

Caversham Bridge

No 699

www.cavershambridge.org

May 2023



TIME TO CELEBRATE WITH NEIGHBOURS AND FRIENDS

by Elestr Lee

ALL OVER Caversham and Emmer Green bunting is appearing and flags are flying in anticipation of the coronation of King Charles III on 6 May. Community events, such as screenings of the coronation itself in the Milestone Centre or street parties on the Sunday or Bank Holiday Monday, will be bringing residents together to celebrate the start of the new reign.

But the excitement won't all stop on 8 May as there will be plenty of continuing opportunities for our community to celebrate over the coming weeks of May. Local arts and crafts will be on show with the return of

the annual Caversham Arts Trail (CAT), during which studios and gardens all around the area are opening to display the extraordinary range of art created by talented members of our community. As ever the trail takes place on two weekends, the first being 13/14 May, and again on 20/21 May. This month our regular Creative Caversham feature introduces two artists, Naomi Barker and Sian Pittman. We met the pair as they started making plans for their very first exhibition as part of CAT (see page 9).

However, some of our local artists don't just display their work in Caversham and the surrounding area.

Silhouette artist Charles Burns' Emmer Green studio will once again be featured on the trail. Like many of us, Charles discovered a whole new way of working during the pandemic: creating his famous silhouettes via Skype and Zoom, he discovered he too could 'work from home'. While visiting his wife's native Japan recently, he has been able to keep up his work, cutting silhouettes in Tokyo while providing a pre-booked online service creating silhouettes as gifts and mementoes which can be accessed all over the world. A fine example of local talent flying the flag for England!

Crowning glories within our community



Flowering Cherry, Balmore Park, April 2023

text and photo Phil Chatfield

FOR MANY of us this will be the first coronation we have experienced, having marked Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee last year. An historic occasion which will be celebrated with street parties and other events throughout our community. In most cases, these are organised by volunteers, emphasising the role of voluntary service in our community, something we have focused on in the Caversham Bridge over recent months.

Our May edition has a distinctly creative theme, literally centred on the Caversham Arts Trail (p10-11). The work of local artists appears on this page (Charles Burns' silhouettes above), and this month's painting by Janina Maher for our Local Scene feature highlights a different sort of art – the tattooist – in its depiction of Absolute Ink on Bridge Street (p17). On the same page we have a report on the Ted Burnell Art Group's recent exhibition at Church House.

The work of volunteers in our area is indicated

by our item on the Women's Institute (p15) and the article on hedge and tree planting (p16). We have a report on activity at the Weller Centre which includes a call for volunteers to help with their Chatty Café (p14). Fundraising events can also be an enjoyable way to contribute to charity, and we have a report from Hilary Smart of the Lent Walk for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development in March (p4).

You will also find our regular writers here. Les Cooper and Louise Hampden write on gardening (p12), Happy Wanderer on the Red Campion (p7), Caroline Gratrix with Community Connections (p13) and Laura Harmsworth continues her series with advice for job applicants, First Impressions (p18).

The Caversham Bridge is your community paper, so do write to us with your stories and news.

Contact us by email at editors@cavershambridge.org or write care of Church House, Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX

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Walking with Jesus forever



by Keith Saynor
Pastor,
Grace Church
Caversham

ON 16 JULY 1969, the Apollo 11 space flight began and history was made four days later when the first humans landed on the Moon. Charlie Duke was the voice on the radio talking to the Apollo 11 crew during landing. A few years later, he walked on the Moon himself as part of Apollo 16. If you were alive when man first walked on the Moon on 20 July 1969, chances are this moment is forever etched in your memory. Charlie Duke remembers the events vividly.

Charlie Duke was the CAPCOM astronaut for that Apollo 11 mission entrusted with communicating with Neil



Charlie Duke at Mission Control

Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin during the actual landing on the lunar surface, and he could hardly breathe in those final minutes. The mission was in real danger of aborting, and Duke was the sole communication link from Mission Control to the astronauts hovering over the Moon. They were so close; the Moon's surface was in view. But the area was too rocky, and more fuel was needed to blast the lunar module to a smoother spot. "The gas was very critical," Duke said. "I called 60 seconds left, then I called 30 seconds. And we still weren't landing. We were 17 seconds from a call to abort."

"Tension was mounting at Mission Control, as you can imagine," he said. "I heard 'Contact engine stop.' And we knew they were on the ground. A few seconds later, Neil

transmitted, 'Houston, Tranquility Base here. The Eagle has landed.'"

Duke said, "We were holding our breath," which may explain his response at Mission Control, one of the most memorable voice bites from anyone associated with the space programme. "Roger, Tranquility, we copy you on the ground. You've got a bunch of guys about to turn blue. We're breathing again. Thanks a lot."

At that point in his life, Duke thought nothing would top it. He was wrong. Three years later, he became the tenth – and youngest person ever – to walk on the Moon. Still, he was wrong. The best was yet to come. Six years later, he encountered and entered into a relationship with Jesus.

"Walking on the Moon was three days," he said. "But walking with Jesus is forever." He walked on the Moon on 16 April 1972 for a record 71 hours and 14 minutes. It then took Duke six full years to the day from his walk on the Moon to when he started walking with the Lord. He later commented, "God delivered me from anger, unforgiveness, just everything that was wrong. It was dramatic. He saved our marriage. Not one promise of God has failed us."

Let me encourage you to put your trust firmly in a faithful God who helps us to navigate this path of life and will never fail us. His promise of John, Chapter 10, verse 10 is that He helps us to enjoy the fullness of life now, and this is a promise that transcends death into eternity! Charlie Duke's discovery was very true – when we walk with Jesus it is forever!

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.
Wednesday – 09:30 – Zoom morning Prayer –
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/786384026>

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. 1st, 2nd, 3rd Sunday Holy Communion, 4th Sunday Service of the Word.

St Andrew's

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

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, vicar@saintbarnabas.ork.uk
Church Office Tel: 0118 947 8239

Current Services

Sunday – 9:30 Parish Communion (except 3rd Sunday of the month: Service of the Word)
1st Sunday of the month – 11:30 All Age Worship
3rd Sunday of the month – 11:30 Family Communion
Every Wednesday – 10:30 Midweek Communion
Full details on our website: www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

CAVERSHAM PARK UNITED REFORM 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/live-stream>

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 10:30 each week, including groups for children and youth
Sermons are recorded and uploaded to www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk
Hymn Café 15:00-16:00 on the last Sunday of each month

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

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson
Tel: 0118 946 3009

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne

Fr Joe McLoughlin, 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

(including Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village)
Fr Michael Sharkey, St Michael's, Sonning Common
Tel: 0118 972 3418
<http://saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk>

For details of the services being held at each of our churches, please visit their respective websites (on this page) or 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 2023 issue should be submitted by 1 May and for the July 2023 edition by 1 June These should be e-mailed to:
editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 May for the June 2023 issue and 1 June for the July issue. These should be e-mailed to:
advertising@cavershambridge.org



Caversham Bridge

News from the editors

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OUR ADVERTISING revenue helps fuel the continuing existence of the Caversham Bridge and so is very important to us. We endeavour to provide a good range and selection of trades and services, such that they offer a first port of call for our readership.

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where you will find a table of current rates.

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Looking back

AS WE approach our 700th edition in June, we have been looking at archives of past editions which have been deposited with the Berkshire Records Office. They have printed copies of almost every edition from the first in 1964. In the last few years these have been deposited as electronic copies only. Working with us, they are gradually scanning past editions, which are available on our website at

<https://cavershambridge.org/list-of-past-issues>

It has become apparent there are a small number of editions missing. Do you by any chance have a pile of old editions secreted in your loft? Could you help us fill these gaps?

The missing editions are: **October 1972, September 1975 and February 1977.**



The Editors

WE RECEIVED the message below from one of our subscribers in March. We were struck by this and thought it could become an occasional feature. So, if someone has made your day by going 'the extra mile', do tell us, so we can share it with our readers.

Write to: editors@cavershambridge.org.

My recent experience in Waitrose:

"Are you reducing any white bread?" I asked the assistant, who was near the bread aisle. "Not at the moment", she replied. It was midweek and I wanted to make a bread pudding at the weekend. Stale bread is always best, and everyone loves my bread pud!

I had forgotten about the bread as I was putting my shopping through the check-out when the kindly assistant who I had asked came up to me beaming and produced a loaf, which she had just marked down. "Will that do?", she asked. Needless to say, I was delighted, and thanked her. She added, "Do you soak your bread in tea first? My Nan always did, and it was delicious."



Egerminate

Mauve blooms crowd the earth,
Signalling the start of spring.
Downpour and warmth intertwine,
Days growing like roots;
Shadows stretching, revealing
Golden evenings.

Anna Walker



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Palm Sunday Procession



The congregations of St Andrew's Church and Caversham Heights Methodist Church joined together for a Palm Sunday Procession, complete with donkeys, on 2 April

photo G Bull



ON SATURDAY 18 March, over 60 people from Catholic parishes across Reading and St Anne's School in Caversham took part in a sponsored walk from King's Meadow to Sonning and back. It was a rainy day, and the walk along the river involved lots of good conversation and some rather muddy fields. The children particularly enjoyed sliding about in the mud; the adults stepped rather more carefully!

The purpose of the walk was to raise money for CAFOD (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), which is one of the agencies currently

involved in providing help to those affected by the earthquake in Turkey and Syria. Walkers carried flags of their own nations and dressed in bright colours to show that we are all part of the same global family. It took a long time to give a cheer for each country that was represented!

...kicked off muddy shoes...

On arrival in Sonning we were very glad to see St Andrew's Church and to be welcomed so warmly by Revd Kate Toogood. We kicked off our wet and muddy shoes, and several kind parishioners of St Andrew's revived everyone with tea and biscuits. We had time to relax and sing together before we undertook the walk back home.

St Martin's School in Caversham also held a fundraising walk for the whole school on the morning of Friday 31 March. Staff and pupils walked together through Clayfield Copse, which is adjacent to the school.

Together, the two walks raised over £3,500 for CAFOD. Damian Porter, who coordinated the St Anne's walk said, 'Thank you to everyone who took part and to everyone who sponsored us. These donations will change lives.'



Zumba Gold

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St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green.

Please contact Daniela:

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A Brand-New Role

by Louise Bisset

HI, I'M LOUISE and I'm new to my post as Parish Youth Worker for Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham. One of the aims of this new role is to develop faith-based youth work across the Parish Churches of St John, St Peter and St Margaret. These churches have many young people connected to them through the Children and Young People's Choir, Sunday Clubs, Messy Church and Holiday School links developed by Anna Clarke, our Children and Families Worker at St John's.

Importantly, it is a priority of the role to work within the wider community, connecting with local agencies and secondary schools to increase and develop safe spaces for our young people. Churches Together in Caversham and our Parish have played a significant role in bringing together local agencies who speak for young people in the area. We have heard young people express a strong desire for places of safety. Places such as open access hubs and youth clubs, where they can connect with trusted adults, mentors, and mental health first aiders to talk informally about mental health and well-being and build ongoing and supportive relationships. These spaces are to be places to have tons of fun, driven by young people. We hope to provide a great, safe experience for young people to invite their friends to and build those key supportive peer relationships too. I will work to offer a range of activities for local young people to build on these desires. I love working and engaging with young people creatively. So, I have already been looking at how we can use food, the arts, sports and storytelling to engage young people productively in issues that matter to them, such as health and well-being, Earth-care and inclusion.

I'm aiming to engage with local youth workers and volunteers to enable this vital work to be developed. Watch this space for exciting developments.

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For your bookshelf....



by Alex Forbes

Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews' where we briefly review a couple of titles chosen from our book shop 'Fourbears Books' in Caversham.

WE RECENTLY had the pleasure of visiting Surrey to sell books at a Library Author event with Kate Thompson. Kate's books are all set during the Second World War, and her latest release is no different. 'The Little Wartime Library' describes the lives of the people who took shelter in Bethnal

Green Tube station during the bombings, and in particular, two characters who create a library within the tube station. 'The Little Wartime Library' is enriched with detail of the time, obtained from hundreds of interviews the author conducted with people who remember the war.

We were fortunate to have a few members of the audience with vivid memories of the time, all brought back by the accuracy of the smallest detail in the book. 'The Little Wartime Library' is an enjoyable read, and Kate



The Bear at War

photo A Forbes

perfectly judges the balance of a bit of escapism with the potential peril of the bombings. A book for fans of 'Call the Midwife' and 'Post Office Girls'.

The children's book is very different: 'Stink' by Jenny McLachlan. Visitors to the shop will know we are huge fans of the 'Land of Roar' series and 'Dead Good Detectives', all by the same author. Aimed at age 7+ readers, Stink is the naughtiest, rudest, messiest fairy ever, but has to carry out a good deed to obtain her silver wings. Stink is a laugh-out-loud adventure filled with magic and silliness - perfect for kids. It's already been popular in the shop, and I imagine it will be one of our best sellers for many months to come.

Happy reading, whatever you pick up, and we hope to see you in the shop soon.



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A Caversham take on royalty past...

by Elestr Lee

AS THE reign of King Charles III begins, the Rabble Theatre is taking a close look at the life and times of a much earlier monarch, Henry I. Beth Flintoff's play, first written and produced for Rabble in 2016, has been slightly revised and will be put on in the Abbey Ruins next month.

"Henry I is very much a contemporary play about under-represented women, but also very much about arrogant men who wage war. Henry had a moment when he firmly believed he needed to repent, which is why he built Reading Abbey – so it is also about our local history," Toby Davies commented.

Rabble took over the Caversham Court stable buildings

last year, and it is now becoming the theatre company's base. They were also delighted to receive a £100,000 Arts Council grant specifically to put on Henry I in the Abbey ruins this summer.

"Rehearsals start on 9 May," Toby said. "We haven't yet created a very large rehearsal space at our new home, so we can only rehearse bits and bobs here in Caversham – for example, we can't do the big battle scenes here! However, it is great for storing costumes and props, and as a base for our admin."

Tickets are on sale for the performances which start on 13 June and continue until 1 July. The play then goes on tour, appearing at Winchester's Great Hall, and then in the Actor's Church in London's Covent Garden. Thanks to sponsorship by Reading Festival, all tickets on Tuesdays will be just £10.

For more details: rabbletheatre.com/whats-on/



The Set

photo Rabble Theatre



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WHAT'S ON in MAY

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to whatson@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/local-info/whats-on

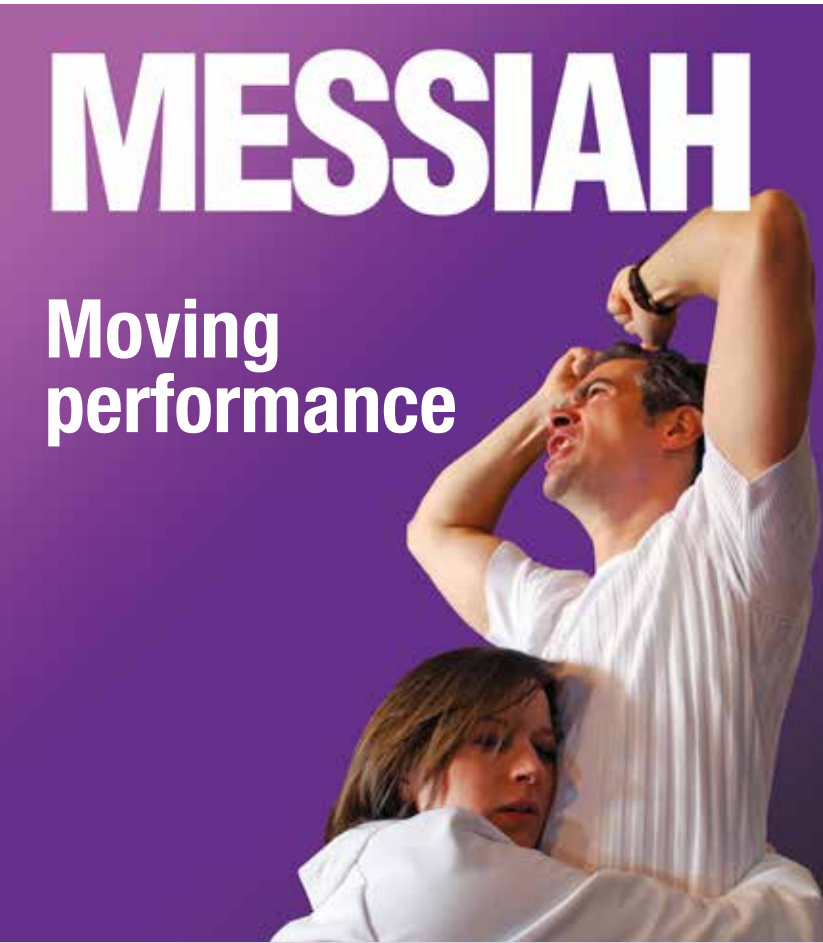
Caversham Library – opening: 09:00 – 17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00 – 19:00 Thursday and 10:00 – 15:00 Saturday. For regular events such as *Rhymetime* see www.reading.gov.uk/leisure/all-libraries/caversham-library

Geo Café – *Artists Against Homelessness*, an ongoing and changing exhibition of art by local artists at Geo Café, Prospect Street. For each sale the artist makes a donation to Launchpad Reading. Open everyday except Tuesdays, when the cafe is closed.

Mondays – *Caversham Park Bridge Club* – at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start. Phone Lin 0118 3348195 for further information.
www.bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Tuesdays – *Babies and Toddlers* – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. 10:00 - 11:30 in term time. All welcome.

Tuesdays – *St. John's Baby and Toddler Group* – Caversham Hall, St. John's Road. 09:30 – 11:00 in term time. All welcome. See www.facebook.com/stjohnscaversham



ST ANDREW'S Caversham is hosting Merry Opera's production of Handel's Messiah on Friday 5 May at 19:00. It is no ordinary production. The church is as you would see it on any normal day. The singers move around the aisles, sometimes sitting with the audience, as they depict 12 instantly recognisable characters. Audiences across the UK say: 'breath-taking, the most inspirational thing I have ever seen' (Tonbridge); 'original, memorable and genuinely spiritual' (Helmsley); 'this is the Messiah I have waited all my life to see' (Wallingford). Tickets £20 from www.merryopera.co.uk or at the door.

Fords, Ferries and Bridges

Crossing the Thames at Caversham over the centuries

Speaker: David Cliffe
Chair, History of Reading Society
and Berkshire Local History Association

AGM & Open Meeting
Tuesday 23 May, 7.30pm
New Testament Church of God
Church Street
ALL WELCOME

www.cadra.org.uk

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

Wednesdays – *Light on the Hill Café* – 19:30 – 21:30 in term time at Grace Church, 119 Peppard Road, RG4 8TR. A wellbeing café for adults 18+. Come as you are for tea and a chat. www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

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

Sundays – *Nordic Walk (or just walking)*. Free to all. One to one training with qualified instructor. Tel. 07931 754096

Wednesday 3 May – *Pang Valley Ramblers* – 10:30 from Hambelden. A 6-mile walk starting at Mill End Car Park. First of several walks this month. For more information see: www.pvramblers.org.uk

Wednesday 3 May – *Rosehill Ladies Meeting* – 14:00 at St Barnabas Village Hall, Emmer Green. Replacing Rosehill WI with meetings on the first Wednesday of the month. All welcome. Email jeandhewitt@gmail.com for details. Contact Jean at 0118 XXXXXX

Thursday 4 to Sunday 7 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 5 May – *Bereavement Café* – 14:00 - 15:30 at St. Barnabas, Emmer Green. The café is a safe place to find others who have had their own loss and can appreciate something of your experience. For further info Tel. Gill at 0118 9478772

Friday 5 May – *Handel's MESSIAH*, staged by Merry Opera – 19:30 at St Andrew's Caversham. Tickets £20 online at www.merryopera.co.uk or at the door

Saturday 6 May – *Caversham Horticultural Society's Spring Plant Sale* – 10:00 - 11.30 at Oakley Road allotments (next to vets). Cash/cheque sales only.

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

READING COUNCIL'S Planning Applications Committee met on 29 March, the last meeting of this Council Year. Three applications for Reading Golf Club were considered and approved. This includes the design and appearance of the housing and the Construction Method Statement, which includes all safety measures and arrangements for construction vehicles. Entry via Kidmore End Road is far from ideal, with school children and vulnerable residents, Victorian housing so close to the road and a long stretch without space to pass. Following on from two meetings with Vistry, CADRA spoke at committee to press the need for a much more careful examination. The Council propose a Temporary Traffic Restriction Order which would restrict daytime parking to allow a passing place. The details have still to be assessed and a review process is to be set out.

The application for the Drews site has been approved, retaining part of the old Malthouse building. The application for retirement housing on Henley Road will be considered at the meeting on 31 May.

Berkshire Archaeology has kindly provided an up-to-date list, by period, of 'Archaeological Finds in the Caversham Area', as well as a new summary report of all Listed Buildings. You can find this on the Local Resources page of www.cadra.org.uk It is fascinating to see where evidence has been found of early life in Caversham.

All are welcome to our meeting on Tuesday 23 May at 19:30 in the New Testament Church of God, next to Caversham Library. After a brief CADRA AGM, we will enjoy a richly illustrated presentation from David Cliffe on 'Fords, Ferries and Bridges – Crossing the Thames at Caversham over the centuries'. Look out for the new booklet on the history of Reading Bridge to mark the centenary this year.

Sunday 7 May – *Dawn Chorus Walk at Clayfield Copse* – 5:00 - 7:00 Friends of Clayfield Copse (ECONET) – Car Park at Caversham Park Road.
See <https://econetreading.org.uk/programme>

Sunday 7 May – *Regular Monthly tasks at Clayfield Copse* – 10:00-12:30 Friends of Clayfield Copse (ECONET) – Car Park at Caversham Park Road. One of a series of work parties which care for our open spaces. For the full programme, see <https://econetreading.org.uk/programme>

Thursday 11 May – *Reading Walks Festival* – Shiplake to Reading – 8 miles – 10:30 Walk Works guided walk, £10 per person. See <https://whatsonreading.com/venues/reading-walks-festival/whats-on/shiplake-reading>

Saturday 13 May – *Artists & Makers Fair* – 10:00 - 16:00 at Caversham Methodist Hall, Gosbrook Road. Local artists and craftspeople display their work for sale. Free entry. For further information, phone Jean at 07808 966928 or visit www.cavershamcrafts.co.uk

Saturday 13 May – *Peppard Unplugged* – 19:30 at Peppard Memorial Hall. An evening of live music. For more information: email info@peppardunplugged.co.uk

Wednesday 17 May – *Making the most of what you have* with Benjamin Pope – 19:30 Caversham Horticultural Society at Caversham Baptist Church. Admission for non-members: £3.00. Refreshments and a raffle.
www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk

Thursday 18 May – *Caversham Women's Institute* – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel. 01189 477868

Thursday 18 – Saturday 20 May – *Sherlock Holmes in The Curious Case of the Cow in the Spotlight* – 20:00 Thursday/Friday, 19:00 Saturday – Caversham Park Theatre at The Milestone Centre, Milestone Way, RG4 6PF. Tickets £11 (Concessions £10) book at www.cavparktheatre.org.uk

Tuesday 23 May – *AGM and talk on Fords, Ferries and Bridges - Crossing the Thames at Caversham over the Centuries* – a talk by David Cliffe -19:30 at The New Testament Church of God. See www.cadra.org.uk

Sunday 28 May – *Pentecost Praise in the Park* – 14:30 in Christchurch Meadows – Churches Together in Caversham. Bring a picnic!

Sunday 28 May – *Hymn Café* – 15:00 - 16:00 at Caversham Baptist Church. Relaxed café style setting with hymns, prayers, testimony and cake. Last Sunday of the month.



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HERE'S ONE of the most attractive spring flowers to be found here and there in our area along hedgerows and in woods, often in company with bluebells, yellow archangels and early purple orchids.

The scientific name is *Silene dioica*, and an internet search tells me that *Silene* is the feminine form of the name Silenus, an ancient Greek woodland deity, which seems somehow appropriate in this context. The *dioica* part of the name signifies that the plant is dioecious, whereby some plants have only male flowers, and others only female ones. Superficially, the two look the same – both have five petals which are usually a bright pink colour, making them very noticeable. The petals are fused at the base to form a tube. If you're so inclined, by pulling the flowers apart you can see that the male flowers have ten stamens to produce pollen, and the female flowers have five styles, which look like little stalks, to receive the pollen from the flowers of another plant. Stigmas and styles are hidden in the tube, where nectar is secreted to attract long-tongued insects.

Red campions are related to white campions and, where they grow near one another, hybrids can form, which have pale pink flowers. I have seen the hybrid only once, on a nature reserve near Abingdon.

A number of other plants called campions grow wild in Britain. Besides the red and the white, there is the bladder campion which has an inflated calyx round the flowers before they open.

The sea campion is typically found on cliffs, and the tiny tufted moss campion is restricted to mountains in Snowdonia and the Lake District,

with its stronghold in the North West Highlands of Scotland.

The Oxford English Dictionary finds the word

'campion' first attached to plants in books in the 1570s, but comments, "It is doubtful whether it was a popular name, even then." The word may be connected with fields, then arenas where combatants fought one another, and with champions who were crowned with garlands of flowers on their brows. Naturally, in England, where the word 'campion' didn't have any meaning, they sometimes called the plants 'champions'.

Geoffrey Grigson, in his book, 'The Englishman's Flora', records many old names for the red campion, though none of them specifically from Berkshire or Oxfordshire. It was sometimes named on account of its red flowers; in Cheshire, where I grew up, they were always called 'red soldiers'. The time of its flowering, coinciding with the arrival of the cuckoo, gave it the name 'cuckoo flower', a name shared by several other wildflowers. Other old names related to silly superstitions – the awful things that could happen to you if you dared to pick the flowers, such as bad luck caused by fairies, thunderstorms, being bitten by adders, and the death of your parents.

Readers of a certain age may remember the actor, Gerald Campion, who played Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School for BBC Children's Television in the 1950s. In those days, children were not allowed in front of the cameras, so the middle-aged and tubby Mr. Campion, in school cap, spectacles, blazer and checked trousers, cut a rather bizarre figure.



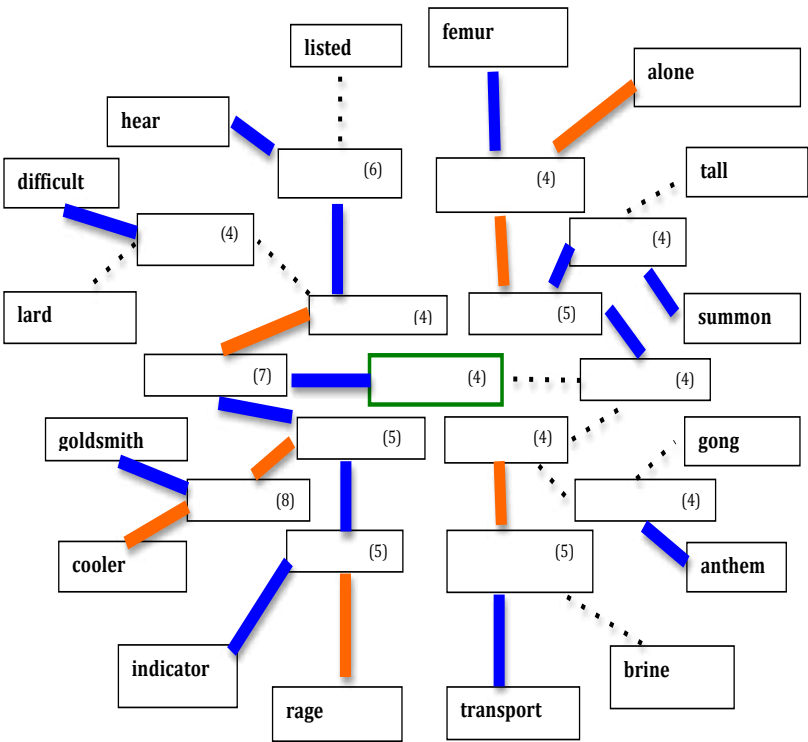
Puzzle Corner

The Challenge by Rachel

WORD PUZZLE

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

Rhyme ———
Letter change
Meaning ———



Answers on page 19

COOKERY

Can you find 21 coronation related words here?

N H T A O R J M D R O W S Y
Q W S C E P T R E H A E Z D
R C O R O I H C M N M S X O
E K E R K C O A C H P T P G
C K A R C H G E E V U M P U
O C N R E G A L I A L I O A
G M O G T M B Q J X L N H R
N D I A N H O I Y L A S S D
I K N R B X R N B T F T I S
T I T W S B E O Y L F E B M
I N Q C O I E X N H E R H E
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Reading Abbey – a Pilgrim Church: a new book



by John Mullaney MA

This work has been over ten years in the making. It is a comprehensive account of how and why Reading Abbey was built and includes up-to-date research.

THE BOOK begins by examining various architectural aspects of Reading Abbey with detailed diagrams of its layout. Dr Kevin Hayward, one of the country's leading petrologists who recently worked on the Cosmati Pavement in Westminster Abbey, examined the stonework and mortar found in the abbey ruins and has contributed to several of the chapters. Some of the more controversial aspects of the Abbey are examined. These include the burial place of Henry I, the height of its central tower, and a look at some unexplored areas, such as whether its chapter house may have been the burial place of abbots and other dignitaries, possibly in an undiscovered vault.

The seals of Reading Abbey are examined afresh, with special reference to the hand of St James, Reading's foremost relic.

The book then moves to looking at the Abbey as a centre of prayer, examining both pilgrimage and the role of Reading Abbey, before and after its dissolution.

Reading Abbey – a pilgrim church is richly illustrated: there is hardly a page without a picture or a diagram. Many of these have been especially drawn to explain the text.

At over 250 pages, in A4 landscape format, this is a substantial work which brings together several strands of the story of Reading Abbey.

Professor Anne Curry of the University of Southampton acted as a specialist advisor.

The 'Friends of Reading Abbey' have kindly agreed to support and promote the book, which is dedicated to, and is in aid of, the 'Friends'. Once costs have been covered, all the proceeds from sales of this print run will go to the 'Friends of Reading Abbey'.

SPECIAL PRE-PUBLICATION PRICE £24.00

Publication price will be £29.00 (£33.00 inc p&p) but, by ordering in advance, you can benefit from a substantial discount and the book will cost just £24.00 (£28.00 inc p&p).

Contact: JGMULLANEY@AOL.COM



Write to the editors



YOU WROTE – Well not quite wrote... The Fading Letters of Prospect Street

Following the publication of our March edition, Chris Walton of Walton Jewellers mentioned he had some old photos of Prospect Street which show the advertising painted on the wall at the corner of Chester Street. So with thanks to Chris, this photograph shows Prospect Street as it was, possibly just before the start of the First World War. *The Editors*



Tofu anyone?

from True Food member,
Will Hughes

WE HAVE probably all heard of tofu, but what is it? It is a vegan product made in a similar way to cheese, but without dairy milk. Instead, fresh soya milk is curdled, pressed into a solid block, and cooled. It has a very slight flavour, unless you buy the smoked variety or other pre-flavoured types. In its plain form, it is ideal for providing a flavour-absorbing baseline for nutritious and scrummy meals. Tofu is low in calories and high in protein, which is why it is often used as a healthy meat substitute. In addition, it has no gluten or cholesterol. The best tofu

has no additives, preservatives, emulsifiers or stabilisers. There are several different kinds available at True Food, so choose one and try it out, if you haven't already.

Because of the way it absorbs flavours, tofu is versatile and always a good central ingredient. The ideal tofu for this recipe is Clearspot Organic Original or their Organic Smoked Tofu. At this time of year, root vegetables and leeks are plentiful, so this is something to try while other ingredients are playing hard-to-get. You can substitute any root vegetables for those listed here and, if peppers are hard to find, use a leek instead! This recipe makes good use of firm tofu.

- 400 ml coconut milk
- 200 g carrots
- 200 g swede
- 200 g parsnips
- 2 tbs sunflower oil
- 1 chopped onion
- 1 crushed clove of garlic
- 2 tsp chopped root ginger
- 2 tsp turmeric, try fresh root turmeric, grated
- 1 small green pepper, sliced or 1 leek, sliced (or both!)
- One block of Clearspot Original tofu, cut into 1 cm cubes
- Sprinkle of dried chilli flakes
- Salt and black pepper
- Coarse ground salt and black pepper
- Cooked white rice to serve (prepare it while this dish is cooking)

- Wash all the vegetables and dice into cubes.
- Heat a large skillet or wide pan to a medium/high heat; add the oil and sauté the onion slowly with a little salt (together with the leek if you are using it) for ten minutes.
- Then add the garlic, ginger, turmeric and tofu, and cook for a couple more minutes. (Be careful to keep the heat down at this point or things start to stick to the pan.) Add the root vegetables and green pepper (if you are using it), and coat them with the oil, adding chilli flakes if you want to spice it up, as well as seasoning.
- Finally, add the coconut milk and reduce the heat. Put a close-fitting lid on the pan and cook slowly for 15-20 minutes, checking the vegetables are cooked before serving with white rice.

(Serves 4-6 depending on appetites).

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FIRST STEPS ON THE TRAIL

Put on a sturdy pair of shoes and make tracks to meet some of your highly talented neighbours. This month Elestr Lee meets Naomi Barker(left) and Sian Pittman (right), who are making their first appearance on the Caversham Arts Trail



TAKING THE leap from 'doing something creative', to putting on an exhibition and selling your own work, demands a certain amount of energy, self-belief and determination – and also requires a venue. The annual Caversham Arts Trail provides the formula for local artists who want to take that step.

Finding a space to set up an exhibition open to visitors is not always so easy when many of our artists combine their passion with busy careers and family commitments. Oakley Road resident Naomi Barker decided that a bell tent set up in her back garden would provide the perfect venue. "I was looking to hire a tent for my husband's birthday last summer, but in fact it cost just as much as buying one. So I bought a bell tent, and now I can use it for the trail, as well as for my children's parties. It's brilliant!" Naomi enthused.

Some artists don't have the luxury of a studio or garden; Sian Pittman is an artist in need of a venue. Having met through a mutual friend, Naomi and Sian decided to approach CAT together – and the pair will be setting out their first joint exhibition inside Naomi's tent this May.

When we chatted, it was very much 'early days' in their preparations, but they were full of ideas for how to display their works; planning practicalities such as obtaining tables and lighting, as well as how

they might incorporate craft sessions for interested visitors. Both are keen to pass their enthusiasm on to others.

Naomi – who works in the buying department of a well-known high street retailer – will be exhibiting the ceramics which have become her passion. "This all started during lockdown, when I was furloughed," she explained. "When things started to open up, I took some Activate Learning courses at Reading College, where I started to make my



own pottery. I then started ordering my own clay and began making things on our kitchen table. We have a sitting room we didn't much use, so I turned it into a studio. I now have my own potter's wheel and a small kiln. Although I have gone back to work full time, I make my pottery at the weekends and in the evenings. It's all a bit time dependent as the clay starts to dry so, once I start a piece, I might be up until midnight finishing it!"

Cooking is another of Naomi's interests so she is particularly inspired to create crockery. "My pottery is functional, and I really love coming up with plates that might be perfect with a certain dish," she said.

Sian similarly has always been immersed in art. "I always loved art throughout my childhood, and I studied fine art at university. Nowadays I work in education, but I want to create my own art again.

"I signed up for a few courses in screen printing, as well as doing some workshops at Art Jam. I love

painting and printing, and using bold colours and patterns, as well as floral designs. I have created a range of products, such as notebooks and cards."

Both Naomi and Sian have started selling their work – Naomi's ceramics can be found at Blue Tin Produce farm shop at Ipsden, while Sian has taken part in the Artists and Makers Fairs as well as the Reading Indie Market. Working out the pricing for unique craft items is always tricky. "If you calculate the time you put in to creating a big piece of work, it pushes the price up," explained Sian. "However, it's possible to sell reproductions and cards at a lower price."

"Similarly, when I have made something using the wheel, it can be moulded for reproduction," commented Naomi. "I really enjoy making things, so I want to break even, just so I can afford to go on making."

"I want to make and sell art," Sian said who, like Naomi, was eagerly anticipating her first Caversham Arts Trail. "But most of all, I want people to be able to see it and enjoy looking at it. I don't just want to make things at home, and for it to stay there tucked away!"



Naomi's pottery (left and right) and Sian's designs (centre) will feature in the Arts Trail this month.

photos N Barker S Pittman

Find out more:

<https://www.bluetinproduce.co.uk/>
<https://www.artistsandmakersfairs.co.uk/>
<https://cavershamartstrail.co.uk/>

Caversham Arts Trail

MAY
2023

Sat 13th & Sun 14th
Sat 20th & Sun 21st May
11am-5pm



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13 venues
across Caversham
& Emmer Green

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#CavershamArtsTrail

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2 4 Hadleigh Rise	2-3			
3 234 Peppard Road	3-4			
4 31 Balmore Drive		12-1		
5 Creativ.Spaces		2-3		
6 68 Westfield Road		3-4		
7 134 Hemdean Road			12-1	
8 4 Hemdean Rise			2-3	
9 14 Kidmore Road			3-4	
10 16 Albert Road				12-1
11 3 Oakley Road				2-3
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13 Artisan & Farmers Market		10-3		10-3

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AMAIZE YOURSELF

BY LES COOPER



IN MY garden world there are one or two things which sometimes perplex me. One is why am I quite good at growing some things and rubbish at growing others. Obviously, I know factors like weather, soil type and positioning play a major part in how well plants flourish. But why am I hopeless with other things? I guess generally it must be my lack of interest in what I am attempting. Nasturtiums are easy aren't they? But I have never grown any worthwhile plants. Maybe I am missing out on something, but basically, I think it is my snooty attitude and the fact I couldn't care less about the poor things.

This brings me to a favourite, namely sweet corn, which I really enjoy growing. Fully grown, the plants look majestic, and I can kid myself I am a good gardener. Even more, I enjoy eating sweet corn, especially fresh from the plant. Few things

are better than a delicious cob dripping with butter – scrumptious, though I would not care to be seen eating it in polite company.

I hope I am not deluding myself, but I cannot remember ever having a bad crop of sweet corn. There is a proviso here, because I did not sow any in 2022, and I have heard at least one report of the cobs not filling out.

My method is basic. At the end of April, I sow two seeds one inch deep in three-inch size pots, and then put them in my non-heated greenhouse until the resulting seedlings are a decent size. In May, if both seeds have germinated, as they usually do, I cruelly remove the weaker one and plant the other one out. I hope you know the plants should be planted in blocks and not in single rows. This is to allow for essential wind pollination. The recommended distance apart is 18 inches, but I must be honest,

and because I hate not using all the seedlings, mine usually finish up being planted closer together. So annoying when it comes to weeding! I water them in and make sure they do not dry out. When the silks on top of the cobs turn brown, I check for ripeness, snap off some cobs and enjoy.

There are many different F1 hybrid varieties and I have tried a few. To be truthful, they all seemed much the same, but I am no gourmet, and they were always nice to eat. When reading the catalogue, I probably look for two words, 'early' and 'easy'.

Incidentally, I read corn is rich in vitamin C, an antioxidant which helps protect your cells from damage and wards off diseases like cancer and heart disease. Yellow corn is a good source of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, good for eye health and helping prevent lens damage which can lead to cataracts.



Plant of the Month

text and photos by Louise Hampden

MAY IS the prime moment for plants that flower in shady places. It's a race against time for the plants that live on the woodland floor to flower before the canopy of trees above closes

drops its seed and dies. The seed then germinates, spends a year growing and, the following year, once large enough, will flower, die and start the cycle all over again.

It's been very fashionable in recent years to grow the white *Digitalis*, which lights up shady corners of the garden and looks lovely amongst ferns and shrubs. It is also quite accommodating if grown in areas of dappled sunlight. What I love about foxgloves is that you need to buy them only once. A couple of plants can produce an abundance of tiny seeds which seed around or can be collected and sown in trays to grow on and then planted out to colonise other parts of the garden. I have found that the 'self-sown' seedlings often find their ideal growing places by themselves and sometimes place themselves at the front of the border. These young plants can be moved or left to carry on growing, depending on how much you like to control the plants in your garden.

My latest foxglove love is a gorgeous variety which flowers in shades of apricot. I have planted it amongst roses as this colour blends well with orange, pale pinks and even shocking pink flowers. I have mature plants ready to flower this year and seeds collected last year are now growing on in pots to plant out later to replace the foxgloves that have finished their life cycle and from which I will collect more seed. I can also cross my fingers that I will find self-sown seedlings to move around the garden.



Foxglove and clematis



Foxgloves with roses

up, depriving them of light. We have just a small window of opportunity to appreciate the beauty and scent of seas of bluebells and the tiny white stars of the wood anemone. But you don't always have to tramp through the woods to see them, for both can grow quite happily under trees and by hedges in our domestic gardens. However, the woodlander that really makes a great floral contribution to our gardens, with spires of nectar-rich flowers in May beloved by bees, is the foxglove. I would not be without its myriad colour variations.

Usually seen in shades of pink growing on the edge of woodland and hedgerows, it is a biennial plant, meaning that it takes two years to complete its life cycle. Once a foxglove flowers, it sets and

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Community Connections

by
Caroline Gratrix

This month we meet
Rupal Patel – CIA to CEO



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

Thames Lido is our No.1 favourite place to eat. Coffee we have delivered by Phil from Anonymous Coffee, it's the best! Shopping – The Collective always has the loveliest bits to pick up for presents and these earrings (see picture)!



Rupal Patel

photo C Gratrix

THIS MONTH I had the pleasure of meeting Rupal Patel. My friend Adrian, who runs a writer's group at Caversham's independent book shop, Fourbears Books, had seen Rupal talk at a literary event, and recommended I look her up. Given she had worked for the CIA, I had visions of her being cagey or even tough. The reality was far from that; in fact, it's hard to imagine a warmer person.

Rupal studied political science, which led her to doing an internship in Oman and to study International Relations. Then she became an analyst for the CIA. During her time in the CIA she worked in Afghanistan, a role she loved, citing the work, the travel opportunities, and the brilliant team she worked with, as the best.

After a secondment in London and getting the feeling London was her kind of place, she made the move from Washington

DC to the UK, where she studied for an MBA and decided that she wanted to be her own boss.

While growing a property business she started with her husband, she also began delivering business-related workshops and got more involved with entrepreneurial communities around the country. Rupal now specialises in employee talent development programmes for corporates as well as some 1:1 executive coaching and keynote speaking.

A passionate entrepreneur, Rupal has written a book about her journey: 'From CIA to CEO: Unconventional Life Lessons for Thinking Bigger, Leading Better and Being Bolder'. Pick up a copy in Fourbears!

How long have you lived in RG4?

Five years now. We moved to Caversham from Winnersh as there was much more going on in Caversham.

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

One thing we can all do is walk more - better for our health and would help to reduce the traffic, which can be bad in Caversham!

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

Getting more involved in your local community groups is a good start, The Weller Centre is an amazing local resource, there are local walking groups, anything that helps you, 'find your tribe'.

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

A beautiful cultural space that would bring everyone from the community together.



A Crafty Cuppa

Freya Lines, Paper Artist

by Ruth Martin

FOR CAVERSHAM paper artist and designer, Freya Lines, creativity has been part of her life since a young age. "My mum got me into being creative," she explained. "We would always be drawing and painting together; she would do things like put a vase of flowers on the kitchen table for us to sketch, and it just went from there." From painting at the kitchen table, a life-long love of art was underway. "I studied Surface Design at Art College in London, immersing myself in screen-printing and creating repeat patterns, and somehow I started designing paper cuts which I loved and specialised in for my final show."

If you look at Freya's Instagram page (@freyalinesdesigns), you will find a gentle palette of yellows, golds and greens, the lines she cuts highlighting the outlines of seasonal flowers we see all around us. There is a deceptive simplicity to the shapes, a little like pressed flowers. "I enjoy the meditative process, it's really relaxing," Freya tells me. "I work from photographs or sketches and cut the paper using a scalpel blade."

As well as designing greetings cards and prints, Freya has branched into commissions. "I love creating bespoke work, it can be nerve-wracking but it's also exciting, and the process of making something personal and meaningful is really special."

Freya's creations can be seen on her Etsy shop (www.etsy.com/shop/freyalines), her Instagram page, and at various local markets. You will find Freya at the Artists and Makers Fair in Caversham in May and June (2nd Saturday of each month at Caversham Methodist Church, www.artistsandmakersfairs.co.uk).

Freya moved to Caversham a year ago from London. The change in location has brought lots of inspiration, "I

absolutely love it here and I'm enjoying getting to know the area and the local people," she tells me. "I have lots of products and collections to develop, I always have so many ideas up my sleeve!"

As our crafty cuppa comes to an end, (Earl Grey, not too strong, with milk and half a sugar for Freya) what would she say to anyone who wants to get more creative? "Always do it! I think everyone is creative, just have a go. You'll be so pleased with what you make."



Freya Lines

photo Benjamin Buckley

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THERE'S A LOT GOING ON AT THE ...

THE CHATTY CAFÉ

BY HAZEL BINGHAM

I SIT writing this at a table in the middle of the Weller Centre Chatty Café. All around me are people chatting, cups of steaming tea and coffee, and amazing smelling cakes, as well as a few children playing with the toys and picking books to take home.

The café was set up to help reduce social isolation, providing a safe place for people to meet. The sense of enjoyment here is amazing. The reduction in social isolation is evident as we see users attending other sessions here with people they have met during their visit to the Chatty Café.

We hope to be able to run the café from 9:30-12:30 Monday to Friday so we can reach as many people who need us as we can. However, we can't do this without more volunteers who are prepared to come and chat with others. Some of our visitors like to sit in silence and do a puzzle with a volunteer, while others come looking to chat or to get advice.

If you want to get involved please drop us an email to admin@wellercentre.org.uk. Hazel is Facilities Manager at the Weller Centre.

WELLER VOICES

BY HILARY SMART

WELLER VOICES is a community choir based in the Weller Centre and funded by the Earley Charity. It was launched in October last year. I didn't make it to that very first rehearsal, but when I did join during the first term, I found a group of people from very different backgrounds who loved making music together, and didn't take themselves too seriously. We rehearse weekly during term times, and work towards occasionally putting on informal Cafe Concerts for family and friends in the Weller Centre.

Maddie Cottam, the choir director, is very open to

suggestions, which I think is why events went the way they did recently. Ellie thought it would be fun to sing Wellerman (the sea shanty), so we did. After a slip-up in rehearsal (Maddie accidentally called it The Weller Centre) I drafted a version of the lyrics about the Weller Centre itself, which Hazel insisted we sang instead of the proper song. Then Mary saw an advert for 'Let's Sing', the annual community choir competition run by the Mayor's office, and suggested we enter a video. Louise backed her up, arguing, "what's the worst that can happen?"

Much to our surprise, we were selected to compete in the live competition. So, some of us went to the Hexagon to perform to a packed house competing against experienced choirs many times our size. We were delighted to get through to the final round, and afterwards the Mayor tweeted to say she had particularly enjoyed our Weller Song. The whole thing was very surreal and a great deal of fun, despite our nerves.

Weller Voices is free, fun and for all. No auditions or previous experience are needed, and many of us don't read music. If you're up for some singing and a laugh, then join us in the Weller Centre at 19:30 on Thursdays during term time.

FRIENDLY ADVICE

CITIZEN'S ADVICE READING started regular sessions at the Weller Centre in March this year. They are available on a drop-in basis from 10:30 until 12:00 every Tuesday. And more is planned...

AN EXTENSION of the facilities at the Centre is being considered by the trustees. With the support of the Earley Charity, plans have been drawn up for a significant addition to the building, including a new, multi-use hall, meeting rooms and a medical suite. The trustees are now considering funding options.



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INSPIRING WOMEN – THE WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

by Pamela Gumbrell

IN RECENT months, the Caversham Bridge has featured organisations which rely on volunteers to operate. The Women's Institute (WI) is one such body, organised and run by local groups on a voluntary basis. Until recently there were three groups in our area: the Caversham WI, which meets at Church House, Chazey WI which meets at St Andrew's and Rosehill WI in Emmer Green. Sadly, the Rosehill WI closed on 1 March this year due to a lack of volunteers to act as President and Secretary.

The first WI in Great Britain was founded in Wales in 1915, when it set out to give women a voice and to be a force for good in the community. Since then,

their members and ambitions have grown tremendously. Today the WI is the largest women's organisation in the UK. It prides itself on being a trusted place for women of all generations to share experiences and to learn from each other. WI members have the chance to meet women in their local area, both in-person and virtually, to make friends, and to make a difference in the community. They campaign nationally on a wide range of issues, and provide life-long learning and self-development opportunities for women in England and Wales.

The final Annual General Meeting of Rosehill WI, which had been operating for more than 50 years, was on 1 March.

The retiring President, Arlene Riley, talked about the speakers and trips enjoyed over the last year, and thanked the many members who had contributed to the activities of the group. She confirmed she would be stepping down as President, and the Secretary would also be stepping down. As no-one had come forward to fill these posts, the process of formally closing Rosehill WI followed.

....Caversham WI continues to meet...

It is hoped that a new monthly ladies' club will be formed, with the first meeting planned for Wednesday 5 April at St Barnabas Church Hall. Details of any future meetings will be included in the What's On section of the Caversham Bridge.

Caversham WI continues to meet every third Thursday of the month at Church House (next to Waitrose) at 19.30. Over the years they have had many links with

Rosehill WI and have fond memories of shared events and meetings. They were saddened to learn about the closure, and wish the former members all the best.

Details of the Caversham WI meetings are available online at:

<https://berkshire.thewi.org.uk/find-wi/caversham/programme>

At the May meeting they will welcome speaker Graham Horn, with Tales of a Blue Badge Tourist Guide. Guests are always welcome, so feel free to turn up on the day. For further details, see their entry in our What's On feature on page 6, and online at:

cavershambridge.org/local-info/whats-on

Chazey WI meet in St Andrew's Church Hall on Albert Road at 14:30 on the first Friday of the Month – contact

chazeywi@berkshirewi.co.uk for more information.

Louise Spiers 1962-2023

READERS WILL be deeply saddened to hear of the sudden death of one of Caversham's leading creative spirits – Louise Spiers – who died on 24 February. She was featured in this newspaper as recently as last November.

Louise, who grew up in Henley, moved to Caversham in 1991, and soon involved herself in the local creative scene. She had boundless energy and imagination, and would take on all kinds of creative projects, whether they were for her own business as an interior designer and decorative paint artist, or for the local community, such as organising a workshop for all children in her road to make decorations for the Queen's Jubilee Street Party in 2002.

Louise could often be seen driving her beloved Bluebell, the vintage Citroën Acadiane van that she used for transporting her wares and that she had had restored and embellished with her business name 'Kitsch-en-Sync'.

Being very proud of her green credentials and as one of the original 'up-cyclers', Louise would take something pre-loved and transform it into an original and beautiful heirloom. She was a passionate gardener with a natural talent for garden design and for propagating plants. She applied this talent to creating original

plant arrangements, always using recycled containers. She was constantly pushing her creative boundaries; at one point she signed up for a welding course so that she could learn how to make large sculptures from welded steel!

Louise will be remembered as the driving force and one of the original founders of Caversham Arts Trail (CAT). Many readers will have visited her venue (her beautiful studio and garden in Emmer Green), where she showcased her upcycled furniture. Fellow co-founder of CAT, Lauren Denney, says, "We will miss her enthusiasm for life and everything she did. She was an integral part of the CAT leadership team. She shared many ideas, was an amazing networker and extremely resourceful. Her input into CAT will never be forgotten. The void is huge." Julie Simmonds, the current organiser of CAT, says "Louise's love and care for her friends and family was limitless, and I feel blessed to have known her. Our lovely Louise is completely irreplaceable, and the world is a little less special without her."

Louise leaves husband, Dave, daughter, Freya and mother, Bette.

Donations in memory of Louise can be made to Sue Ryder Duchess of Kent Hospice via: <https://gofund.me/0d2bbd8e>



photo R Martin'

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Water for wildlife

by Trish Marcouse



Blue tit enjoying a bath

photo P Moore

BOOKS ON the subject all say the best thing you can do for wildlife is to create a wildlife pond in your garden. And there's still time to do it this year and to get it established during the growing season. Ponds with shallow sloping sides offer essential water for drinking and bathing for birds, mammals, butterflies and bees, as well as a new habitat for amphibians and insects. They are also good spots for sitting to do the mindfulness training we are all encouraged to try!

Garden centres sell the liners and underlay, or you can buy a pond liner kit with instructions from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) at their online shop from £25. If you go for a pond, then econetreading.org.uk can provide some cheap, native pond plants.

Not everyone will want a pond, but we can all provide some water for wildlife. There are beautiful bird baths available in umpteen materials, or an old dustbin lid or large plant pot saucer. The key is location: somewhere safe from cats and squirrels which you can watch discreetly, but it needs to be in the open, particularly if a shallow dish on the ground, and to have some branches or tall shrubs nearby where the birds can wait their turn in safety.

Butterflies and bees need the shallows. Please put a flat stone in your bird bath, with the top surface just above water level, so insects can land on the stone and walk to the water's edge to drink.

The RSPB Online Shop is at shopping.rspb.org.uk

GROWING GREEN

by Tricia Marcouse

AS PART of efforts to improve the area around the shops in Emmer Green, Keep Emmer Green arranged for a new stretch of hedge to be planted alongside the Peppard Road on 21 March. They used saplings provided by the Woodland Trust and from gardens in Reading. Eleven local residents and members of Econet planted the saplings through a weed suppressing membrane which will conserve moisture and help the young trees to develop strong roots. The volunteers also replaced saplings which died last summer in the previous 40m of hedge. A total of 170 saplings were planted.

This is one of a number of initiatives to plant trees and hedges in our area. Working with local residents, Reading Tree Wardens have planted many trees here, for example in Chiltern Road and Mayfield Drive. But in the last couple of years, we've had a severe lack of rain in late spring and early summer, and newly planted street trees and hedges have suffered. If you have a new street tree or hedge near your house, and are willing to do some watering in hot weather, please contact the Reading Tree Wardens on rtwn2011@gmail.com and offer your help.



Planting the new stretch of hedge

photo M Ormond

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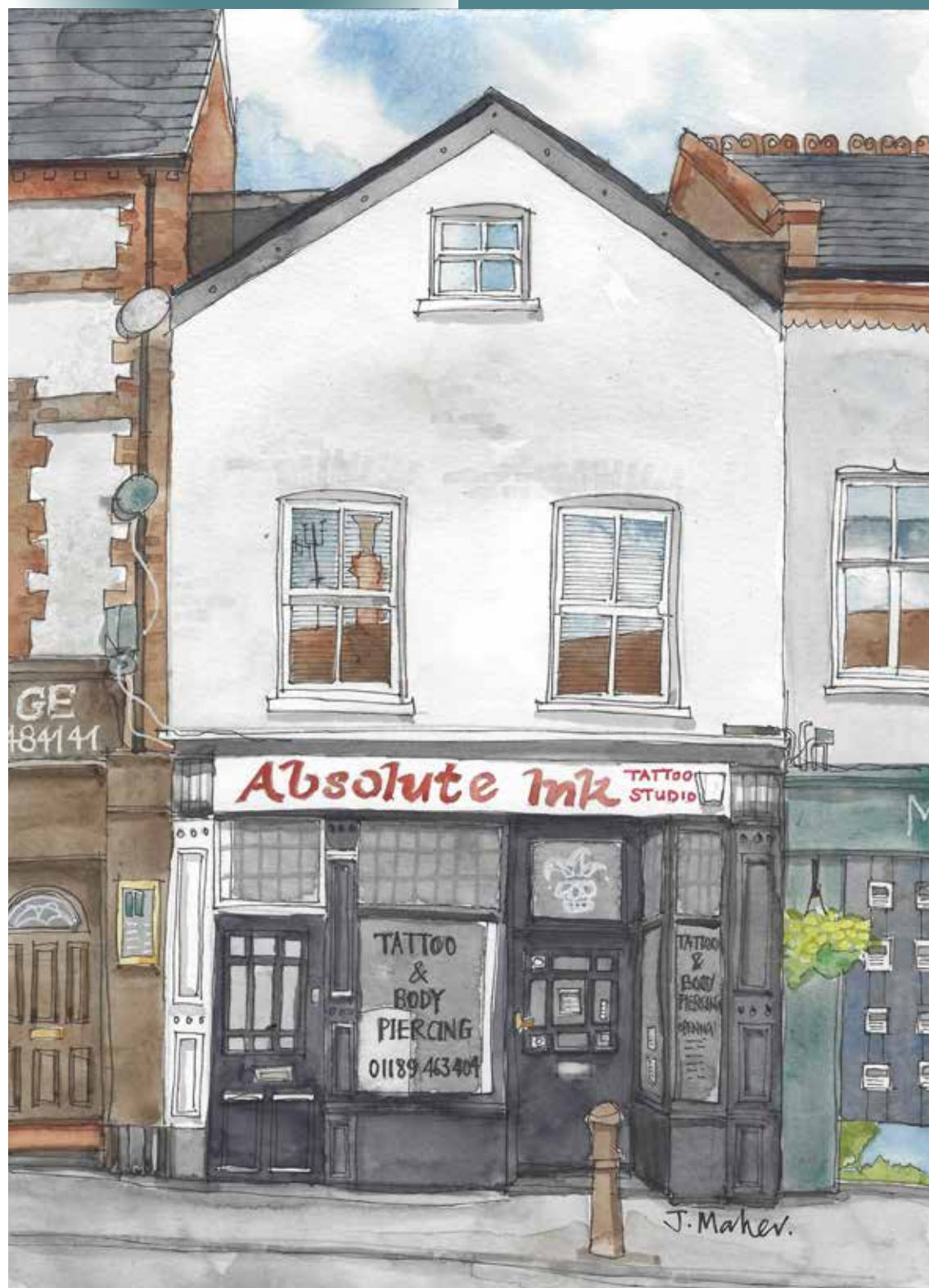
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The Local Scene by Jackie Bishop

Bridge Street – Absolute Ink



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

TUCKED between the Lebanese Village Restaurant and Masons Estate Agents on Bridge Street is a smaller building at number eight which, in 2011, became home to Absolute Ink, a tattoo and piercing shop. Although the circus themed décor seems a bit scary, the all-female team are welcoming and provide a friendly, non-threatening environment for their clients. They have been ranked number one on the *Three Best Rated* website for tattoo studios in Reading for 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Records of the premises being used as a shop go back to the early 1900s, when it was a tobacconist run by James Howes. Smoking was commonplace at the time, and tobacconists sold a wide range of smoking products, such as cigarettes, cigars, ashtrays and snuff. In an advert from around 1908, the shop is described as selling 'Tobacco, Cigars, Cigarettes, Walking Sticks and Fishing Tackle'. Handy for anglers heading down to the river, the shop was open for over twenty years. Mr Howes died in Caversham in September 1923, aged around 66 and is buried in Caversham Cemetery.

By the late 1940s, the shop was owned by Brigham & Co Ltd, another tobacconist, again for around 20 years. The company was established in Reading in 1812 as a cigarette distributor and they also sold fishing tackle.

Number eight was occupied by a lighting supplies wholesaler, Décor Lighting Co for a few years in the 1960s. It was then used by a chiropractor before it went on to be a photography studio. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there are adverts in the Reading Evening Post for exhibitions of prints and drawings at the premises, then known as The Collector's Gallery.



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THE TED Burnell Community Art Group are amateur artists who meet in Church House in Caversham. The group was established by Ted Burnell, a professional artist in the late 1970s. We are a friendly bunch of people with a range of ages who enjoy sharing our common interest in painting and drawing.

We meet on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) in morning and afternoon sessions of two hours duration. The sessions continue throughout the year, with a summer break and a shorter Christmas period. Every couple of months we invite a different guest artist to demonstrate a particular medium, technique or genre which encourages members to try their hand at expanding their skills.

On 25 March we were able to hold our first Exhibition since before Covid and it was a resounding success. This local group of amateur artists exhibited a showcase of their work, with over 70 paintings on display covering a wide range of subjects. Visitors were encouraged to choose their favourite paintings and there was also a tombola and the opportunity to enjoy some delicious homemade cakes with tea and coffee. The money raised will go towards paying for the visiting artists. It was lovely to meet so many members of the public, who were complimentary about the quality of the artworks, especially as there was a record number of 12 paintings sold on the day. The group hopes to be able to hold another public exhibition next year.

For more information on the group email editors@cavershambridge.org
Jean is Secretary of the group.

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First Impressions Matter

Every word matters

by Laura Harmsworth



I recommend using positive action verbs on your CV rather than passive words. They give a strong impression and express action, therefore making you sound like you will make an impact in the role and to the company.

These words are dynamic and make your CV come alive. You want your CV to make an immediate impact – remember the average reader will form an impression within 6-20 seconds and might not carry on reading after that. Every word matters!

- Don't start every line with "Responsible for" – remember it's about your achievements not your responsibilities

- Use the strongest action/power word you can find at the beginning of a sentence to ensure your CV is impressive
 - Avoid jargon words
 - Don't overuse the same phrases or words (see my top tip at the end)
 - Ensure the action verb is relevant to the key words in the job advert/description
- Google is your friend – search for "CV action verbs". This list is just to get you started.

Top tip:

Use the synonym function of an online thesaurus e.g., if you type in "influenced", options include determined, shaped, and persuaded.

You can follow Laura on:

www.facebook.com/CavershamCVWriting

on LinkedIn:

www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth

website: www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Email: contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk

Positive action verbs			
Spearheaded	Collaborated	Accelerated	Established
Secured	Attained	Delivered	Devised
Directed	Identified	Briefed	Organised
Upgraded	Negotiated	Won	Defined
Solved	Convinced	Created	Addressed
Chaired	Diagnosed	Generated	Maximised

<https://www.thesaurus.com/browse/synonym>

Thank you for the flowers

by Shirl Scola

THE ST PETER'S flower group met before Easter to decorate the church for the Easter celebration and to say a big Thank You to Pat Williams who has been helping with the flowers for nearly 30 years. She has been 'in charge' of the flowers for the last 23 years, ordering, arranging and maintaining them week by week. For major celebrations, including an amazing flower festival to raise funds for the new organ, weddings, harvest thanksgivings, Easter and Christmas, she has ordered the flowers and organised a team of helpers to decorate the church. She has now decided the time is right to step down from full responsibility for the flowers.

We are sorry to lose her expertise and organisational skills and her care and dedication in managing the church flowers. She has, however, given us a list of how to do things, and what needs to be done. So, we hope to continue the beautiful fresh flower arrangements in the church with helpers working on a rota basis. Pat has kindly agreed to lend a hand if required. We are sure to call on her again for assistance before long!

In recognition of her years of service Pat Jones presented Pat Williams with a gift and flowers from the 'flower group'. Reverend Rachel Ross Smith thanked Pat on behalf of the whole congregation for decorating the church every week and making it a more welcome and inviting church.

Thank you Pat for your many years of devoted service.

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Pat Williams (centre) and members of the Flower Group

photo M Jones

Are you having regular facials?

by Perry Walker

IF YES, well done! You are looking after your skin and your well-being all in one treatment. If not, I will suggest three reasons why you should consider having regular facial treatments. Remember, taking care of your skin is as important as eating a well-balanced diet and getting adequate sleep. Treating yourself to a facial once every four weeks can have the following benefits and more:

- Blood Circulation - massage is proven to improve blood circulation, and the same goes for facial massage. Facial massage helps to drain lymph and deliver additional oxygen and nutrients to the face. In turn, this leaves healthier, efficient cells and a glowing face. Facial massage can also help the function of other organs in the body.

- A professional facial will cleanse your skin thoroughly, which it is not possible to do at home. A professional will know your skin type and what it needs. You need to remove excess build-up of oil and dirt. This will lead to healthy, glowing skin. A microdermabrasion facial is superb for this deep cleansing and extraction function.
- Mental well-being. A facial is not only a miracle for the appearance of your skin, but it also benefits your mental health. Taking some time out of your busy schedule to focus on your well-being is so beneficial to how you feel. Put yourself first and reap the benefits of how radiant you look afterwards. Facial massage also activates the sympathetic nervous system, reducing stress and worry.

Perry owns Perry's Beauty, Hawthorne Road, Caversham -
@perrys_beautyroom



Perry Walker

photo: Perry Walker



Social Media and us

MORE THAN four billion people are estimated to use social media worldwide, and this figure is expected to rise to six billion by 2027.

This has sparked an explosion of research, which has begun to show **the way people engage with social media might be more important than how much they use it.**

Among the interesting results, studies show *passive* users may prefer to scroll through the content posted by other members of the network, but not do much more.

Reactive users also scroll through content, but offer minimal engagement, especially on topics close to their hearts, but refrain from sharing, commenting or engaging in debate too often.

Interactive users press 'like', share, comment, upload corroborative content, argue and get engaged in discussion, and often carry the online interaction into their 'real' lives.

Studies have found that, in some cases, the use of technology reduces feelings of worry and symptoms of depression among participants, and adolescents who spend the most time on technology creating their own content may enjoy better mental health.

Studies have also found that participating in collective

action through social media can increase our sense of well being.

Charities use social media for good causes and to raise funding for issues from wildlife conservation to world hunger. Many people now earn a living through social media; others use it as a resource for learning. We are able to connect to global events and issues and communicate with people across the world. For families who live apart, the possibilities for regular communication have expanded greatly.

... engaging more mindfully...

However, our brains are wired to doomscroll - the compulsion to consume negative news on social media - especially in times of uncertainty. This can lead to anxiety, depression and fatigue.

Experts suggest getting away from this compulsion and engaging more mindfully, noticing how often we are likely to be reactive/interactive, then balancing it out with some periods of passive engagement or regular periods of disengagement.

So we should ask ourselves how social media is making us feel. If we find we blame ourselves for using it too often, changing the amount and nature of the time we spend on social media can help us restore balance.

We can keep our settings private and verify the sources of information we receive from social media.

With careful and thoughtful engagement, we can expand our social connectivity and use social media as a tool for good causes without losing our sense of wellbeing, and never at the expense of a balanced and active outer life in our off-screen world.

THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right) hard, listen, bone, call, hark, phone, monarch, **king**, ring, ruler, sing, jeweller, gauge, bring, song.

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