

Caversham Bridge

No 687

www.cavershambridge.org

May 2022

We celebrate our deep pool of talents

by Elestr Lee

ALMOST TWO years ago, Caversham Bridge began its monthly Creative Caversham feature, with the initial idea of highlighting the work of artists and craftspeople who would have taken part in the Caversham Arts Trail, which was suspended due to the pandemic: in June 2020 we featured the work of weaver Gloria Pitt. The wealth of local talent of those who live or regularly exhibit in the area, as well as writers and musicians, is clearly extraordinary.

We are rightly proud of the creative people within our community, some of whom have attained national, and even international, recognition for their work – like industrial photographer Matt Emmett and artist Nicolette Carter, who won an episode of TV's *Home Is Where The Art Is*.

Ideas behind the art or craftsmanship are always thought-provoking. Barbara Goodbun makes eye-catching jewelry recycled from old broken pieces. Liz Real has a keen eye for social observation, and raises funds for Launchpad through her Art In The Arbour sales. Janina Maher and Martin Andrews have, in particular, enhanced our appreciation of our built landscape as artists. They have combined their creative talents with Janina's monthly depiction of a local building which, accompanied by Martin's historical account within the pages of Caversham Bridge, encourages us to look

on the buildings around us with a greater understanding of our community's history.

Not everyone featured teaches their skill, though many do. Creativity is all about communication after all. It's natural to want to pass on both knowledge and enthusiasm to the next generation - silhouettist Charles Burns, who virtually rescued this lost art, uses his newsletter to inform and entertain us. During lockdown, those both teaching and signing up to classes to learn new skills found the experience extremely supportive during such an unprecedented and stressful time...and all thanks to Zoom!

Several of those interviewed have expressed concerns about the downgrading of 'the arts' within our state school curriculum, having been inspired in a previous era when arts subjects were encouraged. They worry that today's children are missing out. However, as writer Kate Poels told us, schools around the country are inviting in creative writers like herself to offer children the chance to discover the joys of creative writing – as an antidote to the curriculum.

Caversham is creative – as those who visit some or all of this year's Caversham Arts Trail will testify. This year's 'trail' includes more artists than ever – which can only be a very healthy sign for our creative future.



Clockwise from top, Charles Burns; Nina O'Connell; Martin Andrews; Barbara Goodbun; Gloria Pitt



Three cornered leek photo P Chatfield

ALL IN THE MIX FOR MAY

by Phil Chatfield

OUR THEME for May is creativity – musical, artistic, in the garden or in the kitchen. We mark the return of the Caversham Arts Trail, after a break of two years, with an expanded paper which includes a map of the trail and details of the artists involved (p10-11). Our regular Creative Caversham article features the founders of the Arts Trail, Julie Simmonds and Lauren Denney (p9), while our lead article looks back at the artists we have featured in recent editions of the paper (this page). We also have our regular Local Scene, with a drawing of St John's Church by Janina Maher and background history from Martin Andrews (p16).

In the second of his Musical Memories, Edward Bradley takes a fond look back at the dance halls of the 1950s (p8), and local musicians Janet Sherbourne and Jan Steele celebrate the re-release of a 1980s cassette, and a new album of saxophone music (p6). In the garden, Les Cooper looks at the merits of dahlias, and Louise Jordan considers hardy geraniums, which she describes as 'the workhorse of summer' (both p14). Our regular Happy Wanderer article (p7) considers wild garlic and a Mediterranean relative, the Three Cornered Leek (left).

The war in Ukraine continues to dominate international news. Many people in our community have been moved to do something to help. Ket and Zevva of the Geocafé have been holding fundraising

meals on Monday evenings, with hearty soups, to eat in or take home, for just £5. Pupils at Caversham Primary School decided to organise a cake sale at Albert Road Park. They sold out of cakes and raised a substantial sum (both p17). Food is also the theme of our Community Connections item this month, with Sue and Kat from Makan Malaysia, who have brought Malaysian cuisine to this corner of Berkshire (p15).

We hope you enjoy reading the paper, and look forward to receiving your comments and contributions. And don't forget to join in with our 'Brighten up our streets' competition for plant containers - see:

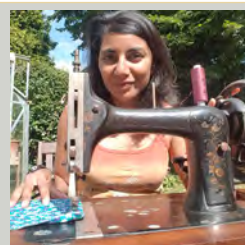
<https://cavershambridge.org:5154/competition> for details. Contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org

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Dahlias
– p14



A Crafty Cuppa
with Bhamini
– p15



Cake sale for
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Suprised by the light

I HOPE that, as you read this, the weather is turning warmer and brighter, and that May is full of flowers, joy, and sunshine. This morning I found myself in a group of wonderful folks reflecting on our 'on-again, off-again' flurries of snow, when one of them suddenly said, "Well at least the summer was nice!" Of course, they meant the glorious week near the end of March and, after the laughter stopped, it got me thinking.

Firstly, thinking about how we are a little obsessed with talking about the weather; we are a bit predisposed to thinking it's going to be bad or go bad suddenly. I am unable to travel to London without a raincoat, ever, because I had a bad experience once. But then I remembered this strange moment last night when I began getting ready to go somewhere I was meant to be, only to discover that I was getting ready to leave a full hour late.

Daylight saving time (British Summer Time) is an interesting experience – not having grown up with it. Our bodies have a rhythm that is not so easily adjusted or disrupted. A rhythm I am not sure we pay enough attention to. We have little problem with the 'Oh-Yay-Extra-Sleep' daylight saving day and rather more trouble with the 'Why-Am-I-So-Tired' daylight saving day. This is because our



Talking Point – by Martin Beukes

bodies don't like the disruption. The rhythm we live by is important! After all, the 11th commandment is 'Thou shalt not rise before 7 am, for this is an abomination!'

Of course, this commandment exists nowhere in the

canon of Scripture, but firmly in the canon of my body clock; a clock which was really caught off guard by losing an hour's sleep and by it being so light yesterday evening. This got me wondering why we're caught off guard by the *light*?

It has been my experience that people have an amazing ability to take the *darkness* – all the pain and suffering that life throws our way – largely in our stride. This despite the manifest suffering all around us as wars are fought, children go to sleep hungry, people shiver in their homes, and many have no home or safety at all. There is so much darkness around and it is unnatural. It needs to be said that every one of us has our own limit to coping with the darkness, and it is only by the grace of God that we do not stray too close to it.

I find it sad I was surprised by the light last night, and heart breaking that it seems to me we are not terribly surprised by all the *darkness* in our world. Have we just come to accept it as the way things are? Has the darkness become the rhythm we busily live with?

I hope May is filled with some truly lovely days full of light, joy and flowers. But, if nothing else, we have a handful of bank holidays where our natural rhythm gets to fight to the surface as we adjust to the *light*.

Rev'd Martin Beukes is a member of the Methodist Team Ministry in Caversham

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

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



engage

Making connections

by Sheila Cox – Engage Co-ordinator for Caversham

ENGAGE BEFRIENDING tackles isolation by matching one of our team of volunteers with someone in need of a friend. We have 20 volunteers visiting or telephoning older people in Caversham. However, we are in need of more volunteers in the area. As a volunteer you would visit a friend once a week or fortnight. It may be for a cuppa and chat, a short walk, out for a coffee or to visit a place of interest nearby. Two of our older clients say: "...such a valuable service, just seeing someone once a week or so when we wouldn't have much contact, my befriender has been such a support and a good friend"

"I don't feel so isolated – very much cheered. It has meant a lot to me to have contact since I've been on my own....I value it greatly."

Rob and Roy from Caversham have been matched

for nearly 8 years. During lockdown home visits stopped, but weekly telephone calls continued. I'm pleased to say visits have started again. Rob and Roy feel comfortable together and have discovered they have similar interests. Over the years they have gone for walks, had meals out and gone to concerts together. Roy says: "We are lucky to have so much in common. We never have any difficulty in finding something to talk about". Rob: "Roy and I are well-matched and share the same interests. This makes conversation very easy and natural. Also, Roy comes up with good ideas of activities we might undertake together and places or events to attend."

Do you feel you could help to reduce the impact of loneliness and isolation by befriending an older person, close to where you live? If so, for further information contact:

Engage Befriending on: 0118 995 2102
or by e-mail: engage@themustardtree.org
Most of the staff are part-time workers so we'll get back to you as soon as we can.



Rob and Roy

photo Engage

Caversham Jam

APRIL WAS the month of traffic chaos in Caversham, as captured in these photos. Extended work to install new broadband cables for CityFibre by contractor Instalcom has affected many parts of our area. But the work over Caversham Bridge and through the centre of Caversham has been particularly disruptive, with temporary traffic lights causing lengthy queues. In addition, work by the Last Crumb, although completed quickly, added to the problem. The impact has also been felt in Vastern Road and George Street as drivers tried to avoid the centre of Caversham.

Facebook groups and other social media have been full of stories of delays and efforts to find alternative routes. Some local shoppers have given up and driven

to Henley to avoid the delays. At the time of writing, the contractors were due to have the work complete by mid-April.



photo F Smith

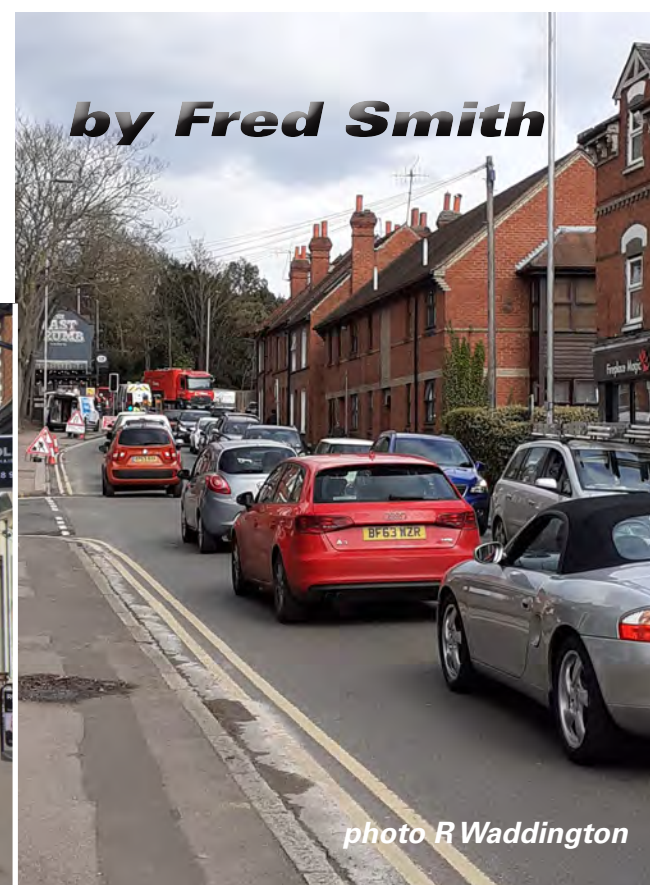


photo R Waddington

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Church and at the Milestone Café in Caversham
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The Road Home

THIS BLANKET uses a pattern called "Safe at Home" and was knitted over a period of 10 weeks by a team of ten crafters from the St Peter's Church craft group.

There are 103 houses in the blanket, each of which is different and the woolly road keeps them all together. The blanket will be given to Berkshire Women's Aid to provide warmth and comfort to someone who needs it.

photo and report Pat Jones



Hoardings get a makeover

photo F Smith

by Rob Sproule

We asked Rob, who is overseeing the refurbishment at Caversham Baptist Church, for an update on progress. His response was: The hoardings are still up but we're in!

OUR CONTRACTORS, Morris & Blunt Ltd, handed back all internal parts of our building on 21 March - and what a transformation! The building is warm, the loos are modern, the upper hall is almost unrecognisable with its dramatic new look, kitchenette and other services. A new assisted hearing system has been installed in both the main hall and lounge.

Back to the future

Handover of the frontage is scheduled for 13 May. The new ramp provides step-free, safe and easy access for all.

We really want to make our refurbished building a community resource all can enjoy. We are organising a range of events over the next 12 months to celebrate the reopening of this historic, Grade 2 listed building - refurbished for the 21st Century.

Our first event takes place over the weekend of 28-29 May. We start with a Community Fun day 10:00 to 16:00 on Saturday 28 May. This is your invitation to explore the refurbished building, experience a taster of some of the activities that take place throughout the week, enjoy some free food and refreshments, music, games, face painting and much more. A schedule of events to help you plan your visit is available from our website www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk. Alternatively call 0118 954 5353 for the latest information.

This is followed with a service of thanksgiving at 10:30 on Sunday 29 May; again, you are most welcome to join us.

Details of future events will be available nearer the time on our website and in other publications, including Caversham Bridge.

Our thanks to Caversham-based DLK Architects and Reading-based construction firm Morris & Blunt Ltd for their exceptional service. Thanks too to our neighbours and community for patience and forbearance over the past 8 months.

We look forward to welcoming you on or before Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 May.

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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 – St John's Baby and Toddler Group – 09:30 -11:00 in term time – Caversham Hall, St John's Road - all welcome. See:

www.facebook.com/stjohnscaversham

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

Sundays – Farmer's Market and Artisan Fair 10:00 – 15:00 Caversham precinct

www.facebook.com/CAFMarket

Wednesday 4 May – Walk at Upper Basildon 5.4 miles – 10:30 start - Pang Valley Ramblers. One of several walks in their programme. Also 11, 16 and 23rd. See www.pvramblers.org.uk for details.

Wednesday 4 May – Rosehill WI – 14:00 St Barnabas Church Hall. Guest speaker Vik Singh, on 'Fraud' and members are asked to bring their phones and tablets!

Friday 6 May – 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.

Saturday 14 May – 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

Saturday 14 May – Caversham Horticultural Society's Spring Plant Sale – 10:00 - 11.30 at Oakley Road allotments (next to vets). Cash/cheque sales only.

Monday 16 - Sunday 22 May – The Big Plastic Count – Greenpeace on plastic waste. Count your plastic for one week to gather the evidence to push for action to tackle the plastic crisis. For more information, see <https://thebigplasticcount.com>

Monday May 16th – CADRA AGM and Open Meeting, including a talk on 'Local Policing' – New Testament of God, Church Street, See www.cadra.org.uk for details.

Wednesday 18 May – Caversham Heights Townswomens Guild Talk 'The River Thames and its residents' by Nick Brazil – 14:45 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, 74 Highmoor Road. Meetings every 3rd Wednesday at 14:45. New members welcome. Contact Margaret on 01491 681223

Thursday 19 May – Caversham WI meeting – 19:30 at 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

Thursday 19 – Sunday 22 May – Plant Sale for Water Aid and Ukraine – 10:00 - 18:00 daily except Sunday 10:00 to 14:00, 97 South View Avenue

www.facebook.com/cavershamfairtrade for details

Friday 20 – Sunday 22 May – Plant Bring and Buy Sale for Ukraine – 09:00 – 17:00 daily, 67 Albert Road Caversham RG4 7AW. Donations welcome. Email for details gardenbringnbuy@gmail.com

Wednesday 25 May – Caversham Horticultural Society Talk 'For the Love of Roses' by Gillian Taylor – 19:30 - St Anne's Primary School Washington Road RG4 5AA. Light refreshments will be available. Cost £5 for non-members.

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 END OF March brought news on two major schemes. The Secretary of State will not 'call in' the Reading Golf Club site application 211843 and the formal approval has been issued. As far as we know, the appeal on the refused application (210018) will proceed in June. The planning application for Caversham Park is now online. It includes: conversion of the main building for 64 assisted living units; a new 64-bed care home; retirement dwellings on the car park and by the previous satellite dishes; 28 affordable and 5 family homes near the site entrance; and refurbishment and extension of the pavilion to provide changing facilities and a café/studio supporting facilities for croquet, bowling and tennis. While the formal closing date is the end of April, comments will continue to be accepted. Given the number and complexity of the planning documents, we have posted a few documents on www.cadra.org.uk.

There have been major decisions for the area north of the station. The SSE site, refused by the Council was approved at appeal. The scheme for the mail sorting office was approved at planning committee on 30 March. This includes 620 residential units with a mix of other uses. The highest building at 24 storeys is next to the northern entrance to the station. Levels step down to 8 storeys on Caversham Road. Design will require a separate application. Between the two, the Aviva site from TGI to the Range will be heard at appeal late April. CADRA remains concerned about the critical relationships between the three sites.

The Government are giving Councils the option to apply to enforce against 'moving traffic offences'. Reading plans to use these new powers to improve safety and tackle congestion. A consultation with more details is open to 20 May. Search www.reading.gov.uk for 'Moving Traffic Offences Consultation.'



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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. We are coming up to the summer so a great chance to pick up some holiday reads.

by Alex Forbes

THE FIRST BOOK this month is 'Insomnia' by Sarah Pinborough. Visitors to the shop know what a fan of Pinborough I am. This tells the story of Emma, who is approaching her 40th birthday. Emma is a little anxious as her mum stopped sleeping just before her 40th birthday, and went mad before committing a terrible act. A couple of days before her 40th Emma suddenly can't sleep, and she is terrified history is repeating itself. Sarah Pinborough is a talented writer who can capture a whole scene and an array of feelings with just a few words. This is a real page-turner, which has you guessing throughout, and buckets of sympathy for the main character. It would make a great holiday read.



The Bear can't sleep!

photo A Forbes

The children's book is 'Once Upon a Mermaid's Tail' by Beatrice Blue. A beautiful picture book telling a story of friendship and protecting the oceans. Theodore loves the ocean and collecting fish. One day he finds something he's never seen before and takes it home, despite the warnings to leave it alone. Can Theodore learn that the creature belongs in the ocean, before it's too late? This story is full of heart and great illustrations and has been a real hit in the shop. Perfect for 4-6 year olds.

Thank you for reading and hopefully we'll see you in the shop soon. Happy reading!

SOUNDS COME BACK AROUND – Janet Sherbourne

by Elestr Lee

CAVERSHAM-BASED musician and composer Janet Sherbourne is celebrating the re-release on cassette of an album originally made in the 1980s. 'Walks Abroad' was composed by Janet and fellow composer Mark Lockett, with tracks all performed by Janet, Mark and Janet's husband and saxophonist Jan Steele. "We made around seven albums on vinyl, CD and cassette during the 80s. People still get in touch, sending emails asking us 'are they still available?', but they sold out yonks ago!" she told us.

It was quite a thrill when Japanese label Conatala got in touch and asked if they could re-release Walks Abroad – still on cassette, which is nowadays quite collectable. "We said, 'Fine by us,'" Janet laughs.

When the cassette was originally made, marketing consisted mainly of leaflets handed out by the musicians themselves; this time round there will be all the benefits of social media. Janet and Jan – both Caversham residents for 23 years – are touched that the music they started producing in the 80s seems to be finding a whole new modern-day audience.

Janet's interest in ethnomusicology is reflected in



Jan and Janet

photo J Steele

her varied compositional style – she became expert in gamelan music, Latin American, as well as jazz – the cassette is almost like a pot pourri of the well-travelled holidaymaker's musical memories.

And in the meantime, the couple are celebrating the recent launch on 23 April of 'Distant Saxophones', featuring Jan on flute and sax, with Janet's vocals and keyboard. This album, which can be obtained as an LP or CD, is being produced by the Portland, Oregon label Community Library.

For more info about 'Walks Abroad':

www.juno.co.uk/products/janet-sherbourne-mark-lockett-walks-abroad/869153-01

For more info about 'Distant Saxophones':

communitylibrary.bandcamp.com/album/distant-saxophones

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Happy Wanderer gets a taste for:

Wild Garlic

FOR THE month of May, I thought it was high time I wrote something on a natural history subject for a change, so here's a picture I took in Great Chalk Wood near Goring in May 2011, showing the flowers of the Wild Garlic, or Ramsons.

It's not exactly a common plant, and it tends to occur in damp places, under trees, and often in large colonies. The Reading Natural History Society reported it growing 'near Kent Woods, Tilehurst, and in Hardwick Woods', in their book, 'List of the Flowering Plants ... of the Country near Reading', published in 1900. The broad green leaves make it hard to mistake for anything else. They are nothing like the narrow leaves of other garlic species, and the bulb is much smaller than cultivated garlic, and without the masses of cloves wrapped in a papery skin.

In cookery, it is the leaves that have been used, rather than the bulb, for flavouring soups and stews. In his 'Herball', first published in 1597, John Gerard wrote that, in the Low Countries, the shredded leaves were used to make a sauce for fish, "Even as we do eate greene-sauce made with sorrell", and that in April and May, the leaves could be eaten with butter, by "such as are of a strong constitution, and labouring men". Whether or not the leaves were cooked first is not stated, but the suggestion is that the leaves were highly pungent.

The other usual English name for the plant, Ramsons, comes straight from the

Anglo-Saxon, and the word crops up in several English place names such as Ramsey, Ramsdale and Ramsbottom. The last of these signified a valley – in this case that of the River Irwell – where Ramsons grows. A few years ago, I travelled there on the East Lancashire Railway. I'd been told that I really should visit the Ramsons Restaurant.

Alighting on the Ramsbottom platform, I spied an advertisement for the restaurant on the wall, but on reaching the place, I discovered that it had recently closed down! Disappointed, I resorted to the chip shop I'd passed on the way.

There is, however, another sort of wild garlic with which readers may be familiar – the Three-Cornered Garlic. Its flower-stems, triangular in cross-section, make it unmistakable. It's an invader from the western Mediterranean region, which is spreading through the island of Great Britain from the Channel Islands, Cornwall and the south-west. It was unknown to the authors of the earlier Berkshire County Floras (George Claridge Druce, 1897 and Humphrey Bowen, 1968). Michael Crawley, author of the 2005 'Flora of Berkshire' says that it was 'not naturalised to anything like the extent that it is in south-west England'. I haven't yet seen it in my garden, but I've certainly

seen it on roadsides and in gardens in Emmer Green and on Caversham Heights. If you have it in the garden, and it's becoming a nuisance, you may like to know that according to Roger Phillips, in his 'Wild Food' book, it was traditionally used as a flavouring for broths – in the areas where it 'traditionally' grew, presumably.



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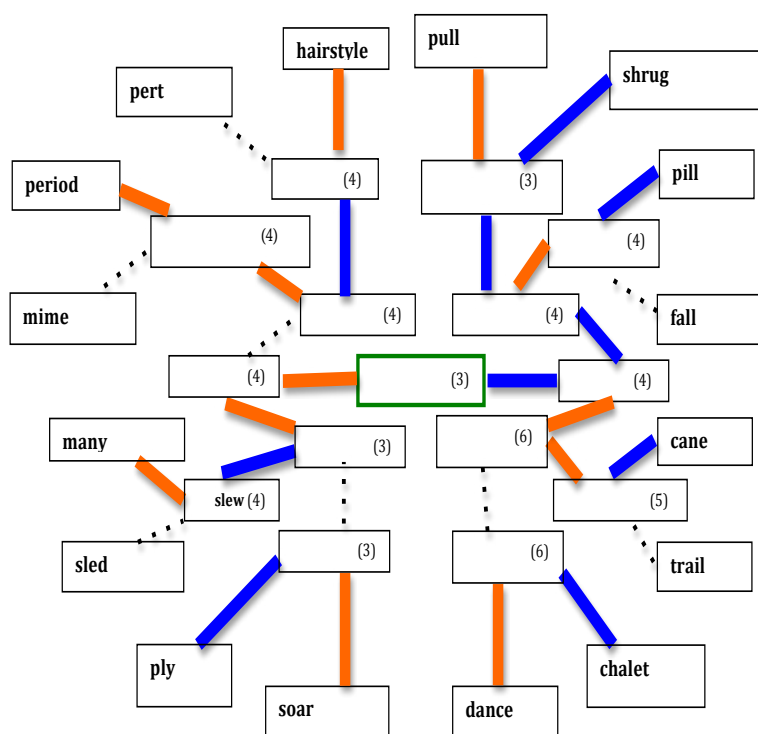
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Puzzle Corner

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: *slew* has 4 letters, has one letter different *sled* and means *many*.

Rhyme ———
Letter change
Meaning ———



Answers on page 19

SPRING FLOWERS

Can you find the names of 18 of our favourite spring flowers

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

Aconite	Narcissus
Bluebell	Primrose
Celandine	Ramsons
Cowslip	Snowdrop
Crocus	Snowflake
Cyclamen	Squill
Daffodil	Trillium
Fritillary	Tulip
Grape hyacinth	Wood anemone



NEW CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS BRIDGE CLUB

OH DEAR! In a recent issue of the Caversham Bridge we made clear the old Caversham Heights Bridge Club was in trouble. It became an indirect victim of Covid-19 and had to close. Although some new people were interested, the existing membership became so depleted that, in the end, there was nothing to join!

Happily, another bridge club has opened in its place,

called the New Caversham Heights Bridge Club. Some of the old club members have joined, with some very welcome fresh faces in a new enterprise and things look a lot better.

We continue in the same way as before. We love the game of bridge, but do not take things too seriously and like to play in a relaxed atmosphere. The new club meets

every week on Thursday afternoons in a cosy room at the Methodist Church in Highmoor Road, Caversham Heights, starting at 14:30.

We still have space for a few more members so, if anyone is interested, please get in touch. It is not essential to have a bridge partner to apply, but you do need to know the basics of the game. We are more than happy for you to come for a free trial session without obligation so you can see for yourself what is on offer.

For more information, please contact Duncan Knight on 0118 9475544 or email him at Duncan.knight@googlemail.com



MORE MUSICAL MEMORIES

by Edward Bradley

AFTER SERVING my country for two years in the Royal Air Force in the 1950s, like so many young blokes, I returned to civilian life a changed man. I had learned quite a few things during my national service, mostly knowing how to swear, and discovering dance bands and their music. In those days there wasn't any television, so we listened to the wireless and heard tunes with lyrics we still remember to this day, songs such as 'The Yellow Rose of Texas' by Mitch Miller, and 'Put Another Nickel in the Nickelodeon' by Teresa Brewer.

At that time in Reading, we had three dance halls: the Olympia in London Street, the Majestic in Caversham Road, and the Oxford ballroom along

the Oxford Road. Those were the days of Victor Silvester: styles with slow, slow, quick, quick, slow, quicksteps and one step forward and two to the side for the waltz. I never did master the foxtrot. I did try to learn how to dance at the Court School of Dancing in Valpy Street but sadly, I was not a natural Fred Astaire and soon gave up trying.

Most Saturdays I went to the Olympia with my male friends drinking 'rum and blacks' in the bar and building up some Dutch courage to ask a girl to dance. At that time the music was live. The two bands I remember were the George Watkins Band and the Don Turks Band. In the dance hall nearly all the girls danced with each other.

They made a pleasing picture as they twirled away in their pretty blouses and billowing skirts fastened with wide black belts.

So it was that eventually we fellows arrived to dance the last waltz. If we were lucky, we could then pick on the girl we fancied. After smooching around and treading on some poor girl's toes during the waltz, it was the 'thing' to offer to take our partner home. Occasionally she might murmur "Yes" but, with me, it was usually "Sorry, but I am going home with my friend".

I wonder how many other readers have similar memories of the bands and dance halls in Reading at the time?



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MAKING IT TO A MILESTONE

Following a two-year break, the Caversham Arts Trail is back – and celebrating its 10th anniversary. Elestr Lee gets to meet Julie Simmonds and Lauren Denney, the event's organisers



Robert Van de Noort, Vice Chancellor of Reading University with founder members of CAT at the 2019 Reading Cultural Awards. From left to right, Lauren Denney, Peter Quarmby, Julie Simmonds, Charles Burns and Liz Real.

IT WAS back in 2010 (which now seems a very long time ago!) that two local artists, Julie Simmonds and Lauren Denney, got together in a pub with a few other artistic friends, and started to plan the very first Caversham Arts Trail (CAT).

"The other artists were Mary Phelan, Gloria Pitt, Charles Burns and Nina O'Connell," Julie recalls. "We wanted to reveal that there were many artists working quietly behind closed doors in Caversham and Emmer Green. We decided that peoples' homes and studios should be the venues, as it was important that visitors could see the artists at work. During the very first trail there were 17 artists whose work was displayed in seven venues.

"It's got bigger over the years, we're always getting new artists and new venues, and this year we have 42 artists – so it is always evolving", she adds. Sadly, founder member Mary Phelan died last year, and there will be fundraising in her memory during this year's trail.

Julie, who studied fine art, painting, drawing and print-making at The Slade School of Fine Art, and Lauren, who concentrated on ceramics at the

University of Staffordshire – home of the potteries – met each other when Julie took a group from her school to South Hill Park to join a ceramics class led by Lauren. Having discovered that they were neighbours, they became friends, and were keen to meet other artists in the local area.

Loyal Group

"New people have joined CAT every year", adds Lauren, "And there are still eight or nine people who have been with us right from the beginning. There is quite a bit of admin involved, and we have to ensure everyone feels comfortable with the venues and

of place. "I tend to work in a series and, most recently, I was working on a series about Reading which included printmaking, drawing and ceramics which I create with potter David Pope. My work always starts with drawings from life, and I love working outdoors." Julie has also been teaching art in school for more than 20 years.

Both Julie and Lauren are looking forward to Caversham's Arts Trail returning – and it will be the biggest yet.

"We've been lucky to work with such a loyal group of wonderfully creative and talented artists and makers over the years. Without them and their enthusiasm for the Trail, we would never have got to where we are.

"In 2019 we won Visual Arts Event of the Year at the Reading Cultural Awards, which was a testament to the hard work of everybody involved. Every year we have raised more than £400 for charities. And our returning visitors – many of whom have supported the Trail from the beginning – well, without their support and purchases, we wouldn't be celebrating our 10th year!" Julie says.

"The world has changed, but we are all excited about being back this year," Lauren remarks.

"It's the perfect year to be celebrating our 10th anniversary," agrees Julie.

Find out more: <https://cavershamartstrail.co.uk>



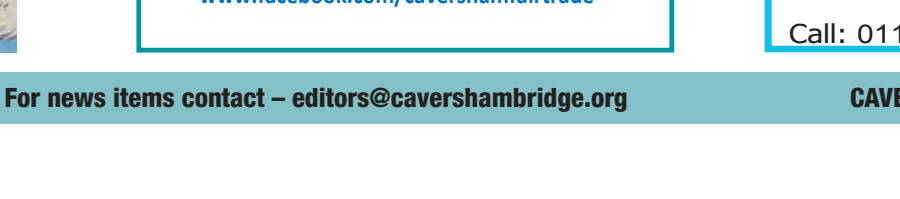
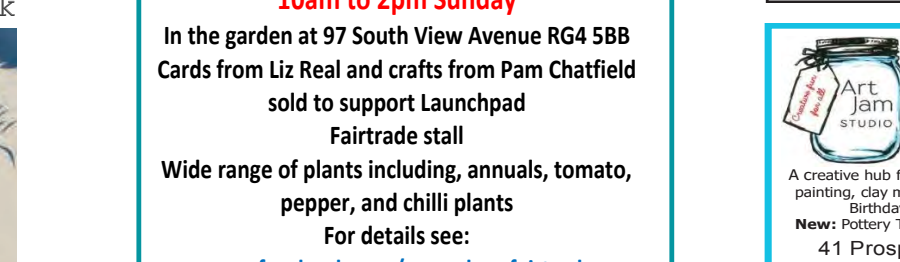
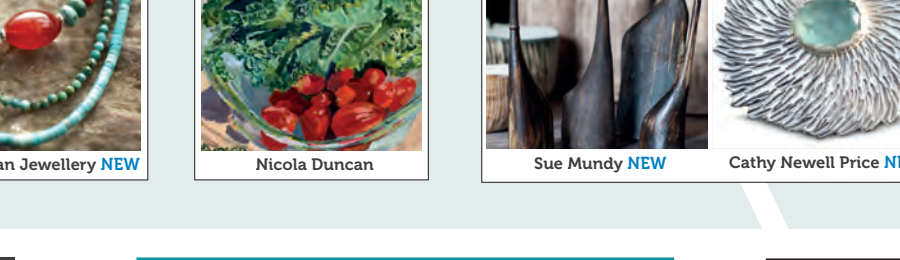
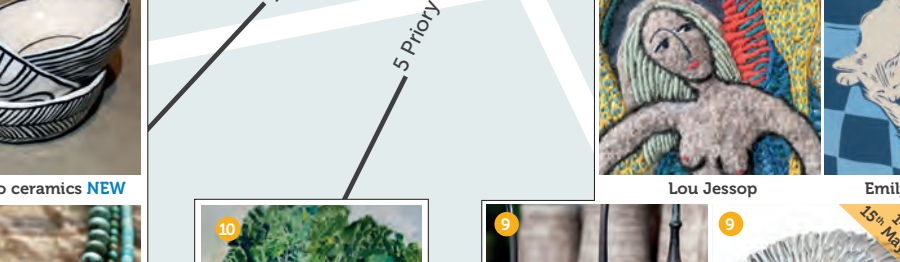
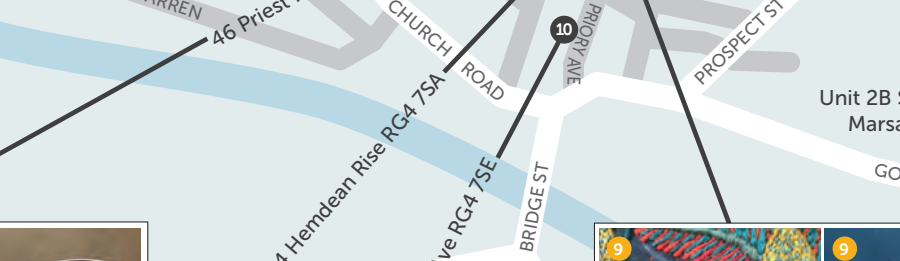
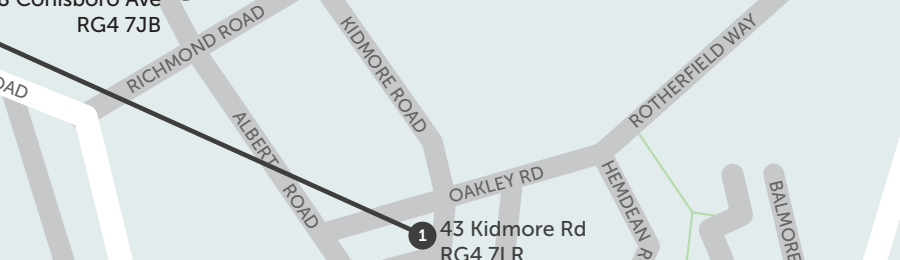
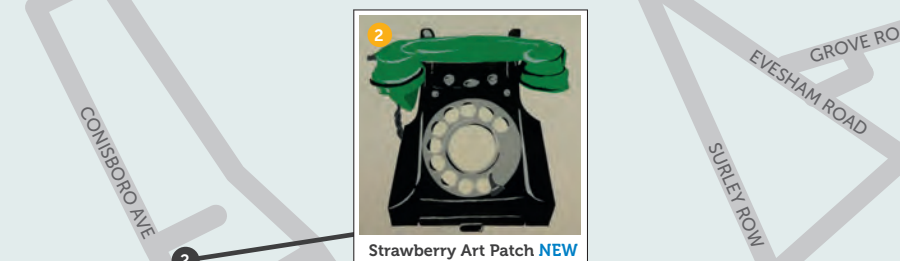
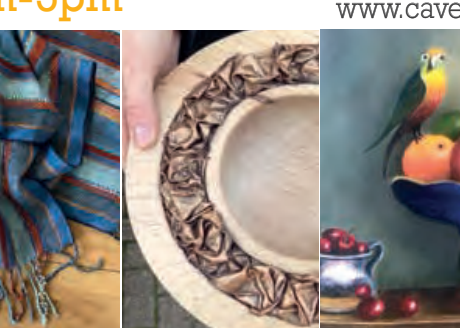
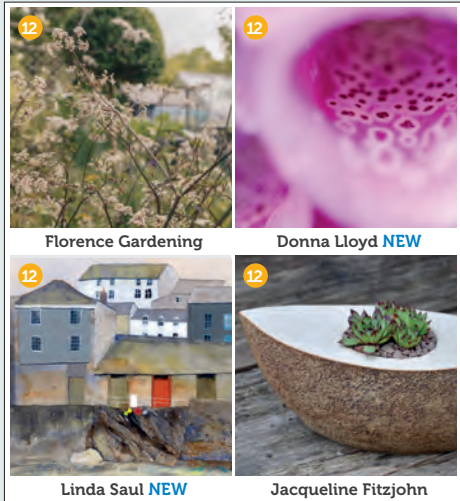
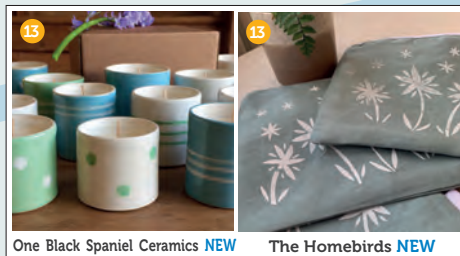
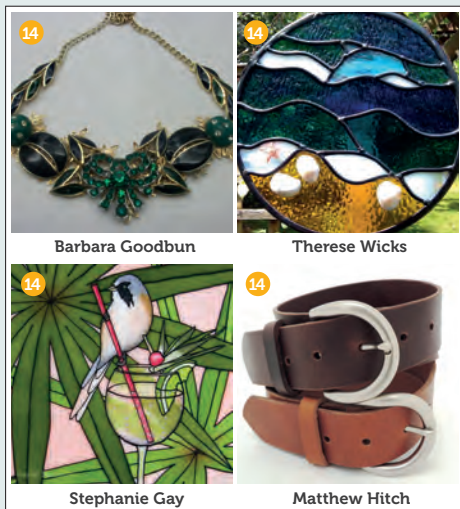
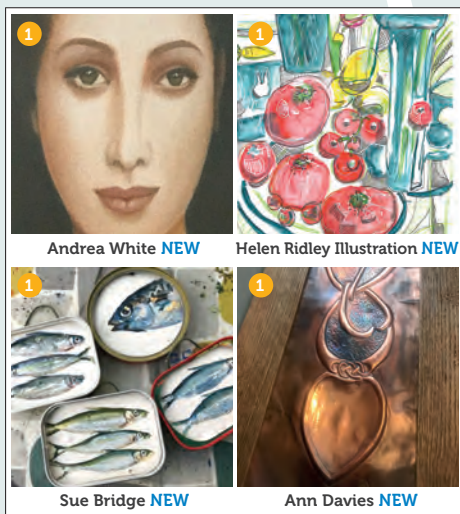
Ceramics by Lauren (left and above); Julie displaying examples of her work (right)

the promotional leaflet, which we hope is a useful marketing tool for the artists' work."

Lauren has lived in Caversham all her life, apart from her time at university, and the workshop she set up when she graduated in 2001 is where she still works and meets trail visitors. Originally, she concentrated on making slip moulds for her ceramics. However, at Christmas, her partner bought her a miniature wheel, and she is enjoying making small pieces of pottery, such as tiny containers for air plants. "I always want to make things which are functional, and not just for decoration," Lauren says. She makes a range of soap dishes, planters, vases, and candle holders, as well as containers.

Julie comments that her own work is about a sense



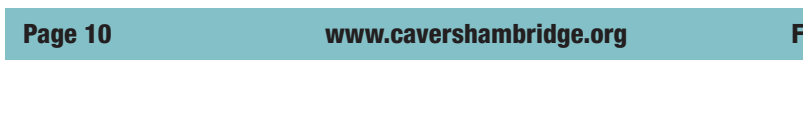


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Dying Matters Week

by Caroline Gratrix



Reading Crematorium by Stewart Turkington

WALK WORKS

DYING MATTERS is a national organisation working for the benefit of people affected by death and dying. It collaborates with hospice members and partners who work in end of life care. National Dying Matters Week this year is from 2 to 6 May and local events have been planned to coincide with this.

Reading Mayor, Rachel Eden, is passionate about everyone having a positive end of life experience, and she has been co-ordinating Dying Matters' activities at a local level in Reading for several years.

As part of the week, Reading Crematorium will

be hosting tours and an open day on Saturday 7 May 2022. There are three bookable slots:

10:00 - 10:45 11:00 - 11:45 12:00 - 12:45

The tours provide visitors with an opportunity to ask questions about the process of cremation, and see for themselves what lies behind the curtains. These are popular, and booking is essential. You can book via the crematorium website.

With many people finding it hard to know what to say and do to help someone who is grieving, Sue Ryder want to give more people the confidence to be there for others. With this in mind, the Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice in Read-

ing has partnered with Walk Works to create the #InAGoodPlace walk in conjunction with Dying Matters week. The walk provides local people with a chance to come together, get some fresh air, meet new people and talk.

The walk takes place on Wednesday 4 May at 9:30 and will start and finish in the main car park at Prospect Park. To book, email:

fern.haynes@suerydercare.org

For more information on local Dying Matters events, please check the Facebook page

[Dying Matters Week – Reading](#)

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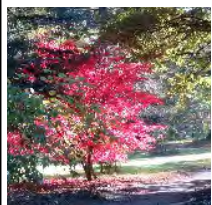
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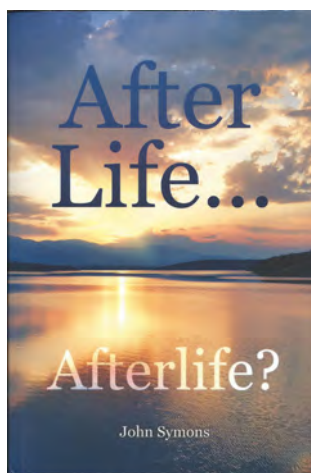


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After Life ... Afterlife? -

by John Symons

Book review by Meryl Beek

IT SELDOM happens that someone writing a book review actually talks to the author of the book. But, thanks to a friend, on this occasion, I was fortunate enough to speak on the telephone to John Symons, author of 'After Life ... Afterlife?'.

He acknowledges that he feels great sympathy with, and respect for, those who do not believe in the life of the world to come. He admits he was once the same. He explains frankly what he now believes and why. It is a book for all, whether Christian, belonging to another faith, or none.

He agreed the book could be divided into sections. The first six chapters deal with John's great sadness at the death of his wife, Judy, in May 2019. This prompted his certainty that Judy, now with the Lord, is praying for and loving him still. Chapter Five is important, and gives numerous biblical references to ponder, and

perhaps to use in study groups.

Chapter Seven opens up with thinking about various great men of the past, including William Temple and his phrase, 'Christianity is Christ'. Reactions to several people's religious experiences are written about. We hear of the lady who helped John with a quote from the gospel of St Matthew in the library on the day he registered Judy's death. Then we are led to consult two C S Lewis books – 'Mere Christianity' and 'Miracles' - both have been reprinted recently and are well worth studying again.

Finally, Chapters Ten and Eleven, titled 'Jesus of Nazareth' help to draw everything together.

The book ends with a simple prayer, 'Lord, put into my heart a longing for my heavenly home'.

Everything depends on Jesus.



Standby to switch off

HEATING BILLS are falling for the summer months, but your house still consumes more energy than it needs to if everything stays on standby. It may only be a few pence a day, but it mounts up for umpteen electrical items each year.

We're used to the 'turn off the lights' mantra, but you could save up to £70 a year by switching things off at the socket, not by the 'not really off' button. There isn't a sensible 'average saving' figure, as it depends upon the number of units and their age, but last year (before all the rises in costs) OVO Energy reckoned the average was £40 per household. Another survey of UK households found an average of ten items on standby that hadn't been used for a year!

Look round the house and garage/shed, focusing first on the big users: TVs, game consoles, loudspeakers, computers and monitors. Is the convenience of 24hr standby worth the cost, or could it be switched off for most of each day/week? Of course, it may not be easy to switch things off, as the remote control puts things on standby and the power point may be tucked inside a cupboard!

Finally, think about your charging habits. Are you charging your phone/laptop, removing the charger when the battery is at 100% and then using the unit until it asks for recharging? Or is it constantly being charged for no purpose other than to reduce the battery life and cost you money?

by Tricia Marcousie

Planting for a greener future by Tricia Marcousie

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LOCAL VOLUNTARY groups have been working hard this winter to increase carbon storage and biodiversity in the Caversham area.

The Tree Wardens and Reading Borough Council have planted lots more standard street trees in Caversham, whilst volunteers from Conserve Reading on Wednesdays and Keep Emmer Green put in the first 40 metres of a new hedge alongside the Peppard Road by the Emmer Green shops, which will provide winter shelter and spring nectar for wildlife. Hopefully, this area will turn into a useful place for the community, with reduced vehicle fumes and street noise. This hedge line will be continued in future years.

Friends of Mapledurham Playing Fields planted another 65 whips in the scrub area alongside Hewett Avenue, to give wildlife more nectar in the spring and fruits and nuts for the autumn, as well as leaves and cover during the summer months.

Wildflower seed was sown on a new earth bank between Clayfield Copse car park and Caversham Park Road at the beginning of April. Children from Caversham Park Primary School and Friends of Clayfield Copse sowed the seed to create a colourful barrier with pollinators in mind. The bank is made from demolition material, which could include broken glass, so please don't allow children to run up and down it whilst the vegetation establishes. There is a very good, and much safer, grassy bank to use by the skateboard area on the other side of the car park!

All these projects are part of the Reading Climate Action Plan for nature and green spaces, with tree whips grown by volunteers or donated by the Woodland Trust and Miles Macadam. If you fancy joining us to get more done in the future, then please contact either nature@rcan.org.uk or inquiries.mail@econetreading.org.uk, and we'll put you in touch with your local groups.



Friends of Clayfield Copse sowing seed

photo J Oliver



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BRIGHT THINGS

by Les Cooper



IF LIKE ME you have been around for some while, you will realise how, over the years, things in the garden world have changed - some for the better and some, possibly, for the worse. Many chemicals such as DDT, dieldrin and aldrin, which we used to spread around with not a care in the world, are now thankfully banned. We used deadly asbestos sheets

on our shed roofs with aplomb, and some people gaily puffed away at a cigarette or two as they made sure they deep dug two spits down for their potato patch. Instead of gravel and cars, our front gardens then had neat beds of marigolds and antirrhinums.

Sadly, these days some flowers which were once so popular have also tended to fade a little into the background. Here I am mostly thinking of the three old favourites: chrysanthemums, dahlias and roses. They were very popular in days gone by, and nearly every group of allotments would have a couple of plots full of chrysanthemums with their blooms hiding beneath paper bags.

There were local specialist societies where, for example, the men crowded together in the Church Hall to listen to experts telling them how to grow their exhibition chrysanthos or dahlias. A couple of obedient wives would be sitting at the back ready to make tea at the finish of the talk. How things have changed these days, with women doing much of the work in gardens and running local garden societies!

The grumpy old man in me does tend to think people now desire a too comfortable life, and find it easier to buy a few pots of flowers to brighten the borders around plastic lawns. (You, dear Reader should, of course, opt for a colourful pot or planter and enter the Caversham Bridge competition!) It would be good to see more people growing dahlias and chrysanthemums, not necessarily to exhibition standards but because they are such easy and worthwhile garden plants. A few dahlias will brighten any garden, and there is such a wide spectrum to choose from - small pom-poms to tall giants. I prefer buying plants rather than tubers, but the choice is yours. It doesn't take a great deal of effort to plant them in the open and ensure they get water, and perhaps a bit later do a little disbudding to get some bigger blooms. They will repay you handsomely with beautiful, colourful flowers to decorate your front room or the Church Harvest Festival Service.



Top Anemone Flowered Dahlias

Right: Cactus Flowered Dahlias

Photos E Cooper

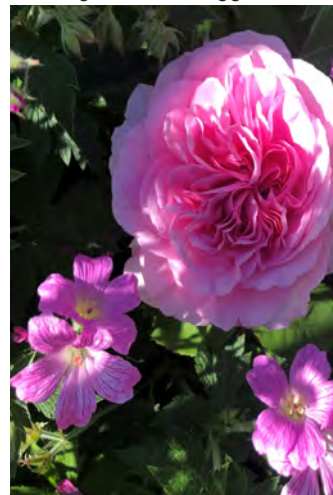


The Workhorse of Summer

Text and photos by Louise Hampden

I WAS FIRST introduced to a variety of this plant on a trip to a garden centre around thirty years ago. They were a bargain – 3 for £5 – lovely blue flowers and foliage. Duly planted at the front of my then empty border, they flowered for a month or so. I cut them back not thinking I would see them again and they flowered again, with new fresh foliage. What was this miracle plant? It turned out it was a hardy geranium. It was wrongly named, I found out later, but the correct name of this blue flowered wonder is Geranium Himalayense.

My next purchase was a Geranium Psilostemon, which grew much bigger and beefier with large leaves



Geranium Wargrave Pink complementing a pink rose

particular geranium does not repeat flower once it's been cut back, but compensates by flowering sometimes as early as April through to July.

Both these geraniums have been in my garden ever

since. And what an investment they have proved to be. They've been divided, moved around, dug up, and often given away. My garden would not be complete without these useful work-horses of the summer border returning year after year.



Geranium Psilostemon

My collection probably now extends to over ten different varieties, and each one flowers its socks off and many of them seed themselves around. They cover the ground, with varieties suited to both sun and shade. One, Wargrave Pink, often tries to climb up and through roses, and returns happily even when butchered with the secateurs after flowering.

If you are looking for a plant that scrambles around the stems and skirts of shrubs and roses, then explore the amazing variety of hardy geraniums in garden centres, and especially at specialist nurseries.

One final attribute I have discovered about these accommodating stalwarts is that they are virtually slug proof!

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Community Connections

by Caroline Gratrix

Community People – Meet Sue and Kat from Makan Malaysia



Sue and Kat

photo C Gratrix

SUE AND KAT met at high school in Malaysia, when Kat's family relocated there – they have been best friends ever since.

They always talked about opening their own business, but then followed different paths: Sue studying Chemistry and Maths, and Kat, Geography and Religion. Life brought them back together, with a focus on their heritage and bringing good Malaysian food to the people of Reading and beyond.

Initially they focussed on producing and supplying the traditional Malaysian sauce, Sambal. Then, after meeting Laura Gonzales, of the former Nomad café in Caversham, they learned a lot about supper clubs and pop-up events.

With a fair amount of positivity, trial, error, and amazing support from the independent food and drink businesses in Reading, the girls have gone from strength to strength.

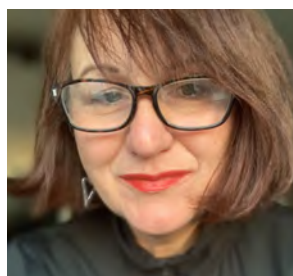
You can order food from their website <https://makanmalaysia.co.uk/shopfood>

Hire them for a dinner party, event or catch them at a festival or pop-up near you soon.

Sue, Kat, tell us a little more about you ...

How long have you lived in Caversham?

Sue has lived in Caversham for 4 or 5 years now, and Kat moved in with her temporarily for 6 months (!) during lockdown whilst Makan Malaysia was growing!



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

There are so many! Vegivores and Papa Gee are definitely our 'go-to' dinner venues and, of course, the Fox and the Last Crumb are where you'll find us for a beer. Sue's house is also full of wonderful plants and skincare products from Midrib/Nood Stores – honestly there is so much going on in Caversham!

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

Cutting down on car travel would have a positive impact, especially with the crazy roundabout traffic we get. The roads are great to cycle on and you can pretty much walk everywhere.

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

More community activities like the Caversham Market would be great! We have the space in the precinct and the parks, so let's get some beer and food festivals going!

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

A Karaoke bar - that serves Malaysian food and sexy cocktails!

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by Ruth Martin



A Crafty Cuppa

– with Bhamini Markella of Edelweiss Craft

MAKING SOMETHING new out of old is at the heart of Edelweiss Craft – Bhamini takes delight in giving new life to a tatty old pair of jeans or a moth-eaten skirt. Raised by a mother who was a keen seamstress, Bhamini has always been happiest behind a sewing machine. "In the past everyone sewed and had sewing machines", she enthuses. "I was taught to sew by my mum and bought a sewing machine with my first salary". Initially making things for her children, Bhamini was encouraged by her friends to sell her creations – and she was amazed when people wanted to buy them! With a passion for re-using and recycling, her products include handbags from scrap leather, totes from old denim, and artworks collaged from cherished oddments of fabric that she's stashed away.

Realising that not everyone knows how to work a sewing machine, Bhamini started running classes to teach everything from threading up a machine to how to use the correct thread and tension to tackle a variety of fabric types. And it didn't stop there! "A friend gave me a beautiful old sewing machine from 1880, I found someone to fix it and they taught me how to service it. I got it working and soon a collection of old sewing machines began, that actually work because the old ones



Bhamini

photo P Davies

were made to be repaired easily and to last!" Her mother's mantra rings through her own work – "My mum always says, 'old is gold', and the old machines are definitely worth their weight in gold."

Being part of the Reading Guild of Artists (RGA) has kept Bhamini

motivated, exhibiting with them and stretching herself artistically. Next up is an anticipated Two Rivers Press/ RGA publication based on artwork of exhibiting RGA members on the theme of Reading past, people, places, wildlife.

Any tips for fellow creatives in need of inspiration, I asked Bhamini. "Just try whatever comes your way, never turn down an opportunity, to be creative is human and in all of us." With that our crafty cuppa came to a close, with Bhamini returning to her sewing machine and me pulling mine out of the cupboard and dusting it down, inspired to make my own creation.

You can find Bhamini on [Instagram @edelweisscraft](#) or at her website www.edelweisscraft.co.uk.

The Local Scene

by Martin Andrews

St John's Church



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

I HAVE always been struck by the huge expanse of terracotta roof on St John's, so clearly featured in Janina Maher's drawing; unusually a single tiled roof covers the nave and the aisles of the church. This contrasts with the beautiful knapped flint walls and stone detailing.

Situated in St John's Road, it was built on a plot of land that was originally part of Bryant's Farm. The population of Caversham greatly increased in the second half of the nineteenth century as a

result of the expansion of the trades and industries of Reading, in particular the 'three Bs'; biscuits, beer and bulbs. This also resulted in an increase in church attendance, and as the Parish church of St Peter's could not cope, another church was planned in Lower Caversham. Building work started in 1887 (Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee year), was completed a year later, and the church was consecrated on 8 November 1888. The architect was a Mr Warren, who also designed the chancel screen,

the font and the organ case.

Beside the church is a Garden of Remembrance with a sculpture of 'the pelican in her piety' in the centre. The pelican was believed to pierce its own breast with its beak and feed its young with its blood. It became a symbol of Christ sacrificing himself for man and, because of this, was frequently represented in Christian art. The sculpture was carved in the 1980s by Eric Stanford, who was an assistant to the great British wartime artist, Eric Kennington, 1888–1960, who lived near Ipsden – later Stanford became Keeper of Art at Reading Museum & Art Gallery.

Today St John's is a thriving centre for the community, hosting many activity groups, including the Gosbrook Growers, who run free gardening courses, and the St John's Baby and Toddler Group. The Caversham Community Café, which sadly had to close over the Covid crisis, is hopefully now open again and welcoming customers on Tuesday mornings. St John's continues to be a focal point for worship and the people of Caversham.



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IN OUR APRIL edition, we reported on some of those who had responded quickly to the war in the Ukraine in support of the charities working with refugees and the injured.

For local café owners Ketí and Zezva, the war was an unwelcome reminder of the Russian invasion of part of their homeland, Georgia, in 2008. The family moved to Caversham in 2007 and eventually opened the Geocafé in Prospect Street in 2018. They also have a shop

in Henley. During the Covid-19 lockdown, the business changed its focus to sell fresh, local produce and bread baked on the premises, as well as takeaway refreshments.

Ketí had not expected the invasion to happen, and described her disbelief at the news. This was followed by a feeling of being lost, not knowing what she could do. Some of her customers had family connections in the Ukraine, so she and Zezva decided to open the café on Monday evenings to serve low-cost meals (only £5 per portion) as a fund-raising exercise. They are also organising a raffle, with an announcement of the total funds raised on 9 April, the Day of National Unity in Georgia. This is a day of remembrance of the events in the capital, Tbilisi in 1989, when a pro-independence demonstration was brutally crushed by the Soviet Army, resulting in 21 deaths and hundreds of injuries.

The Monday evening meals have become a place where those with family links, or who have visited the Ukraine, can meet and exchange news. Some customers simply collect their food to take away but, for others, it has provided a chance to make connections and share experiences over a meal.

It seems likely the people of Ukraine will continue to need support for some time, and some will come to Reading and Caversham as refugees. Ketí is keen to act as a focus for support to help with language skills, and to teach basic catering skills to enable them to find work here.

We asked Ketí if she could provide a typical Ukrainian recipe, which we will be including next month.

Check their website for more details about the Geocafé - <https://geo-cafe.co.uk/> and follow their Facebook Page www.facebook.com/geocafeUK for news about special events. For the story of their journey, from selling Georgian Street Food on market stalls to opening the Geocafé, see www.suneli.uk

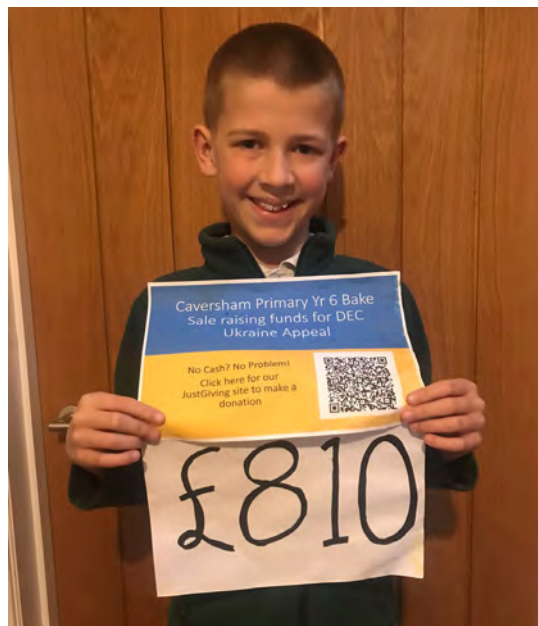


Primary Care by Ruth Martin

LOCALS BRAVED hail and sleet on Saturday 2 April to attend a bake sale for Ukraine held at Albert Road Park. Eleven-year-old Joel Bellingham dreamt up the idea, and roped in some enthusiastic Year Six classmates from Caversham Primary to help. Planning and promoting the whole event themselves, they created posters, got friends and family to spread the word on social media and, of course, got baking.

Every last home-made sweet treat was sold, from a traditional Ukrainian honey cake to fairy cakes decorated with blue and yellow icing. Along with a fundraising page for donations, they managed to raise an incredible £810!

Attended by school pals, parents, neighbours, and the local Vicar, everyone agreed the group had done a marvellous job, and that the cakes were delicious. As for the children, they felt pleased that they were able to make a difference, thanks to Joel's idea.



Joel with the total

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First Impressions Matter

Social media and your job search

by Laura Harmsworth



Over the last couple of months, I have focussed on LinkedIn as it's such an incredible tool for job seekers but there are other forms of social media you can use in your job search.

Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat

NOT JUST FOR teenagers, updating your friends and families with your activities, or following celebrities, these sites can be extremely useful if you're looking for a job. Companies are using these platforms to highlight their achievements, new products, and their culture - all of value when determining if you'd like to work for a company, for inclusion in your cover letter, and for discussing at interview.

- Search and follow the companies you'd like to work for
- Look at how they post, what they post, how they respond to comments
- If you have something relevant/of substance to add, get involved in the discussion (but don't engage just for the sake of it)
- By following thought leaders in the industry, you can learn all sorts of things, see what the latest trends are, what's being discussed

Blogs, Pinterest

You could start a blog or Pinterest board, and this will demonstrate to recruiters that you have a passion for a particular area. Make your content relevant and engaging.

Twitter

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- Build your network before you need it
- Don't be overly formal – show your personality
- Search hashtags e.g., #Hiring #NowHiringJobs #Careers

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Let's Talk Menopause

by Dr Shilpa McQuillan



Shilpa is a local resident, GP and menopause specialist, accredited by the British Menopause Society, who has set up a private menopause service - Berkshire Menopause Clinic - in Henley-on-Thames.

I AM A menopause specialist, GP and community gynaecologist. Alongside my career as a GP, I am now specialising in my lifetime's passion to support women who are experiencing symptoms of peri menopause and menopause across South Oxfordshire and Berkshire. Why has menopause become such a talked about subject? It is the time when important female hormones (oestrogen, progesterone, and testosterone) dramatically decline. These hormones not only control the menstrual cycle, but have receptors in most parts of the body- heart, brain, musculoskeletal, skin, urinary tract and genital systems. If these hormones are not replenished, it can result in a range of symptoms.

Commonly, people think of hot flushes, but there are a huge array of other symptoms, including poor sleep, low energy, mood changes, joint pains, headaches, vaginal and bladder discomfort . . . The list goes on and on. The intensity and duration of symptoms varies from woman to woman, with many reporting symptoms lasting for decades. Needless to say, this has a distressing impact on quality of life. But it really doesn't have to be this way!

'Research suggests that one in four women leaves her job because of the debilitating effects of menopause symptoms'.

This can and should be changed. Some women sail through their menopause with barely a

symptom. But for many, it really is not an easy chapter in life. By raising awareness and dedicating time to menopause care, I hope women will get the right support.

There are many treatment options available, ranging from Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT), non-hormonal medications, nutritional aspects, and exercise.

Menopause specialists, accredited by the British Menopause Society, can guide women through the options, based on high quality and evidence-based medicine. Everyone is different, and I believe women benefit from seeing a specialist who tailors care and treatment specifically to the person in front of them. There are huge benefits for mental and physical well-being in recognising that menopause care needs a holistic approach, so it is important to draw on the skills and experiences of a team of specialists who can consider nutrition, pelvic floor health, exercise and muscle and bone health.

If you are experiencing symptoms of peri menopause and menopause, remember, you are not alone! There are experts who can help, so consider seeking their advice to guide you through this natural chapter in your life.

You can contact Shilpa by email at info@berkshirermenopauseclinic.com or visit the clinic's website www.berkshirermenopauseclinic.com for more information.

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RG4 Academy

by
Simone Prendiville

THE WELLER CENTRE is planning to bring new life to the green space next to its building and increase the use of the area for everyone. Although we plan to incorporate football facilities for children and young people, we will be improving the green space for everyone by increasing seating and bin provision, and 'greenscaping' wider area to protect the local nature and expand the variety of native trees and plants growing here. The Weller Centre will be funding this project, with support from The Earley Charity, and is committed to making it a success and increasing the use of this under-utilised space.

The views of local people are key, so we have already surveyed many of the children on the Estate (both male and female), and 100% of those spoken to were in favour of a football team being set up, and they have already requested that the team

be named 'RG4 Academy'. When completing the survey, the children stated that living on the Estate makes them feel isolated from the other provision available in Reading. They said they feel most comfortable when mixing with their peers within the Estate – even those from 'rival' schools. The idea of advertising themselves as being connected to the Estate excited them greatly. We will be holding a series of information events in April for all Lower Caversham residents to hear more about our proposal. Dates and times for these are on the Weller Centre Facebook page. There will also be expanding opportunities for volunteers to help with this project, so we are keen to hear from people who would like to be involved with the football team and this regeneration.

We believe by involving everyone in the project, the level of respect for the local community, the environment and the provision available will increase, leading to a knock on effect across the whole estate, ensuring a thriving community in Lower Caversham.



Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Mineral wealth!

CALCIUM IS a mineral most often associated with healthy bones and teeth, although it also plays an important role in blood clotting, helping muscles to contract, and regulating normal heart rhythms and nerve functions.

We need regularly to replace calcium in our bodies to keep our bones and teeth strong, but it's not just milk that can boost our calcium levels.

Calcium is the most common mineral found in the body. Hosted almost exclusively in our skeletons, calcium firms the structure of our bones, which are made mostly of flexible collagen. While bones and teeth feel like solid structures, they are actually constantly changing, with old bone being destroyed and new bone being created all the time.

So it's important we continue to fuel our bones with enough calcium to replace the bone matter lost through its natural destruction.

Various foods can offer us a calcium top up:

- All malted milk drinks are extremely high in calcium, providing between 440 – 710mg in a 25g serving in 200ml of milk.

- If malted milk isn't for you, swap it for a hot chocolate. You needn't add milk, a light version of hot chocolate with hot water will provide a 200mg hit of calcium.
- At breakfast time or for dessert in the summer months, a 120g pot of yoghurt will provide 200mg of calcium.
- Sardines are a good savoury source of calcium, with roughly 260mg of calcium in half a tin.
- Being full of wheat flour, bread is a great source of calcium. White bread provides 100mg for every two slices, while wholemeal flour produces 54mg.
- Not only are they packed with vitamin C, oranges are also the fruit with the greatest calcium content, at 75mg for each medium sized orange!
- Tofu is another calcium winner, with 60g of some tofu brands containing 200mg of calcium, but only if it's set with calcium chloride or calcium sulphate.
- One serving of custard (120ml) provides 120mg of calcium.

And last but not least, time spent in the sunshine aids vitamin D production so we can absorb calcium optimally!

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right) perm, tug, time, fill, term, plug, germ, **bug**, slug, flu, bullet, slew, train, fly, ballet

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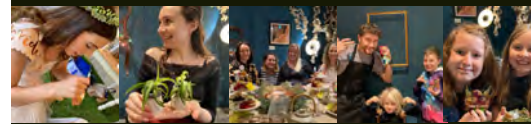
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