



Caversham Bridge



No 700

www.cavershambridge.org

Price £1

June 2023

GETTING TOGETHER TO MARK THE NEW REIGN

by
Cleo Alexander

ROADS ACROSS Caversham and Emmer Green took up the opportunity to hold street parties during the coronation weekend and Bank Holiday. Elstow Avenue in Caversham Park Village (pictured right and below), and Blenheim Road in Caversham (see below left), were among those who put out the bunting, picnic tables and even marquees when the sun threatened to shine. It was an opportunity for neighbours to gather, and a lovely chance for children to play together in the street.

For those who wanted to, there was a live screening of the coronation at venues including St Andrew's Church and Caversham Heights Methodist Church, which gave those who attended

the chance to experience the historic day in company, and to enjoy some choice refreshments. And while the military flypast over Buckingham Palace always appears to be the highpoint for the Royal Family – we saw it first! Disappointingly the planned spectacle had to be scaled down due to the dreadful weather. However, the helicopters which were able to accompany the Red Arrows on the day could be seen in formation over our skies as they set off to London. "The four Chinooks were particularly impressive as they flew in," recalled one of our editors, Phil Chatfield. "And on the way back, the helicopters flew over our garden and were much lower. At first all we heard was the sound, then they flew into sight just above the trees!"



Elstow Avenue party

photo M Ellison



Elstow Avenue neighbours

photo P Gibbons



Blenheim Road sunshine

photo E Lee



All age fun, Elstow Avenue

photo M Ellison

In Praise of June

In early June the world of leaf
and blade and flowers explode... John Steinbeck

by Phil Chatfield

HOPE you were able to make the most of the May Bank Holidays, despite the unsettled weather. Whilst our day of the Coronation was very wet, the sun did shine for at least some of our Coronation street parties (see above).

This is our 700th edition, and for our Creative Caversham article, Elestr Lee was delighted to be able to talk to local resident and superstar Liz Mitchell, lead singer with pop group Boney M, who will be headlining at Henley Festival in July (p12).

We have several articles with an environmental theme this month. Recycling links the work of Emmer Green resident, Wendy Howell, to prevent unwanted bras going to landfill while raising funds for her church (p4), and our item on bottle banks (p15). Concern for our planet is the focus of Reading Climate Festival which starts 10 June (p4) and indoor air quality for our EcoTip (p9).

It is a busy time for gardeners. In addition to our regular gardening spots from Les Cooper, on delphiniums, and Louise Hampden, about Astrantias, (p10), we report on two recent gardening events in Caversham. Beanpole Day, held in Caversham Court Gardens, is always a friendly occasion (p9), and the annual plant sale in support of WaterAid and the Red Cross saw hundreds of plants finding new homes (p14).

Other regular features include Happy Wanderer, who picks up the challenge from Martin Andrews in our March edition Local Scene, relating to the naming of the The Clifton Arms in Gosbrook Road (p7), whilst Janina Maher's painting of the Convent building in South View Avenue is enlivened by a personal story from Martin (p13).

The Caversham Bridge aims to serve our community and is brought to you by a large team of volunteers (p8). If you enjoy the paper, please share it with friends and neighbours, and encourage them to subscribe.

Contact us with your news and stories at editors@cavershambridge.org or care of Church House, Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX.

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Lost and found



Talking Point

by Revd
Rachel Ross Smith
Ministry Team at
Caversham Thameside
and Mapledurham
Parish

I AM AN expert at losing things - phones, watches, earrings, keys, hearing aids, purse, you name it. One minute it is in my hand, the next it is nowhere to be found. The other day, on a bright but cold morning, walking our dog along the river, I changed my glasses to sunglasses. Within a few minutes of returning home, I went to change back to normal glasses only to realise that they were no longer to be found. There ensued the predictable frustration of searching high

and low in the house, then resorting to retracing my steps, but all to no avail. Despite messages to Caversham Gossip Girls and other local sites it appears that my regular routine of losing and finding has been disrupted.

Losing one's glasses is not only deeply frustrating and expensive, it is mentally and physically disorientating. And it reminded me, how, as a child, my wider family and relatives would talk about those who were 'lost'. Lost was always used as the opposite to the word 'saved', meaning someone who had accepted Jesus as their saviour and therefore had the assurance of going to Heaven instead of Hell.

Now the Bible has a lot to say about being lost. In St. Luke's gospel we hear the stories of the 'lost' coin, the 'lost' sheep and the 'lost' son. In these parables, told by Jesus, the coin and the sheep are eagerly and fervently sought. In the story of the lost son, he has been allowed to leave the family home taking all his inheritance in search of a better life. While doing so, the son blows his fortune and decides to return home only when he reaches rock bottom in the gutter. Unknown to him, his father had every day been eagerly awaiting his return and runs to meet his son when he recognises him in the distance.

These stories illustrate for us not eternal damnation, but the constant desire of God to restore and heal our broken relationships.

There are many times in our lives when we can feel 'lost', be it in the desolation of grief, the heartbreak of broken personal relationships, the disorientation of a



change of occupation and location, or the devastation of having felt that we have failed. All these experiences can leave us feeling alienated and even at times unable to cope. These stories of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son remind us that when we're lost, we can know that, whoever we are, there is a loving God who is constantly seeking to find us and acting to restore our relationship and eliminate feelings of alienation.

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 July 2023 issue should be submitted by 1 June and for the August 2023 edition by 1 July These should be e-mailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

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

advertising@cavershambridge.org

Reading Climate Festival and National Big Green Week

10-21 June *Tricia Marcouse*

THIS YEAR the Climate Festival in Reading is being held in association with The Great Big Green Week, which is the UK's biggest ever celebration of community action to tackle climate change and protect nature. The Festival begins at Waterfest (Forbury and Canalside) on 10 June with a series of short talks in the climate marquee, together with tables manned by experts to answer all of your questions (we hope!). The following ten days offer walks, talks, and advice on environmental education, and finishes with a youth fair on 'Show Your Stripes' day on Wednesday 21 June.

All events are free of charge and can be viewed and booked on Eventbrite www.eventbrite.com/cc/reading-climate-festival-2023-1871509

From 10-18 June, 'Gaia' the world-famous earth artwork created from NASA imagery is suspended in the Reading Concert Hall. To see this, book a slot on www.readingtownhall.co.uk/whats-on/luke-jerram%E2%80%99s-gaia-0

The cost is £2 per adult and accompanying children under 14 are free.



'Gaia' in Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury Festival 2019

<https://my-earth.org/about/>



Caversham Bridge News from the editors

THIS MONTH we mark the 700th edition of the Caversham Bridge newspaper. It was first published by the Churches Together in Caversham in 1964 with the aim of bringing all the church communities in the area together. The paper has chronicled events in our community since then, evolving over time to reflect changes in both society and printing technology.

Many of our past editions have been scanned and are available on our website. We are working with the Berkshire Records Office to scan more of these. See

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

Subscribe

If you have yet to pay your 2023 subscription, please let us know if you would like to arrange for someone to call and collect cash or a cheque (which should be made out to Caversham Christian News). Email us at subscriptions@cavershambridge.org

or leave a message on our answerphone, 0118 328 2754. Cheques can also be posted to Caversham Bridge, Church House, Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX.

The annual subscription for 2023 is £5. For new subscribers, the charge is £2.50 to the end of the year. You can pay by direct transfer from your bank account, using our bank account details:

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and please include your postcode and house number or name as a reference!

Going the Extra Mile

If someone has made your day by 'going the extra mile', do tell us so we can recognise their effort and share it with our readers.

Write to us at: editors@cavershambridge.org



CONCERTS in CAVERSHAM

Midsummer Music

THE MUSICIANS of Concerts in Caversham invite us to an evening of boisterous good fun, nostalgic melodies and unashamed romanticism at St Andrew's Church. A select group of their regular performers join together for an evening of wonderful chamber music on Saturday 17 June at 19:30.

The performers are

Tamas Andras – violin (Royal Philharmonic Orchestra);

Jiafeng Chen – violin; Michelle Bruil – viola;

Peter Adams – cello; Adrienne Black – piano.

They will be playing three pieces:

Piano Quintet in A major – Dvořák

Piano Quartet in A minor – Mahler

Piano Quintet in E-flat major – Schumann

Tickets: 25-59 yr old - £22; 60+ £20; 16-24 £16; under 16s free

See www.concertsincaversham.co.uk for more information and to book tickets or email info@concertsincaversham.co.uk

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Bras raise funds for St Barnabas



Stock boxes of bras

photo W Howell

by Maddy Hayden
Communications Officer, Diocese of Oxford

EMMER GREEN resident, Wendy Howell, has raised over £1,100 for her church, St Barnabas, through selling new and second-hand bras.

Each month Wendy receives bags full of new and second-hand bras from a local charity shop which is unable to resell unpackaged bras. Instead of sending them to landfill, Wendy uses her creative and fundraising skills, to sort, photograph and sell the bras online on the second-hand clothing site Vinted (www.vinted.co.uk). Each is sold for a few pounds and the proceeds donated to St Barnabas.

The venture started in June 2021, when Wendy discovered selling second-hand clothing. It inspired her to use her time and skills to fundraise for the church. Since then, Wendy has sold over 500 bras, raising over £1,100 for the church. Any unsold bras are donated to women in developing countries, maximising the benefit from the bras and minimising waste.

Wendy has a love for fundraising, and her Christian faith has been behind this lifelong passion and support for her local church.

"I've been fundraising for over 30 years. Ever since my children were small, I've enjoyed fundraising in the local community, being part of something creative and hosting events at the church to help support our mission and ministry."

Protecting the environment and minimising waste are a key part of her vision, and she avoids using plastic packaging, using tissue paper and reused cardboard boxes for packing the bras instead.

"Prolonging the life of clothing, and stopping items from going to landfill, is one of the ways we can help reduce waste. I'm one of those people who doesn't throw anything away and always think of a new way to repurpose items."

"It's also about helping those who are less well-off to access good quality and affordable underwear, particularly as we are seeing many households struggling with the present cost-of-living."

To donate bras to Wendy, please drop them off at the St Barnabas Parish Centre, Grove Road, Emmer Green on Tuesday mornings between 9:00 and 11:00, when she is there at their craft group, or email churchwarden@saintbarnabas.org.uk to make alternative arrangements.

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Lent learning at St Andrew's

by Rodney Oliver

EACH YEAR, St Andrew's Church in Caversham hosts a Lent Address from a guest speaker. This year, at the end of March, we invited Dr Ashok Sadashiv Khare to speak about the beliefs and practices of Hinduism. Dr Ashok was born in Mumbai and qualified with a PhD in Chemical Technology. He arrived in the UK in 1999 and is Head of Chemistry at Shiplake College. He is Chairperson of the Executive Committee of the Reading Hindu Centre in Whitley Street.

He gave a talk with a PowerPoint presentation. Hinduism, which originated over five thousand years ago in India along the Indus River, highlighted the rites of living abiding by the simple laws of nature. There is no single holy book nor a single style of worship. He explained the four pathways to pursue God - through the devotion of love; service to humanity; a knowledge and dispersing it to others; and gaining empowerment over mind and body. These pathways lead to enlightenment, and practitioners decide through their needs, habits, and temperament whether to practise the faith.

The key beliefs of Hinduism are reincarnation, choosing any pathway for the appropriate action by the law of Karma, and behaving in a manner consistent with one's position in life, which is a logical way of practising good behaviour. 'You can be the creator as well as the destroyer.' Hindus believe in the importance of the observation of appropriate behaviour, including the carrying out of numerous rituals, with the ultimate goal of Moksha, the release or liberation from the endless cycle of birth and reincarnation.

Dr Ashok invited us to visit the Hindu Temple in Reading at a later date. In appreciation of his address, we presented him with an Easter egg and a jar of Caversham honey.



Lent at St Andrew

photo J Oliver

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For your bookshelf....



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

A couple of customers have suggested I should include an interesting book industry fact, so we'll start this month and see when I run out of facts. The first one is below the reviews.

by Alex Forbes



The bear wants to ride a unicorn!

photo A Forbes

MY FIRST choice this month is a non-fiction book: 'Shadowlands' by Matthew Green is a journey through the lost towns and villages in Britain. Green does an excellent job of weaving character, history and place together. Each chapter focuses on a different location, as we visit eight different Shadowlands, including a city that fell off a cliff and an abandoned village which now feels like it's full of the ghosts of the community that once was. A brilliant gift for historians, but equally enjoyable for those who want to try something different.

The children's pick is the latest in the Skandar series. The first in the series 'Skandar and the Unicorn Thief', was

a huge success, so we were very pleased when the sequel, 'Skandar and the Phantom Rider', arrived in the shop. The story joins Skandar as he starts his second year of Unicorn Riding School, but something bad is happening. Immortal Wild Unicorns are somehow being killed, and the prophets are predicting that a catastrophic event is coming. Meanwhile Skandar has his own problems with his sister and trying to get her enrolled in the Unicorn Riding School. A mark of a good children's book is if the kids like it. Jacob, the 11-year-old at home, loves this series. So much so, he read it twice through in a handful of days. The second in the series has really kicked on from

the foundations laid in the first book, and I can't wait to see what the kids of Caversham think of it. A great gift for those aged 9+.

Book Fact: Offset Lithography, or Offset Printing, is the most common way of printing books. However, one of its restrictions is that the books must have a total number of pages which are divisible by 8, 16 or 32 (depending on the printer). Sometimes there will be blank pages at the back of a book, or the author will be asked to add/cut words as required for the text to fit in the required number of pages.

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



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THIS IS NOW

Talor Clarke and Edward Chilvers

photo T Clarke

IF YOU WERE wondering what was happening when the hoardings went up at the corner of South Street and Prospect Street in the Autumn of 2021, Caversham Baptist Church were embarking upon a redevelopment, completed in September 2022.

Given its prominent location in the heart of Caversham, the church had a vision to create a facility that could be enjoyed by the worshipping congregation and community alike.

This included the purchase of a Steinway Boston GP-193 grand piano, a fitting addition in the redeveloped space. Saturday 15 April 2023 saw the first concert event: 'In This Now,' a Music and Art Experience and the collaboration of Edward Chilvers (Piano) and Talor Clarke (Photographic Images).

An audience of more than 80 people were invited to relax, remove their shoes and to walk around, listening from different vantage points, even underneath the piano, and to observe the images from different angles.

The visual artworks meshed beautifully with the music, which was largely improvised. In the second half, the audience were asked to participate: a roll of the dice influenced the pianist's next musical direction. This interactive experience combined pianistic virtuosity and stunning photographic art forms, the multi tempo and transcendent style of the music combining mesmerisingly with the visual display.

The reaction of the audience to the encouragement to relax was interesting, and the children especially, given the freedom to explore and move around, did not fidget or look bored. Rather, they embraced the experience with enthusiasm, eager to take their turn in rolling the dice and enjoying the opportunity to recline under the piano.

To find out more about Caversham Baptist Church see www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

and for booking enquiries email bookings@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk

WHAT'S ON in JUNE

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. Daily 8:00 to 17:00, Sunday 8:00 to 15:00.

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

Tuesdays – *Babies and Toddlers* – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. 10:00 - 11:30. 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

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

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. Enjoy a 3-mile circuit led by qualified Nordic Walking Instructor. Includes warm up and cool down exercises. Tel. 07931754096 or email Pat at Wirralbird@hotmail.com

Sundays – *Readifolk Song and Music Club* – 20:00 - 22:30 in the garden of Watlington House, RG1 4RA. £8 admission for performances, £3 on singing nights. See www.redifolk.co.uk.

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

Thursday 1 June – *Pang Valley Ramblers* – 19:00 Evening pub walk. A 3-mile walk starting at Thameside Promenade car park Caversham. First of several walks this month. For more information see: www.pvramblers.org.uk

Sunday 4 June – *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>

Wednesday 7 June – *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. Contact jeandhewitt@gmail.com for details.

Friday 9 June – *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

Saturday 10 June – *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 10 June – *Peppard Unplugged* – 19:30 at Peppard Memorial Hall. An evening of live music. For more information: email info@peppardunplugged.co.uk

Tuesday 13 June - Saturday 1 July – *Henry 1 at Reading Abbey* – The Rabble Theatre. For details see rabbletheatre.com/whats-on/

Sunday 18 June – *Glass Ensemble Ladies Chamber Choir* – 16:30 at the Church of Our Lady and St Anne, RG4 5AB. Tickets £12.50 in advance/£15 on the door/under 18s £5, price includes refreshments. Contact Susie on 07930 690 873 or asusied@btinternet.com

Wednesday 21 June – *Caversham Horticultural Society* – 19:30 at Caversham Baptist Church Hall. Lecture: Aspects of Fuchsias by Carol Grubler. Light Refreshments. £3 admission for non-members. www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/events.htm

Thursday 22 June – *Caversham Women's Institute* – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel. 01189 475176

Saturday 24 June – *A Concert for Charlie* – 19:00 at Highdown School, Emmer Green. In memory of Charlie Ilsey, providing gifts to children with brain tumours across Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Adults £10, under 16, £5. Concessions available.

Sunday 25 June – *Emmer Green 5 & 10K* – 10:00 Follows a multi-terrain course on lanes and footpaths with chip timing. Mini-Oak Challenge for children. See website for fees and registration: emmergreen10k.org.uk

Sunday 25 June – *Hymn Café* – 15:00 - 16:00 at Caversham Baptist Church. Relaxed café style setting with hymns, prayers, testimony and cake.



Artists & Makers Fair
Saturday 10 June
Caversham Methodist Church
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10.00 am - 4.00 pm
FREE ENTRY

www.artistsandmakersfairs.co.uk Tel: 0780 8966928

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 PLANNING Applications Committee on 29 March approved three applications for **Reading Golf Club**. These include 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 the committee meeting 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 of this had not been assessed and CADRA continues to express concern. A review process for the order is to be set out, in agreement with Ward Councillors. The application for the **Drews** site was approved, retaining part of the old Malthouse building. The application for **retirement housing on Henley Road** is expected to be considered 31 May. The application for a **5G mast** at the junction of Henley Road and Donegal Close was refused. There are new applications for a mast at Henley Road/ All Hallows Road and St Peters Hill. A revised application for 1a North Street through to **3 Prospect Street** would increase the number of flats and add a third storey on Prospect Street. An application in Caversham Park would involve felling **The King's Spy Oak**, thought to be 700 years old.

Work is underway to review the **Reading Local Plan** and to develop a **joint Local Plan for South Oxfordshire and the Vale of the White Horse**. The **Reading Local Transport Plan** is expected later this year.

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Happy Wanderer explores

CLIFTON, SURREY, SUSSEX ...AND VICTORIA

THE ARTICLE in the February edition about the Clifton Arms pub asked if anyone knew the origin of the pub's name, and the reason for the naming of Sussex Place, across the road. The challenge was hard to resist!

The first record of a 'Clifton' in Caversham seems to be a newspaper report in February 1864, when an Edward Walden was living in Clifton Terrace. The bicentenary history of Brakspear's Henley Brewery says that in the same year, William Brakspear bought the Clifton Arms beerhouse, suggesting that the beerhouse was already there. So when we read in the 'Berkshire Chronicle' of 1 September 1866 that, "On Thursday last a new licence was granted for the Clifton Arms by the Henley magistrates," the words 'new licence' probably mean there had been a previous licence for the beerhouse. Between 1864 and 1866, the brewery must have rebuilt it, much bigger, with bay windows and tile-hanging.

The completion of the suspension bridge between Bristol and Clifton was causing a stir in 1864, and the progress and eventual opening were reported on in the Reading papers, so that it seems likely that the name was chosen because Clifton was in the news, and was a 'classy' place.

Across the road from the pub and terrace was, for a short time, Clifton Road. It was laid out around 1900 by the local developer, J. C. Fidler but, by 1906, a new road was being laid out, Clifton Park Road, between St Anne's Road and The Mount. By 1911, Clifton Road had become Wolsey Road, after Cardinal Wolsey the founder of Cardinal College, Oxford, which became Christ Church College when the cardinal fell out of favour with Henry VIII. The college owned Christchurch Meadow, at the end of the road.

Between the Fox and Hounds pub and Nicholas the estate agents on the corner of Wolsey Road are three rows of houses – Sussex Place (Nos. 45-41), Victoria Place (39-33), and Surrey Place (31-21).

Sussex Place has a small porch over the central doorway, and the

name 'Sussex Place' painted on the brickwork, above and to the left of the door. I haven't yet discovered the reason for the name. There was another Sussex Place, a row of houses on King's Road, Reading, between the Factory Bridge and Orts Road.

The name of Victoria Place now seems to be forgotten – a row of four houses with railings in front. They have what were known as 'area steps' going down to the kitchens in the basements, as well as steps up to the front doors.

Surrey Place, pictured here, has an archway in the middle, above which is a stone tablet with the name of the row carved into it. In 1862, the houses were described as 'lately erected' when Richard Talbot advertised them for sale. He had come from Rotherhithe, which at the time was in Surrey, and was in business as a barge-builder and timber merchant at Caversham Bridge Wharf, on the Reading side of the river. I wonder if the builder of Sussex Place had come from somewhere in Sussex?



Surrey Place

photo Happy Wanderer

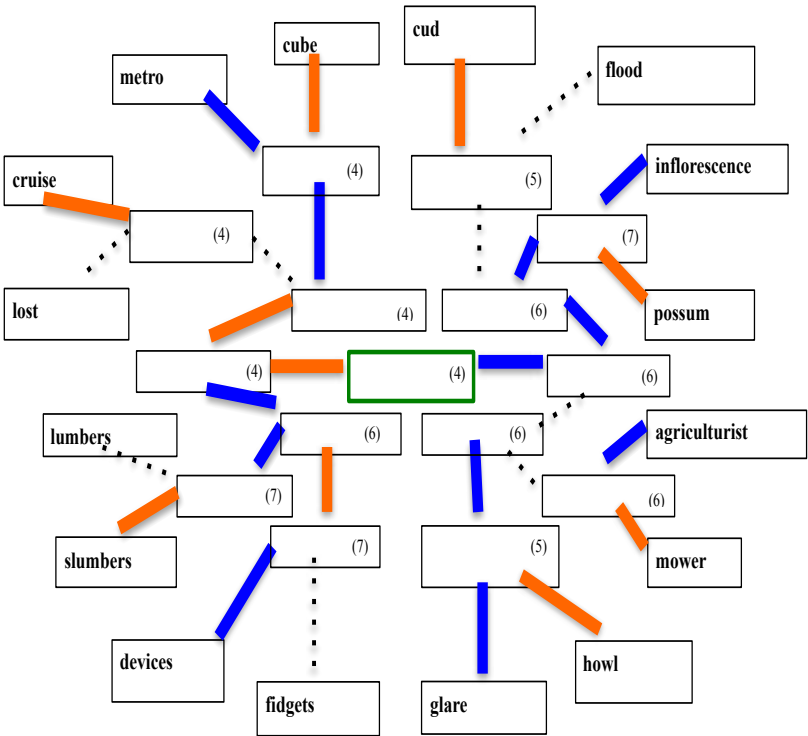
Puzzle Corner

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 15

EMMER GREEN BUSINESSES

Can you find 19 local businesses here?

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CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

SINCE FEBRUARY, we have been featuring the importance of volunteers in our community. This month, as we mark our 700th edition, we put the focus on our own band of volunteers who produce, distribute, and deliver the Caversham Bridge.

Since its first publication in 1964, the Caversham Bridge has depended on a team of people who give their time to support this community publication. We have nearly 100 people involved in the distribution and delivery of the paper. The papers arrive from the printers on a pallet and are collected for onward distribution by a couple of drivers, who each pass on batches to about half a dozen distributors. They in turn will drop the papers off to between 6-12 individuals, who deliver them to our subscribers.

Our deliverers also collect subscriptions from those who prefer to pay by cash or cheque, often stopping to chat for a few minutes as they do so.

As a company and a charity, we depend on a small number of volunteers to act as Board Members and Directors, taking responsibility for the running of the organisation and ensuring we comply with both company and charity law. Several of our directors have served for ten or more years, and our current Treasurer, Joan Belcher, is only our second since 1964! We are supported by a few volunteers who undertake specific



roles, including our Advertising Manager, Alan Wright, Subscriptions Volunteer, Carey Clifford, and Social Media Volunteer, Jean Harper.

We have a team of regular writers, artists, photographers, editors and proof-readers who live in our area and give their time freely. Without them there would be no paper!

To complete the picture, the paper is designed for us professionally, and printed by a major news printer in Lincolnshire.

If you would be interested in playing a part in the future of the Caversham Bridge, we would be pleased to hear from you. In particular, we are looking for someone with marketing or advertising experience to take on the advertising manager role, and someone who could manage our postal subscriptions. To find out more, please contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org or leave a message on our answerphone, 0118 328 2754



text and photo Phil Chatfield

EATING FOR VICTORY

text and photos
Cynthia Martin



WHEN RATIONING ended in 1954 it was found that, despite years of privation, average Britons were far healthier than those of previous generations, and nutritionists now credit a wartime diet founded on vegetables and grains. Only small amounts of meat and fats figured in the wartime menu, and these ingredients were stretched to add flavour, rather than forming a main course.

The recipe below is adapted from a pamphlet produced by the Ministry of Food, which enjoined all good citizens to eat healthy, in order to stay strong and contribute to the war effort. In today's economy, these clever recipes aren't merely nostalgic, but surprisingly relevant and useful.

NB: I purchased a small bag of powdered egg from Amazon for £4.99. To the recipe below, fancifully entitled Spanish Omelette, I added two ounces of thawed left-over ham. Everything else is strictly by the book.

Dried Eggs

The Ministry of Food dried egg is pure fresh egg with no additions, and nothing but the moisture taken away. It is pure egg, spray dried.

- 1 level tbs. egg powder + two tbs. water = 1 egg.
- Mix the egg into a smooth paste with half the water.
- Beat until lumps have been removed.
- Add the remaining water and beat again.



Spanish Omelette

- 2 eggs (reconstituted)
- 8 oz grated mixed vegetables
- A small piece of chopped leek or parsley
- Salt and pepper
- 1½ oz margarine or dripping

Method

- Beat the eggs
- Heat the fat in a frying pan and fry vegetables and leek until tender
- Add the eggs, water and seasoning
- Stir until the eggs are set and serve flat without folding

(Ministry of Food, May 1944)

Result:

Egg powdering technology must really have advanced since the war because, even while mixing with water, the 'eggs' smelled nice. My spouse not only pronounced it 'edible', but kept wandering into the kitchen and eventually ate three-quarters of the pan.

Verdict: Try it!

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Clear the air indoors



by Tricia Marcouse

ALMOST EVERY ad break on TV these days seems to contain an ecstatic person enjoying weeks of super-fragrance from their clothes, furniture, old socks... with clouds of scented loveliness pervading the living space. But there are no adverts about the impacts on indoor air quality of cleaning spray solvents, particulates from open fires, Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) from cooking with gas, mould spores due to condensation, and general dust particles in the air from dusting.

A report for DEFRA in 2022 identified that indoor air quality can be worse than outdoors (unless you live by a very busy road). But there was little data to quantify impacts on health, and more detailed and regular research was needed to assess practical solutions for different housing stock.

There were several key messages. Firstly, don't waste your money on anything that deliberately

puts extra chemicals or particulates into the indoor space, such as air fragrances and candles. Secondly, move away from using aerosols, whether for deodorants or polish, and revert to a liquid or cream formula. Thirdly, make sure that you ventilate the kitchen when cooking, particularly if cooking on gas, to reduce moisture in the house as well as particulates. If you have an extractor fan, use it, or simply open the window.

...open those windows...

Most importantly, retain or reintroduce your COVID-19 ventilation routines and let the less polluted air from outside into the house. New homes built to Passivhaus standards will have mechanical ventilation systems with heat recovery installed, and you could choose to install one of these. Easier and quicker is just to establish a routine, for example, opening the windows during breakfast.

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Supporting local gardeners

BEANPOLE DAY at Caversham Court on 22 April this year was busy from opening time at 10:00 until the drizzle started at 14:30. Forty-six bundles of hazel beanpoles, cut from local woodlands as part of their conservation management programmes, headed out of the site to allotments and gardens, along with bags full of plants. Tomatoes, courgette and herbs sold well, alongside replacement herbaceous plants and wildflowers.

People were encouraged to grow their own, with a seed swap stall run by Reading Food Growing Network, to purchase Fair Trade goods, and to assist in conservation and climate change actions by Econet and the Tree Wardens. Friends of the Earth and Global Justice led the conversations on wider environmental issues. Homemade cakes and fudge disappeared rapidly, with all money raised headed for the Ukraine appeal.

The most common topic of conversation was just how many plants in everyone's garden and greenhouse had died during the cold spell this winter or the soggy March!

Beanpole Day is organised each year by Econet. Please look on their website for the next practical tasks in local sites such as Clayfield Copse and for other activities at www.econetreading.org.uk

Tricia Marcouse



Beanpoles away

photo P Chatfield



Beanpoles all sold

photo J Oliver



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SHOW TIME

BY LES COOPER



Delphiniums at Wisley Show 2022
photo E Cooper

I HAVE always enjoyed horticultural shows, and one I remember well was in 1959. It was the famous Chelsea Flower Show and I went to look at the magnificent stands exhibited by the likes of Suttons Seeds, Carters, Allwoods and many others. My interest then in delphiniums was nil, but I did remember my Dad, a good gardener, once growing some lovely blue spikes. But it was a fleeting attraction.

At Chelsea, as I strolled towards the main marquee I probably didn't know a delphinium from a dahlia.

On one stand a book attracted my attention. I went to study it. A man asked me, "Are you interested in delphiniums?" I mumbled something like, "A bit". Then I asked, "What is this book?" He gave me an odd look. "It's the Yearbook of the Delphinium Society." "It looks good, can I buy one?" "For ten shillings and sixpence you can become a member of the Delphinium Society, then you will get this book for free." Although this was not something I was expecting to spend money on, I did dig deep and

handed over my ten-shilling note and a sixpenny coin.

The book was worth every penny, and I read it from cover to cover. I was married the following year and, although I faithfully renewed my membership, my interest in the Society was minimal. However, I started to grow delphiniums, with limited success. But to be fair, other concerns, like two young sons, took precedence.

...turned to stormy showers...

One year the gods looked with favour on my delphiniums, and I decided to enter the Delphinium Society Annual Show in London. The moment my entry form dropped into the pillar box the weather, which had been very pleasant, turned to stormy showers.

On the day before the show, the sun shone brightly as I made my way to work. My plan was to get home early, cut the delphinium spikes and pack them in long fluorescent tube boxes to carry them to Westminster by train. What could possibly go wrong? Everything.

That afternoon I saw black clouds gathering, and called my wife urgently. "It's pouring with rain. Can you cut the delphiniums?" "Which ones?" "Any that look any good." When I arrived home, Eunice had cut every delphinium spike. I selected the best and stuffed - I mean carefully placed them - in the box. I staggered to the bus stop only to see the bus moving away, so I walked a mile through the rain to Reading South station. Apart from the delphinium box falling over a few times, I arrived safely at Waterloo Station at 9:00. It was an arduous walk to the RHS Westminster Hall, and I arrived late, wet, bedraggled and thoroughly fed up. It was late, but luckily the Show Secretary helped me stage my poor, sad delphinium spikes.

I went home dispirited but became a little happier when, next day, I discovered my spikes had won a fourth-place award.

In a few weeks' time our local Garden Societies will be holding their shows, so make sure you take part. Who knows you too might get a fourth-place award.



Plant of the Month – June

by Louise Hampden

LIKE MOST gardeners, I tend to be drawn to the stars of the season – those plants which have flamboyance and charm whether through spectacular colour, scent, or bloom - like roses. There are, however, the supporting players that quietly get on with their jobs and cover the ground and skirts of the big players. I'm talking about ground cover.

Taken for granted and often unappreciated, ground cover plants do an amazing job of acting as a living mulch by keeping the soil moist and, in some cases, holding the ground together on sloping ground, preventing slipping. One such plant, the *Astrantia*, is well worth adding to the garden.

In summer the *Astrantia*, or its common name, Hattie's Pin Cushion, is one such supporting player and comes in a myriad of shades from white to dark red. I bought one plant, *Astrantia* major 'Shaggy', at a flower show over twenty-five years ago, and it has faithfully returned year on year, seeded itself about, been dug up and divided, and still remains happily flowering with



Astrantia major 'Shaggy'

its white flowers in partial shade at the foot of a shrub rose.

My new love is *Astrantia* 'Roma' which is pink. I've planted this one in gaps and partnered it with a Clematis which is currently climbing up an obelisk. As Clematis like to have their feet in shade, the *Astrantia* will do a useful job in providing this. I also have plans to place some at the front of a border where more tender perennials were wiped out by the recent severe winter frosts.

Astrantias will grow in any soil and in sun or partial shade, although I have found that partial shade suits the red-flowered varieties better. After flowering, they can be cut back and will grow new fresh leaves and occasionally flower again.

The flowers do resemble a tiny pin cushion, hence the common name. An added bonus is they are extremely attractive to wildlife and will regularly be visited by bees and all manner of insects stocking up on nectar.

Their seedheads are also pretty, and it is worth

keeping the flowers on until they set seed when you can either collect them or let nature do the job, allowing the plant to drop its own seed. The following spring the seedlings will appear, and you can either move these or pot them up and grow them on ready to plant out in the autumn.



Astrantia 'Roma'

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Community Connections

by Caroline Gratrix

This month we meet
Adrian Raffill –
Caversham Writers



ADRIAN IS a Londoner, born and bred, but moved to Reading for work in the 1990s. At Foster Wheeler he was an IT consultant specialising in communications; he travelled



Adrian Raffill

the world installing networks in Egypt, Singapore, Thailand and Australia. Now, instead of providing the systems that people communicate over, he writes the stuff that gets communicated – he is a freelance copywriter for technology companies.

He also runs Caversham Writers, a group providing mutual support for anyone interested in writing. They've been going since 2018, when Canadian author Crystal Bourque moved to Caversham and wanted to connect with local writers. When Crystal moved home the following year, Adrian took over running it. He says, "Writing can be a lonely endeavour - ultimately it's just you and the blank page - so it's wonderful to feel you're part of a wider community of support and collaboration. I wanted to keep that going."

Caversham Writers are open to all writers in all genres and at all levels of

experience - published or not, aspiring to be published or just an enthusiastic hobbyist. All are welcome – their motto is, "If you write, you're a writer". They meet every Wednesday evening either in person at Fourbears Books in Caversham or online via Zoom. Adrian told me, "We have members all over the world who joined during lockdown, and hearing their diverse voices and experiences has enriched the group enormously."

They have writing sessions, feedback and critique meetings, social events and, occasionally, author events where Adrian will interview an author about their writing process and path to publication. Local author, Kate Poels will be talking to the group in July at Fourbears.

The sessions are free to join and free to attend. You can find Caversham Writers on Meetup.com:

www.meetup.com/caversham-writers/

How long have you lived in RG4?

Over 25 years.

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

Quattro was the first place I ate in back in 1992 and it's still my favourite. And the courtyard garden at The Collective is a great place for coffee.

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

Walk – walk everywhere. The human body evolved for movement, we're not supposed to be sedentary. And walking is great for your mind as well as your body – win/win!

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

People have an innate need for connection and belonging, but to cultivate that you need to have purpose (what is our community for? Define it and then communicate it) and to be inclusive - don't leave anyone out or behind.

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

A literary festival! Henley, Oxford and even Wargrave have one, why not us?

A SILVER LINING

by Phil Chatfield

FOR CLAIRE and Jodie from NOOD Store and the Caversham Artisan and Farmers Market, a quiz night at Alto Lounge ended in a nightmare when they came home to find their house filled with smoke and fire alarms going off.



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A fault with a light fitting had caused a fire to start in the ceiling. Prompt attendance by the Fire Service limited the damage. However, there was smoke everywhere, the floor needed to be replaced, and they lost their cat. Her body was found by the Fire Service, and they were told smoke inhalation had taken her. When they checked their house insurance, they discovered it had just run out. Like many of us, they had been busy and had not got round to renewing it. As Jodie said, "We all think it won't happen to us..."



Fire damage

photo Jodie

But friends have rallied round, providing temporary accommodation and support. Their builder came the next morning to assess the damage and had replaced the damaged timberwork in a few days. In many ways, smoke damage is harder to deal with, as it is difficult to remove the smell from clothing and bedding, and every surface needs to be cleaned.

... people's kindness and support...

Talking to Jodie, she emphasised the importance of making sure your insurance is kept up to date and hopes others will learn from their misfortune, saying "I hope nothing like this happens to anyone else". Things could have been worse. Their dog survived and the damage could have been more extensive. But most of all, they have been amazed by people's kindness and support, which is helping them to recover. Jodie commented, "We are not used to needing help and are so grateful for the support we have had from our community."

If you would like to help them to get back on their feet, there is a fund-raising page on Go Fund Me at <https://gofund.me/e42b8691>

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SUPERSTAR LIZ ENCOURAGES OTHERS TO FIND THEIR MOJO



As lead singer with Boney M, Liz Mitchell has thrilled millions since the 70s with hits including *Brown Girl In The Ring*, *Rasputin*, and *Rivers of Babylon*. When not touring, Liz concentrates on the foundation she set up which helps young people to find their own unique gifts and paths in life, as she explained to Elestr Lee



THE FIREWORKS and fizz which mark the closing night of the Henley Festival will have an added sparkle this year, when 70s disco-funk stars Boney M take to the Floating Stage - fronted by a certain resident of our neighbourhood, Liz Mitchell, founder member of the superstar group.

Liz has lived in this area for many decades. Born in Jamaica, her family moved to Harlesden in London when she was 11. When her parents split during the 70s, her mother wanted to live near family in Wallingford; once Liz married her husband Thomas Pemberton, the couple settled near Caversham and raised their three now grown-up children here. Liz has long been an active member of the New Testament Church of God, opposite Waitrose.

"Boney M appeared at the Henley

Festival for the first time last summer," Liz says. "This year they invited us back. I'm a bit nervous to be performing so close to home, as I have always lived so quietly in the area."

In 2022, Boney M were named 'the most successful black pop group ever' due to a claimed 22 BILLION social media hits for their ever-popular songs (*Daddy Cool* even made it on to the playlist for King Charles' Coronation!), a fact that bemuses Liz, who comments, "I'm not a show-bizzy person at all. I have always said, I didn't ever set out to become a star, I just enjoy singing!"

Liz reveals that she never took singing

lessons as such: "My mother and aunt – all my family – are good singers, we sang in church. Singing was just something you did, I didn't ever think of it as leading to making a living from it," she says. "But there is something about the songs of Boney M. I never listen to our music at home, but I am amazed at how our grandchildren have searched it out, and they listen to it."

"It makes you feel good, it is so alive!"

Everyone is gifted

As a teenager, Liz auditioned for the cast of the rock musical *Hair*, dancing and singing in London and transferring with the show to Berlin. She stayed in Germany, joining the rock gospel group Les Humphries Singers – and this led to an invitation to join the newly-formed Boney M in 1976. Ever since, Liz has toured the world (nowadays billed as 'Boney M featuring Liz Mitchell') as well as making several solo albums of her own.

Liz regards her voice as a gift, and passionately believes that everyone has one, which sometimes they don't realise. "Everyone is gifted," she says. "But it isn't always simple to discover your own power. We really should help children to find their purpose, as it transforms their lives."

To this end, Liz has set up a charitable foundation which takes children to Gambia,

where they have the chance to gain an in-depth experience of Black History, while embracing the path so many have taken to becoming British. "We have raised money for children from a range of backgrounds who are somehow disconnected from society, and the experience helps open them up to their purpose. We have had so many successes with these children. For example, one of the girls who went to Gambia has now become a doctor," Liz explains.

"We encourage the children to find out more about their history, because many West Indian children have very little idea of their heritage. But they also have the chance to find out how they came to Britain, and to celebrate their Britishness."

"I think this is the sort of work I would always have wanted to become involved in, especially once my own children were at school. A lot of good things have happened to me, and that was because my own grandparents were good to other people. In 2004, I made a solo gospel album called *Let It Be* and this is now the name of my foundation which aims to continue my work with these children."

Ordained as reverend

Liz frequents both the New Testament Church of God in Caversham as well as Power Centre Church in Mitcham, London. In 2006 she was approached by the ministry of Power Centre Church, and invited to be ordained as a reverend. "The only obstacle would be if someone in the congregation had any reason not to ordain me," she recalls. "But no-one did! I was ordained by Archbishop Dr William Wood and Archbishop Mercy Wood of Power Centre, and nowadays I preach when I am invited to."

Liz firmly believes that serving others in the community is fundamental to a happy existence. And, in the meantime, despite more than four decades in the entertainment industry, she is continuing to delight audiences worldwide with her voice. "The whole purpose of my life has been singing," she says. And is she really nervous of appearing at the Henley Festival? "I am never nervous!" she laughs. "I trust the audience will really enjoy the music!"



Find out more:

<https://henley-festival.co.uk/artist/boney-m/>

<https://letitbefoundation.co.uk/>



Boney M, featuring original lead singer Liz Mitchell, is performing at Henley Festival on Sunday July 9
www.henley-festival.co.uk



Drawing by Janina Maher

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Janina Maher's drawing this month is of the building that stretches between St Anne's Church and Presbytery and St Anne's Primary School in South View Avenue. Today the building has been converted into a number of modern apartments – I will remember the major building work that involved raising the roof and constructing a new gable end to provide more accommodation. Originally the building was a Catholic convent belonging to the Visitation Sisters of Ghent in Belgium. In 1902 the sisters were invited to establish a community in Caversham, mainly to provide teachers for St Anne's School next door. At its height there were eighteen sisters living there and worshipping in the lovely chapel housed in the building. Sadly, in the 1970s the number of nuns declined, those who remained became elderly, and the last two sisters left the convent in 2005.

As a resident of South View Avenue, I came to know the sisters well. My children went to the school, and many local parents will remember the diminutive figure of Sister Anne, as our children attended her class. Sister Sheila fed our cat when we went on holiday, and once I was called upon to rescue a group of elderly nuns who had locked themselves out – I climbed over the fence, up onto the roof of an extension, and through an open window – finding myself in a nun's bedroom! I received gratitude in the form of a blessing. The nuns were a real part of the community – often providing welcome food for the homeless who knocked on their door. The convent rooms were regularly used for local activities, as were the delightful gardens.

The conversion to apartments has been sympathetically done and the character of the building remains. A hint of its previous use is an empty niche above a door which once housed a religious statue. The front garden, that the nuns always proudly kept groomed, is still well maintained.

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First Impressions Matter

Is AI the future of CV writing?

by Laura Harmsworth



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a term we're hearing more of but, if you've not heard of it, here's a brief outline from a luddite!

THERE ARE a few chatbots including OpenAI, ChatGPT and Google Bard. These understand and generate answers to text questions, like a friendly robot. They have been trained on large amounts of information including data from the internet, books, and social media. I'll refer to them as ChatGPT as it's the only one I've played around with (got some good menu ideas!), and it is the most common.

One way it's being used is in generating CVs and cover letters. You can give ChatGPT the job description/advert that you want to apply to, together with your CV, and ask it to optimise your CV around the key words.

Benefits

- Generates text, ideas, and guidance
- Takes seconds to create content

- Assists in overcoming writer's block and can improve writing by suggesting different words and phrases, similar to a thesaurus
- Identifies key words from the job description and advert
- Checks for typos and grammar (use alongside spell check, Read Aloud, Grammarly etc)
- Free/low cost

Limitations

- Unemotional and lacks creative skills, so won't capture your voice, personality, or context
- Can fabricate points about your experience and qualifications
- A human CV writer will delve deeper and ask the right questions
- Data privacy concerns
- Plagiarism – if you copy and paste content for your CV from ChatGPT without making any changes, it won't sound like you and recruiters may well detect this and/or use one of multiple tools that detect the use of chatbots

- Ethics - whilst using a CV writer could be considered unethical, I would disagree, as a good CV writer will work collaboratively with you. You have to put some work in, and it makes you think and talk about your abilities and achievements – all great practice for interviews

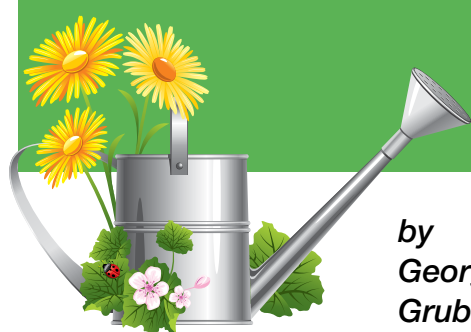
My thoughts

Whilst AI has a place in writing your CV, use it with caution and as a tool to assist you. You can start with AI suggestions to help guide you, add your personal touch, then run through AI again to check for typos. I would suggest that AI is not yet at the point where it can fully replace a human in writing a CV. I'd love to know your thoughts!

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



by
George
Grubb

HUNDREDS OF plants found their way to new homes early in May, raising more than £1,800 for the Red Cross Ukraine Appeal and Water Aid. Once again,



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Pam and Phil Chatfield opened their garden in South View Avenue, and stocked the tables with their own and donated plants, including some splendid hanging baskets. Pam had grown more than 100 tomato plants, which had all been sold by the end of the second day!

They also sold Fair Trade food and crafts from around the world, as well as Pam's crafts, products from the Shea Butter Cottage store on Henley Road and greetings cards sold in aid of Launchpad from local artist, Liz Real. Plenty of tea, coffee and cakes were enjoyed and friendships renewed. Pam and Phil would like to thank everyone who helped with donations of plants and cakes, washed up cups, provided advice about plants, and gave the plants new homes. Plans for next year's plant sales are already in hand!

Follow the Caversham Fair Trade Facebook page
[@cavershamfairtrade](https://www.facebook.com/cavershamfairtrade) for details of future sales.



A much depleted marquee

photo G Grubb

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BOTTLING IT UP

text and photo by Fred Smith

LOCAL RESIDENTS were perplexed when arriving at the Co-op store in South View Avenue to deposit bottles for recycling in April as the bottle banks had been removed. Although the details are not clear, it seems the council had been asked to remove the banks by the site owner. This follows on from the loss of the bottle banks in Buckingham Drive in Emmer Green. As a result, the only glass recycling facilities in our area are at St Martin's Precinct (adjacent to Iceland), Hill's Meadows Car Park off George Street, Thameside Promenade off Richfield Avenue, and at the Milestone Centre in Caversham Park Village.

Reading Borough Council is keen to improve its recycling rate but, to do so, the lack of facilities for glass containers will need to be addressed.



Hill's Meadow Bottle Bank, George Street



Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Life's work

IF YOU have been in a children's playground recently, you may have seen a distracted parent absorbed in an intense phone conversation, swatting a child away.

Sure, some are ordering tickets for the school play, but most are not – they are working. They might have knocked off officially, be on leave, or it might be a weekend. But as surely as if they were in the office, they are at work.

Many of us know that tug of war: the child's pressing need is pitted against a complex issue on the other end of the phone demanding every neuron we can muster.

Our forebears would not recognise the ephemeral way we work today, or the absence of boundaries around it. But powerful new technologies have disrupted last century's clearer, more stable, predictable limits on the time and place of work. This is called 'availability creep', where employees feel they need to be available all the time to answer emails, calls or simply to deal with their workload.

So work is now untethered from a workplace or a workday. This has serious implications for our mental health, work-life stress, productivity, and a fair day's work for a fair day's pay.

Of course, flexibility is not all bad. Research collecting evidence for decades about the case for greater flexibility for employees notes silver linings in a pandemic that achieved almost overnight what decades of data-gathering could not; new ways of working that can suit their households.

However, this change has a dark side. Digital work and work-from-home have shown themselves to drive long hours of work, and to pollute rest and family time. Poor sleep, stress, burnout, degraded relationships, and distracted carers are part of the collateral damage.

The 'right to disconnect' has taken several forms in recent decades. Some large companies now simply stop out-of-hours or holiday emails or calls.

Some countries now regulate the right nationally. Since 2017, French companies employing more than 50 people have been required to engage in an annual negotiation with employee representatives to regulate digital devices to ensure respect for rest, personal life and family leave.

The European Parliament is setting up a vote to grant workers the right to refrain from email and calls outside working hours, including when on holiday, as well as protection from adverse actions against those who disconnect.

Given that many women, low paid, private sector, un-unionised and relatively powerless workers in smaller workplaces have little chance of negotiating or enforcing a right to disconnect, it is vital the right to disconnect applies across the whole workforce.

The Scottish government is leading the UK's commitment to undertaking 'meaningful discussion' on providing its employees with a right to disconnect.

While policy is being worked on, we could try to educate ourselves better about our own rights to disconnect, and take daily steps to ensure that our lives register a balance between work and rest, between activity and leisure, between doing and being.

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