 19:30-21:30; Good Friday 15 April 10:00-noon - noise allowed, children welcome! Noon-15:00 silent

More information from Penny Cuthbert
07825331810 penny@ctmparish.org.uk



COFFEE, CAKE AND COMPANY – 3Cs

by Nigel Smith

TUESDAYS AT the 3Cs (Caversham Community Café) were a regular social event for many locals until Covid-19 forced it to close in March 2020. It was a place to meet friends in a lively, yet relaxed environment. Based at St John's Church, St John's Road, the café provided high-quality Fair Trade coffee, as well as cakes and an assortment of light lunches. Now it's coming back.

After a two-year pandemic break, the café is looking forward to serving the people of Lower

Caversham once more, with the same winning formula of great coffee and friendly people as before. The doors re-open on Tuesday 10 May, again offering a variety of barista coffees, as well as other hot and cold drinks. Delicious cakes, baked potatoes and toasties will once more be on the menu.

The café, situated in St John's Church, just off Gosbrook Road in the heart of Lower Caversham, will open every Tuesday from 9:30 to 14:00. Whether you are a regular from the 'old days' or new to the café, you are guaranteed a warm welcome.

The café is a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers from the local community. In the run-up to re-opening, more helpers are being recruited and trained. The work is varied and includes serving behind the counter, waiting at tables and helping with food preparation. All training will be provided. To volunteer or for more information, please email volunteers@3cscafe.co.uk.



Café Flag photo 3 C's café

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photo P Cuthbert

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WHAT'S ON

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to editors@cavershambridge.org We need to receive these no later than the 10th of the month before the event for inclusion in the printed paper. Later submissions can be included in our online What's On, which is updated regularly. To see what has been added check: cavershambridge.org:5154/local-info/whats-on

Caversham Library opening: 09:00 -17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00 - 17:00 Thursday and 10:00 - 15:00 Saturday
www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/libraries/all-libraries/caversham-library

Mondays - Caversham Park Bridge Club - at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start. Phone Lin 9477820 for further information. www.bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Tuesdays - Babies and Toddlers - 10:00 -11:30 - Gosbrook Road Methodist Church - all welcome

Tuesdays - Riverate Choir - 19:30 in term time - Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. Enjoy singing together. For details see <http://riverate.com>

Thursdays - Community Café - 14:00 - 16:30 Mapledurham Pavilion, hosted by Warren and District Residents Association. For details see: www.wadra.org/community-hub-cafe

Sundays - Farmer's Market and Artisan Fair 10:00 - 15:00 Caversham precinct www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Until 13 April - Grace Boyle: Well Behaved Women Don't Make History Exhibition - Caversham Picture Framer, 7 Church Road. See <https://cavershampictureframer.co.uk> for more

Friday 1 April - Bereavement Café - monthly drop-in for the bereaved 14:00 - 15:30, St Barnabas Parish Centre, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA First Friday of the month. All welcome. Contact Gillian Wilson 0118 947 8772 for information.

Wednesday 6 April - Rosehill WI - 14:00 St Barnabas Church Hall. Guest speaker Rob Nickless, on 'Meadow Honey Farm' and there will be by-products for sale.

Wednesday 6 April - The History of Morris Dancing - 19:30 Talk by Chris Hutchinson, Caversham Heights Society, Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. For more information, see www.cavershamheights.org

Saturday 9 April - Artists & Makers Fair - 10:00-16:00 - Caversham Methodist Hall, 272 Gosbrook Road. Local artists and craftspeople display their work for sale. Free entry. Phone Jean 07808 966928 for information. www.cavershamcrafts.co.uk

Thursday 21 April - Caversham WI meeting - 19:30 Church House (next to Waitrose). Every 3rd Thursday of the month. New members are welcome. Email: cavershamwi@berkshirewi.co.uk Secretary: Joy Kennedy on 07786 642424

Saturday 23 April - Beanpole Day - 10:00 - 15:00 Caversham Court ECONET present their annual sale of beanpoles plus much more, including plants, tools, gardening books and Fair Trade products. Home-made cakes and tea available from the refreshment kiosk.

Saturday 23 April - Late Spring Concert - 19:30 - Concerts in Caversham present Adrienne Black - solo harpsichord playing Bach, Handel and more - St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, RG4 7PL. Tickets available online at: www.concertsincaversham.co.uk or phone 0118 9483220 priced £20, £18, 16-25s £15 under 16s free

Wednesday 27 April - Toys along the M4 - 20:00 Talk by Bob Welch, Caversham Heights Society, Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. See www.cavershamheights.org

Building our community

Planning update from Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA), bringing you a summary of planning and transport matters affecting the RG4 area

THE BIG NEWS this month is on Reading Golf Club. On Wednesday 2 March, the Planning Applications Committee considered a report recommending approval for up to 223 homes (211843/OUT). There was a well-attended protest outside the Civic Offices. Keep Emmer Green, Emmer Green Residents' Association, Caversham and District Residents' Association, and one individual spoke in opposition. Cllr Mitchell spoke to oppose, and confirmed that he had requested the Secretary of State to 'call in' the application. Cllr Barnett-Ward raised concerns about traffic through Caversham and the junction by the Last Crumb.

After a lengthy debate, the Committee supported approval by a majority vote. The decision will not be confirmed until a series of agreements with the developer have been signed and the Secretary of State has considered whether to call in the application. A final decision is not expected before April.

Part of the approval would confirm financial contributions for specific projects, such as an upgrade to the junction by the Last Crumb, including facilitating pedestrian and cycle improvements. Other contributions would cover local healthcare, carbon off-setting, open space and leisure facilities in Emmer Green, off-site biodiversity enhancements within the local area, and bus service revenue support for three to five years. These would form part of the Section 106 legal agreement. In addition, developers pay a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This formula-based charge is intended to contribute to the cost of the supporting infrastructure such as schools and roads. Fifteen percent of the CIL payment can be applied to local schemes.

Meanwhile, the previous application (210018), rejected last July, has been appealed. This process will continue unless the developer decides to withdraw if the recent application is confirmed.

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For your bookshelf....



Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews' where we briefly review a couple of chosen titles from our bookshop 'Fourbears Books' on Prospect Street. The days are getting longer and the weather is not as cold, but hopefully you are still finding time to read!

by Alex Forbes

THE FIRST BOOK this month is 'We Begin at The End', by Chris Whitacre. At the start of the book, we meet Walker, a teenager who wants to become a policeman when he is older. Walker is searching for his missing friend with the rest of the town when they find a body. Thirty years later, Walker is now Chief of Police, and his childhood best friend Vincent is released from jail following the murder Vincent committed all those years before. But the locals aren't pleased to see him, including the self-proclaimed outlaw 14-year-old Duchess Radley, who looks after her mum. A thrilling tale of retribution and love, with some brilliant characters you root for despite their imperfections. This one certainly left me with a book hangover once I'd finished it.



One-eyed bear meets one-eared rabbit!

photo A Forbes

The children's book I've picked is described as Middle Earth for the Middle-Graders. It is the first book in the Five Realm series by Kieran Larwood. 'The Legend of Podkin One-Ear' is about a legendary fearsome warrior rabbit, whose reputation for cunning and triumph in battle has travelled the ages. But how did he become such a mighty fighter? This book illustrates perfectly that you don't have to be big and powerful to achieve great things. The series just gets better and better.

These are just a couple of ideas for you and hopefully we'll see you in the shop soon.

Happy reading!



For the love of art

by Monnik Vleugels

THE ARTS SOCIETY HENLEY, a registered charity, aims to bring people together through a shared interest in the Arts. A varied programme throughout the year offers members stimulating talks, guided day visits, special interest days and a holiday. Some of the talks included in this year's programme are:

- The Rise and Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte
- The Era of Anything: Decoding Contemporary Art
- River Thames: Theatre of Pageantry and Pleasure
- The History of Jewellery from Elizabeth I to Elizabeth Taylor

Whilst our members are mainly Henley based, an

increasing number come from neighbouring areas, including Caversham.

Our talks and events provide intellectual stimulation and create a great opportunity to meet people, explore new interests and build new friendships.

While lectures form a key part of our activities, our outreach and heritage projects, such as our involvement and volunteering work with Young Arts and Heritage Conservation, provide additional value to our members and the wider community.

Our meetings are held in the Ballroom at Phyllis Court Club, Henley-on-Thames (no need to be a member of the Club) and start at 10:45, repeated at 14:15. Visitors and new members to the Arts Society

are very welcome to join us.

To find out more about the Arts Society Henley, please visit our website: henley.theartsociety.org



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Happy Wanderer follows up on A Singular Occurrence

I WAS GIVEN this photograph of a stoneware mineral bottle back in 2017. Its owner wished to find out the whereabouts in Caversham of the premises of 'J. Cheadle, Botanical Brewer', and how long ago he was there. I agreed to write an article for 'The Caversham Bridge', asking if any readers had information, but nothing was forthcoming.

There had been no problem in tracking down J. Cheadle when he was working from Eldon Place in Reading, where he had taken over the mineral water business of Sidney Weaver in 1908. Mr. Cheadle remained in business until 1918. I had forgotten all about him until a couple of days ago, when I happened to be standing outside my house, waiting for a lift. A car drew up to the kerb, the window was wound down, and a genial gentleman who seemed vaguely familiar started asking me if I'd found out anything more about a botanical brewer. At first nonplussed, eventually I remembered that he was the owner of the bottle.

Later in the day, it occurred to me that, since 2017, I'd acquired access to the online British Newspaper Archive, and I thought I'd try looking for John Cheadle in Caversham there. Searching for him by name didn't work, but when I tried 'botanical brewer', I discovered the street where he had lived, and read of an unfortunate incident which befell him. Here is the sad story, which comes from the 'Reading Observer', 21 April 1906.

'Singular Occurrence – yesterday afternoon, whilst Mr J Cheadle, botanical brewer of Washington Road, Caversham, was delivering from a van in De Montfort

Road, some children caused the horse which was attached to the vehicle to take fright by striking it with a whip. The animal bolted down the road and subsequently dashed into the river. An endeavour was immediately made to rescue the horse, but all efforts were unavailing, owing to the weight of the van. By the aid of drags and a pulley block, the animal and the van were got out of the river by Mr Bill Moss and

...the botanical brewer...

a number of his men, but not without considerable difficulty, the operation lasting upwards of two hours. The horse was, of course, dead, whilst nearly the whole of the contents of the van were lost, only a few of the bottles being rescued. The van was undamaged.'

Old Reading street directories in the Central Library show Mr Cheadle at No 24 in Washington Road in the 1907 edition, and at No. 22 in the 1908 edition, so he can have lived there for only a short time. Both 22 and 24 are terraced houses, modest gardens behind, with no room for the brewing and bottling plant, shed for the van and stable for the horse, so he must have been operating from somewhere else, but at least we know a little more about the botanical brewer.

I hope that the owner of the bottle is still a reader of 'The Caversham Bridge' so he now knows its age, and I can't help wondering whether at some stage it had been recovered from the bed of the Thames, off the end of De Montfort Road.



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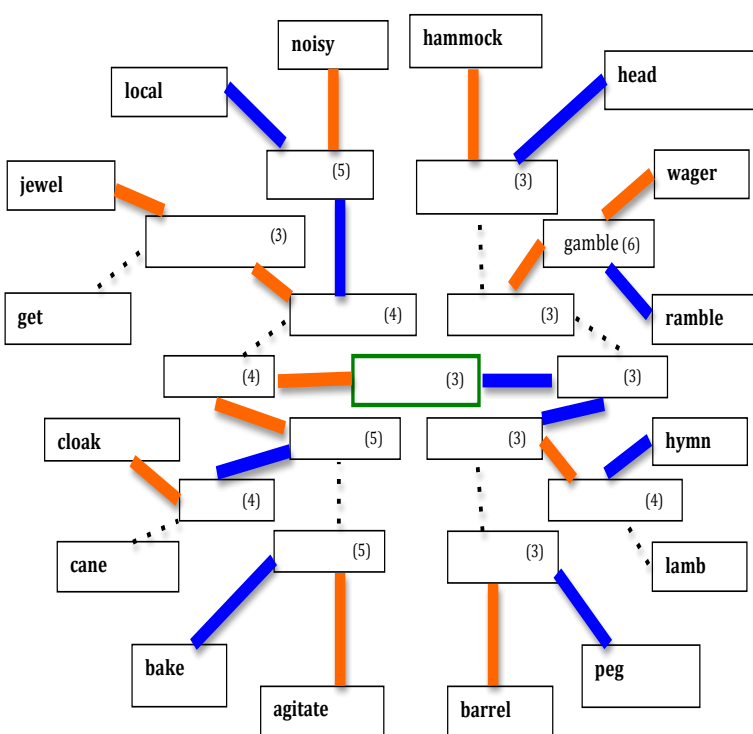
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Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

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

Rhyme ———
Letter change
Meaning ———



Answers on page 15

CAVERSHAM PARK VILLAGE AVENUES

Can you find the names of 16 Avenues in Caversham Park Village here?

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Fraser
Harlech
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Lomond
Newton
Odiham
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Tenby

A COMMUNITY IN SHOCK



Photos: Office of Matt Rodda MP unless otherwise stated

by Phil Chatfield

WE HAVE ALL been horrified by the unfolding disaster in the Ukraine in the last few weeks. Local people have felt angry, frustrated, powerless. But the community response has been astounding. At the time of writing, (mid-March) we have learned of many efforts to collect food and medical supplies and to raise funds.

The Reading Ukrainian Community Centre (RUCC) was inundated with donations, with people from our area reporting deliveries arriving by foot, bike and van. After visiting the centre, Caversham resident and local MP Matt Rodda said, "It was moving to see the organising at RUCC, and I am extremely proud of the contributions the people of Reading have made to support those suffering in this invasion."

The Centre is now asking people to make direct donations to charities such as @BritishRedCross. You can learn more on RUCC's website: <https://rucc.uk/posts/302157126484182701?hl=en-GB>

Caversham Tiles on Donkin Hill set up a collection point for donations of food and medical supplies. Colin from the store reported three vanloads had been collected in the first week. He was confused when a Tesco delivery van arrived with supplies, but they have had more such visits as people have ordered online for delivery directly to them. Supplies have also been left on doorsteps for collection by young volunteers.

Our creative community has joined in with fund-raising. More than £500 was raised for the Red Cross appeal from donations, proceeds from refreshments sales, and Ukrainian-themed crafts at the Artist's and Maker's Fair in Caversham Methodist Church Hall

on 12 March. Kingdom Coffee, a local Fair-Trade company, donated the coffee and loaned equipment at short notice. After posting a photo of her blue and yellow bunting, Pam Chatfield was inundated with requests for it. A small team is now cutting fabric and sewing bunting to enable people to show their support in their windows and to raise funds.

Caversham artist Martin Andrews, who designed our logo and writes the articles which accompany Janina Maher's drawings,

was celebrating a significant birthday in March. An exhibition of his work was held at the Old Fire Station in Henley, with the proceeds from sales (around £3,000) given to the Red Cross for Ukraine.

Artist & Makers Fair photo P Chatfield



Henley Exhibition photo P Chatfield

Alison Galer of Florence Gardening raised over £500 from a plant sale for DEC on 11 March and we are sure there are many other efforts being made here in response to this pointless war. Do send your stories for inclusion next month. Write to: editors@cavershambridge.org.



Donations pile up at RUCC



Matt Rodda provides support at RUCC

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Save energy and money with the weekly wash

THIS ECOTIP is based on a January 2022 report by Which? It can be read without being a Which? Member on: www.which.co.uk/news/2021/08/cut-your-laundry-costs-by-100-per-year

It offers the following key points:

- On average, switching from 40°C to 30°C saved 38% energy, and going down to 20°C saved 62%. The average washing machine costs about £38 a year in energy (before recent price increases) to run four washes a week.
- Lowering the temperature doesn't mean you get a bad wash unless clothes are very soiled. Switching to a liquid detergent will help shift tough stains at lower temperatures.

- In tests, some dryers ended up using 50% more electricity after 20 loads than for the first load, because of blocked filters. Remove these from the bottom of the dryer and clean out the large blobs of dust and fluff by hand, and then rinse until clean under the tap. Remember to let the filter cool before cleaning, and dry completely before putting it back in the machine. Do this at least every 10 cycles. More dryer tips are available online.

Please remember that the energy used in running a tumble dryer is usually more than the energy used for the wash, so that hanging the clothes out on a line to dry is a better eco-tip than changing the wash temperature. Doing both is best!

by Tricia Marcousie

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Intrepid litter-pickers

photo J Lanzoni

A way with litter

AS SPRING strides ever more purposely towards us, you might find yourself braving the outdoors a little more. Should you find yourself in a park or walking along the river on a Saturday morning, you may spot a band of merry men and women, armed with litter pickers and purple rubbish bags, ready to combat the scourge of litter dropped in our green spaces and wooded areas.

Established in 2020 by Jacopo Lanzoni, Keep Caversham Tidy is a not-for-profit charity with the goal of doing just that – keeping Caversham tidy. On Saturday mornings, at around 10:00, intrepid volunteers from Caversham and the surrounding area congregate to tackle the rubbish problem for a couple of hours. A different area of Caversham is cleared up each week, some being muddier than others! Once the rubbish is picked up, it is collected by the Council litter collectors. Since its inception, there have been 34 litter picks, involving 60 volunteers, amounting to over 650 hours of voluntary service. Our volunteers include several young people doing their Duke of Edinburgh award with us.

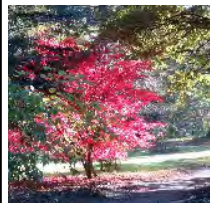
New volunteers are always welcome. It is a light commitment – you need attend only when you are able. Alongside doing good for local wildlife and helping to preserve our natural spaces, there is a chance to share a joke, take a bit of exercise on a Saturday morning, and build friendships. All the details of timings and dates for specific litter picks can be found on our Facebook page. Search for Keep Caversham Tidy. In addition, if you have ideas for other areas in Caversham we could clear, then please do get in touch via the Facebook page or group. We look forward to seeing you on future litter picks!

by Frazer J Mayhew

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TOMATOES - TAKE YOUR PICK

by Les Cooper



I F I AM truthful, my record of growing tomatoes has not been so good. Occasionally I have been successful, at least in my eyes, but over the years my tomato results have been mostly mediocre, sometimes hopeless, and always a bit late. Nevertheless, there is something good about growing your own tomatoes, even if they are not perfect. And you can always kid yourself they taste better than those Tesco show-offs your wife has just bought. Perhaps I fail to sow the seed early enough, because I worry about frosty nights when my greenhouse has no heat.

Friends are a problem too, because they always seem to do better than I do with their tomatoes. My neighbours, Jonathan and Jo, always grow 'Gardeners Delight', and frequently pass a bowlful over the fence, while my plants cower in the greenhouse green with envy. Their secret is to grow a lot of plants, which I think is one answer. You need to grow a good number for a reasonable crop, particularly the varieties with those tasty small fruit.

Selecting the best variety is difficult, because there are so many available now. Do you mean to grow them in the greenhouse, or outside in the garden? Then, of course, are they to be a bush variety or a cordon, and here even the packet instructions leave me unsure. Over the years I have tried a good number of different sorts and I am probably less certain now about my favourite than I was in those days way back when the choice was more limited. Then 'Moneymaker' was the fellow to grow. These days I think it looks fine, but it is rather tasteless. (Or maybe my sense of taste is not so good!)

In 2021 I grew six different varieties, because a friend gave me the plants. They were all grown in large pots filled with good compost. Although this was by no means a regulated test, the results were varied, to say the least.

One, called 'Balconi Red', I grew outside as instructed, where it decided it was a bonsai tomato, producing one large tomato from a pygmy plant. Now, too late, I have discovered it is meant to grow in a hanging basket; I should have guessed from the name.

The remaining five lived in the greenhouse. 'Indigo Cherry Drops' and 'Midnight Snack' were black, and I wasn't sure when to pick them. When I did, I was not impressed or even certain they were ready for eating. 'Orange Paruche' and 'Jubilee' were yellow/



Gardeners Delight,
(left)

Mountain Magic
(below)



orange and were okay, but nothing special: definitely not as prolific as 'Mountain Magic', which grew like mad, with an abundance of fine tomatoes. I rather took to it and wonder if it has a promising future. So, although I could well give it the kiss of death by doing so, I am trying it again this year.

Sowing the seeds of success

by Louise Hampden

ONE OF the best pieces of advice I can give to anyone who wants to sow seeds for summer flowers or vegetables is largely to ignore the advice on the back of the seed packet.

Let me justify that. The packet will perhaps say to sow in February or March, and gardeners faithfully follow that and wonder why their seeds do not appear. For, unless you have a warm windowsill or greenhouse, this advice is useless.

The end of March and the beginning of April sometimes bring cold winds, snow and frost which is not the ideal beginnings for any poor seedling.

Throw out the calendar and observe what is happening around you. Timing is everything, and nature knows much better than any seed packet. All over the garden plants will be growing, trees will be coming into leaf, and seedlings will be appearing. Many of them will be weeds. And it is this moment that the window of success opens wide.

Hardy annuals like poppies, calendula and love-in-a-mist can be sown directly into the ground. Sowing in small rows is helpful for beginners so that, when your seedlings appear, you can identify them from weedlings. A good tip for those who are new to sowing seed is to sow a couple of seeds into a pot so you will again be able to identify the seedlings of the seeds you have sown.

If you don't have a garden, sowing in pots is just as good, and plants like nasturtiums will fill a pot and spill over the sides. Sowing containers with vegetables is a great way to grow your own. Seeds like cut and come again lettuce, rocket and beetroot will provide leaves for salads. I've seen old wooden apple boxes used as mini raised beds filled with all sorts of vegetables and grown in the smallest of spaces.

Nothing succeeds like success, so watch and copy how nature starts her growing calendar, and your seedlings will germinate quickly and grow into strong plants.



Love-in-a-Mist

photo I Wildfeuer, Wikipedia Commoms

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Support floods in

by Fred Smith

IT WAS A bad start to the week for Forrester's Hair Salon in St Martin's Precinct on 21 February. When Diane arrived to open up, water was flooding across

the floor from a broken water pipe. But in minutes local businesspeople came to her aid: Matt from Terry's knew where to find the stopcock and was able to staunch the flow, Rowland and 'Lofty' from Caversham Butcher dashed over with brushes to sweep out the water, and two staff arrived from

Iceland with a suitable vacuum cleaner. Fortunately, their prompt action prevented any serious damage. Although early appointments had to be postponed, the saloon was up and running the next day. So what might have been a tale of misfortune became the story of good neighbours!

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Community Connections



by Caroline Gratrix

This month we learn something about local resident Dan Smith.



Dan Smith

photo C Gratrix

DAN STUDIED Interior Architecture and Design without fully knowing the direction this might take him in. After working in retail interiors, he gained design experience across a variety of design disciplines - including restaurants, bars, exhibitions, hotels and residential projects - before returning to study for a Masters in Dementia and Enabling Environments.

Dan's designs are about people and the impact on their health and wellbeing of the built environment around them. They are unique, considerate and inclusive. He now runs a creative design agency DanSmith.Design, on Prospect Street in Caversham. His studio is passionate about working with and supporting independent businesses, and is looking forward to working with more of them in the future. They also work directly with homeowners on interior design, home renovations and disability adaptations.

Let's find out a little more about Dan and how he feels about our community...

How long have you lived in Caversham?

For just over a year now, but I ran the cocktail bar 'Chapter' from 2019. I lived in Woodley for five years before that. I moved from London to buy a house and settle down away from the capital's fast-paced life. I love the community spirit in Caversham, and how everyone supports each other.

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

There are so many great, independent businesses here. I eat out

way more than I cook at home and feel spoilt for choice! The Fox and Hounds has an excellent selection of beers and food, in particular their Jaipur Fish and Chips. I love a Pizza - so Papa Gee is a must! I often pick up coffee and a pastry from Geo Café, which is opposite our studio. Everyone is so friendly, and you quickly get to know the business owners by name. Makan Malaysia are great friends of ours, selling tasty food for home delivery. It's fantastic to see new shops like Nood Stores and The Live Well openings, despite the pandemic.

How do you think we can all be eco-friendlier in RG4?

Shopping locally and supporting independent businesses has a double impact - helping local people, as well as reducing your carbon footprint. Seeing businesses working together and supplying each other is great, as is the Plastic Free Caversham initiative. Regarding design work and home design, products such as bedding made from recycled plastic, re-purposed furniture, and sustainably sourced timber are available. Construction can be wasteful, so we try to recycle or re-use building materials.

Being part of a community reaps a wealth of benefits; how would you strengthen our sense of community in Caversham?

This is an amazing place and I regularly see familiar faces supporting community activities. Christmas in Caversham (organised by the Caversham Trader's Association) was great, as are the regular litter picking and walking groups. There are so many talented people of all kinds here. Maybe a summer festival would be a fantastic way to celebrate these individuals and organisations in one place, bring the community together. There could be drinks and food providers, live music, book readings. A great way to showcase the talents and diversity of our area!

If you could bring anything to Caversham, an event, an experience, a shop, what would it be?

I would love to build a space for 'gardening therapy' alongside a little café, growing fruit and veg to cook and share with the community. This could offer a fantastic sensory therapy and would be a great addition to any community!

I've designed many speakeasy venues in London and would love to see one in Caversham - a little hidden bar tucked away behind a secret bookcase, or a door disguised as a vending machine! There is a fantastic bar in Prague that prints half the menu in ultra-violet ink. You only see the 'secret' drinks if one of the bar staff lends you one of their torches. They can add an element of excitement to what would otherwise be an ordinary night out.

If you would like to connect with Dan, you can find him on Instagram @dansmithdesign or his website is www.dansmithdesign.co.uk.

Heron-spotters now have a new addition to look out for during strolls by the Thames - thanks to Vanessa Beresford, who talks about her new-found love of working with stained glass to Elestr Lee

EVERYONE WHO enjoys walking from Lower Caversham, past View Island and across the weir to Caversham Lock, will have strolled past Heron Island – which now features its very own handsome stained-glass heron.

The heron is the work of stained-glass artist Vanessa Beresford, who has been living on the island for the past 15 years. The heron is dedicated to her late husband, Eddie Insam. "It's a life-size heron, and a tribute to Eddie. The river, especially rowing and the regatta, were so important to him!" Vanessa says.

Vanessa herself has been making quite an impact with her stained glass, which has been exhibited at the local Artist & Makers Fairs in Caversham, as well as at the Henley Art Trail in both 2020 and 2021 - remarkable as she only began learning the craft in 2018 when she started attending classes run by Caroline Loveys at South Hill Park in Bracknell. "In fact, I still go to South Hill Park, as they have the equipment, the facilities and the expertise," she adds.

Zimbabwe-born Vanessa has lived in the UK since the age of 20, when she came here to marry an Englishman. Prior to her marriage, she had studied music at Cape Town University in South Africa, with ideas of becoming a pianist. In fact, she never used her musical skills as, when she arrived in the UK, she enrolled for a graphic

design course and later acquired teaching qualifications, and taught both computer graphics and media studies at Reading College and Thames Valley University.

"I then found I had injured myself due to IT, and discovered Pilates. As I enjoy teaching, I ended up setting up Pilates classes myself! I'm no longer doing this – however, I have created a stained glass image of a Pilates pose," she laughs.

Vanessa is full of ideas for new creations in glass. "I am making lots of small pieces, which I sell at the craft fairs. Fish, butterflies – actually they are very time-consuming, and involve a lot of careful working. But I am also interested in making a lot more pieces suitable for people to display in their gardens, such as my Garden Pyramid. They look so good when the sun is shining!"

"I am also working on small stands for people to display my pieces on window-sills, where they can't be suspended."

Attending the Artist & Makers Fair led to two commissions for front door panels, which Vanessa is very excited about. She is full of enthusiasm about future ideas. "I would like to learn about repairing stained glass, and I am also going to sign up for a course on leaded glass, the type you see in churches."

She has joined the Contemporary Glass Society, and has got to know John of Reading Stained Glass at Cemetery Junction. "I am so new to this, and there is always the feeling 'I'll never be as good as that!' - but in fact, I am very ambitious," she says.

While some glass artists are interested in 'fused' glass techniques, Vanessa's interest is in the traditional stained glass achieved by metallic salts added during the manufacture of the glass, creating various colours. She loves the fact that it is very much a 'craft' - with so many facets to learn. Her pieces sometimes combine beauty



with humour, such as her depiction of a lady and her greyhound in Art Deco style – which has more than a hint of Cruella DeVille.

Teaching has long been an important part of Vanessa's life, so it's not surprising she has recently started teaching a beginners class in stained glass in Twyford. "I find I am now devoting an awful lot of my time to stained glass," she enthuses, "And there is a huge amount to learn!"

Find out more: vbglassart.com



Vanessa is enchanted by the potential of stained glass: *Poppies* (top right); *Glass flower candle* (left), and *Lady with dog* (right)

Photos: V Beresford

Beanpole Day Saturday 23 April at Caversham Court

by Tricia Marcousie

THIS YEAR, we are back to normal at Caversham Court, on 23 April from 10:00 to 15:00, with all the usual suspects to supply your gardening needs for this summer, and a few extras.

A wealth of locally grown vegetable plants, shrubs, flowers and wildflowers at extremely reasonable prices. Star attractions will be the enormous range of tomato plants, allowing you to mix and match varieties from old favourites to the yellow, green and black ones seen on TV; large herbs in fibre pots; big perennials to make a statement in

the garden; plants for pollinators; and young trees to capture carbon.

Added to this come second-hand refurbished tools, gardening books, home-made cakes and sweets, gardening advice, opportunities to build your own bird box, to join a local environmental group working on public spaces, Fairtrade goods, a wealth of information from local environmental charities, and activities for children.

What we don't have is parking, apart from disabled parking bays outside the main entrance. If you are coming by car, please park on local streets and walk in. There will be a crèche for anything you buy, and then you can bring the car down to load quickly.

Join us for a good day out next to the Thames. The refreshment kiosk will be open, or bring a picnic to have on the lawn, and PLEASE bring some cash. Not every charity has portable electronic payment systems, although many do.



Beanpole creche

photo P Chatfield



Beanpole day 2019

photo Econet

Messy Church: Ready, Steady, Go!

MESSY CHURCH launched at The Weller Centre on Sunday 27 February. We were delighted to have so many families come and try it out - 22 children along with their adults.

The first hour involved crafts like creating colourful sand art pictures

and stained glass decorations. Our Young Leaders (those in secondary school) then performed a fantastic drama, retelling the story of Jesus being tempted in the desert - based on Matthew Chapter 4 verses 1-11. We thought about how big, strong and powerful God is, and how he's a God who wants to know us, and who wants us to know him, finishing with a great rendition of the song 'Our God is a Great Big God'! Pancakes were then enjoyed by all!



We're already looking forward to the next Messy Church from 16:00-18:00 at The Weller Centre on Sunday 10 April. Hope to see you there!

If anyone would be interested in being part of a pack-down team for half an hour (18:00-18:30) on Messy Church Sundays (once a month) do drop me an email:

anna@ctmparish.org.uk

photo and text Anna Clarke

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First Impressions Matter

LinkedIn Top Tips

by Laura Harmsworth



Last month I wrote about the importance of LinkedIn in your job search and the power of networking.

HERE ARE some key actions to get your LinkedIn profile ready for engaging with others:

Photo: This should be just you (head and shoulders), with a neutral background, well-lit from the front and with no shadows on the face. Smile and look approachable. You can create a great profile pic at pfpmaker.com.

Banner: change it so you stand out - canva.com has a good section for creating LinkedIn banners.

Profile URL: tidy this up so you lose the random letters and numbers after your name. Click the Me icon → View Profile → Edit public profile & URL → click the Edit icon next to your public profile URL → and edit the last part of your URL in the text box → Save.

Headline: this is the line under your name and defaults to your current job title. Stand out by using all 220 characters to highlight what you do.

Summary: this is your story, it doesn't need to be as formal as your CV, add some personality. Avoid writing in large text blocks, use emojis and bullets, and don't begin every sentence with 'I'.

Add your key specialities and a call to action.

Skills list: update using the key skills required in the role you want - 50 is your limit. Ensure the top three relevant skills are pinned to the top of the list.

Use keywords throughout your profile. It's hard to adapt to each role you apply to, so ensure your profile contains relevant/common words across a variety of roles you're interested in.

Once your profile is up to date, what should you do?

- Follow relevant people/companies
- Engage with posts, write intuitive posts

- Check your feed daily
- Ask for endorsements and recommendations (and give them back)

Continue to do this even when you're not job seeking, as you never know what might come of engagement or when you might need to contact someone for a role.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

or on LinkedIn, where she posts tips and articles:

www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

Her website is: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email Laura at contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk



A beautiful day at the club

photo Bohemian Bowls Club

THE UNIQUE Island Bohemian Bowls Club is a thriving outdoor club in a tranquil position, situated on De Montfort Island (also known as Fry's Island) in the river Thames, between Caversham and Reading bridges. Access is by a short ferry ride provided by the club.

Bowl over to the island

by Adrian Barrett

The Club is holding Open Days on Sunday 1 May from 10:30 to 15:30, and Monday 2 May from 16:00 to 19:00. For those unable to make either of those dates, we are also having an Open Day later in the month on Saturday 28 May from 14:00 until 17:00.

The clubhouse has been recently refurbished, has a well-stocked bar, and a kitchen for making tea and coffee. Club members have built two new changing rooms over the last two years to enhance the facilities.

We have a full fixture list for 2022, welcoming many clubs from near and far, as well as playing in local leagues for both ladies and gentlemen and competitions.

We would love to welcome you to our club, whether you are an existing or new bowler or just interested in trying the game for the first time. If you are unable to make the

open days we offer free coaching every Monday evening, starting in May, from 17:30.

Bowling is for everyone, regardless of age and gender, and can be a family activity, a social activity or a competitive sport; it's what you want it to be. The game of bowls is an excellent way of keeping active, a low impact sport with time to socialise and make friends.

There are two options for catching the club ferry – it can be taken either from the South bank at the end of Brigham Rd, RG1 8DP, or from the North bank at the end of Wolsey Rd, RG4 8BY. It's very easy.

We do hope to see you on one of our open days, and ask only that you wear flat-soled shoes or trainers. The bowls equipment will be provided for beginners.

For more information, ring Adrian on 0118 947 6234.

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Get Jamming with the Jam Lady

Sarah Roy



SPRING IS WELL under way in the garden, and I've been keeping a close eye on my rhubarb patch. The first signs of shoots appeared in January, and they have been growing steadily since. Now the sun is getting warmer, I am hoping I will be able to start picking stalks in April. My son adores rhubarb crumble, so that will be first on the list, but then I'll be using them for jam making. Top Tip – freeze the chopped-up rhubarb before using it. When it is defrosted, it's super soft and perfect for jam making. I love to mix some elderflowers in with the rhubarb when they are available – it really is the taste of spring in a jar. I also love to pair it with fresh ginger in the jam, as it really packs a punch.

Rhubarb & Fresh Ginger Jam

Ingredients:

1kg rhubarb stalks, chopped
1kg granulated sugar
75g grated fresh ginger

Method

1. Wash the jars and lids in hot water. Put into a warm oven (175°C) for 15min to sterilise them. Put a saucer into the freezer.
2. Cook the rhubarb and fresh ginger until it is soft. You'll need to add water to fresh stalks but, if defrosted, they will be soft enough not to need water.
3. Stew down the stalks and ginger, using a masher to break down to a pulp. Add a little more water if necessary. You want to avoid letting it burn on the bottom of the pan.
4. Stir in the sugar until it dissolves. Bring to a rolling boil.
5. You know that it has reached setting point when the mixture is bubbling and spitting. Take care, as the jam will be scalding hot at this stage and can be quite dangerous.
6. Once ready, ladle into the hot jars right to the top and firmly seal the lids. As the jam cools, a vacuum is created and the jam is preserved.



photo S Roy

Enjoy on freshly made bread or warm crumpets. This is a soft set jam, so it really oozes into all those holes – yummy!



Walking on sunshine!

AS WE TURN towards Spring, I wanted to draw attention to this unique 'sunshine' vitamin. I don't want to be prescriptive, but I do think there is some merit in discussing the role of vitamin D in our bodies, and deciding what form of it might best suit us.

Vitamin D is both a nutrient we eat and a hormone our bodies make. It is a fat-soluble vitamin that has long been known to help the body absorb and retain calcium and phosphorus - both of which are critical for building bone. Also, laboratory studies show that vitamin D can reduce cancer cell growth, help control infections and reduce inflammation. Many of the body's organs and tissues have receptors for vitamin D, which suggest it has important roles beyond bone health, and scientists are actively investigating other possible functions.

Few foods contain vitamin D naturally, though some foods are fortified with it. For most people, the best way to get enough vitamin D is to take a supplement because it is hard to get enough through food. Vitamin D is formed in the presence of (UVB) rays, hence its nickname, the 'sunshine' vitamin, but D2 is produced in plants and fungi and D3 in animals, including humans. Vitamin D production in the skin is the primary natural source of vitamin D, but many people have insufficient levels because they live in

places where sunlight is limited in winter, or because they have limited sun exposure due to being inside much of the time. Also, people with darker skin tend to have lower blood levels of vitamin D because the skin pigment (melanin) acts like a shade, reducing production of vitamin D (and also reducing damaging effects of sunlight on skin, including skin cancer).

Symptoms of vitamin D deficiency can include muscle weakness, pain, fatigue and depression.

We can get vitamin D in a variety of ways. These can include:

- Being exposed to the sun - about 15-20 minutes three days per week is usually sufficient
- Through the foods we eat
- Through nutritional supplements

Without vitamin D our bones can become soft, thin and brittle, and insufficient vitamin D is also connected to osteoporosis. Taken in appropriate doses, vitamin D is generally considered safe. A number of scientific studies investigating the link between vitamin D3 deficiency and increased compromise of the immune system in Covid 19 patients are underway.

As someone with darker skin, I might consider taking the supplement year long instead of only in the cooler months. In safe doses, and from a certified company only.

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right) vocal, bed, gem, gamble, opal, bet, oval, **egg**, beg, shape, leg, cape, limb, shake, keg

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EDITORS: Dr Alison Johnston, Mrs Janet Offord, Mrs Heather Gale, Phil Chatfield, Judith El-Nager
Email: editors@cavershambridge.org

ADVERTISEMENT MANAGER: Mr A Wright
Tel: 0118 947 6958
Email: advertising@cavershambridge.org

COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr Tony Holland.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: C Clifford
Email: subscriptions@cavershambridge.org

CIRCULATION DELIVERIES:
Email: circulation@cavershambridge.org

COMPANY CHAIR: Mr Phil Chatfield
Email: chair@cavershambridge.org

COMPANY TREASURER: Mrs J Belcher.
Tel: 0118 947 4772
Email: treasurer@cavershambridge.org

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER:
Mrs J. Belcher Tel: 0118 947 4772

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