

Caversham Bridge

No 705

www.cavershambridge.org

November 2023

Honouring the past, preparing for the future

| photo and text by Phil Chatfield

NOVEMBER, the month of remembrance, is for many a time to reflect on the past. It is also when we start to look forward to Christmas and New Year.

This month, we have another 20-page edition, which includes a focus on education, with articles on two local schools (p10) and, for those looking forward to children starting school, details of open days at local primary schools (p11). This is an important time of the year for our local traders, and we feature two familiar shops in Janina's painting this month (below). The Caversham Traders Association are gearing up for Christmas, with preparations for their late-night opening event on 8 December. We provide thoughts on the ways we can all support local businesses (p14). In addition, we look at a local craft producer making stained glass, and the owner of the new Pop Classics shop in St Martin's Precinct

(p15). Throughout the paper there are, as usual, adverts from local businesses of all kinds. Do make use of these and, if you contact them, please mention the paper.

Our Creative Caversham article this month (p16) features local author Larisa Brown, whose powerful book, *The Gardener of Lashkar Gar* is reviewed by Alex Forbes (p17). We also report on recent events with their roots in the past. In Mapledurham, bellringers celebrated the 400th anniversary of the oldest bell at the church with a special peal (p18), and the Caversham Holiday Group, started in 1964, tell us about their latest trip (p8).

Regular features include a look at the Razor-Strop Fungus by Happy Wanderer (p7), a planning update from the Caversham and District Residents Association (p6), and an energy-saving EcoTip (p9).

We are always pleased to hear from our readers. You can contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org or care of Church House, Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX.

The Local Scene by Martin Andrews

THE TWO businesses which are the subject of Janina's drawing are prominently positioned at the heart of Caversham on the corner of Church Street and Prospect Street. Neil Asbury took over Homecrafts in 2011, and Nichola Bowley established Define Hair in 2014.

They share a detached building which seems to date from the beginning of the twentieth century, as numbers 46 and 48 Church Street appear in street directories at about that time. In 1915, number 46 was Rogers' Stores, pork butchers and provision merchants, and next door at 48 was Allen & Co, boot repairers (by 1921 it had been taken over by John Fallon who was in the same business). By 1952, 46 had become occupied by H Taylor, dairyman, and 48 was a confectioners run by Albert Slade and, in 1970, the shop is listed as Scholes & Sons Ltd, Bakers. Meanwhile number 46 became Ivans' Building Supplies in the 1960s and, in 1967, it turned into a hardware store named 'Homecrafts'. In the 1970s the business was taken over by Ray Barrett who ran it for over 40 years until Neil took over in 2011.

12,000 lines in stock

What would we do without Homecrafts? Neil has turned it into an Aladdin's cave of everything you need for the home and garden. Forget the big DIY stores, just pop into Homecrafts and they will have just the thing you want and you will come out with much more. The range of stock has increased, and Neil estimates he has around 12,000 lines. His favourite phrase is 'The little shop that thinks big'. A display board outside the shop lists what is inside – everything for DIY and gardening, but also pet supplies, cooking equipment, haberdashery and much more. Equally important, Neil and his staff are on hand to give expert advice.

As a bald and bearded man, I was relieved to feel welcome next door at Define Hair. Nichola told me that there had previously been several hairdressers at number 48 before she took over, and she has maintained it as a classic hair salon which also offers beauty therapy, waxing and nails – and specialises in 'wedding hair'. Nichola and her staff create a warm and friendly atmosphere, and I am sure many ladies in Caversham appreciate their skills.

Homecrafts and Define Hair

Janina has produced three 2024 calendars featuring her characterful artwork, for Caversham, Reading and Henley. These are on sale at Fourbears Books and through her website, <https://janinamaher.artweb.com> – Her book, *A Stroll Through Caversham* is also available.



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Make Space to Thank Our Creator God



Talking Point

by
Rev Andy Storch

AS WE enter November, so our memories of summer fade, and we turn to autumn proper, with Bonfire night and Remembrance Sunday. We have just left October behind, the month for Harvest Festivals. The harvest was always brought in right at the very end of the summer (hence the August school holidays), and offers a time to stop and give thanks for all we receive.

This Harvest-tide I have been saying goodbye to the three churches of Caversham, Thameside and Mapledurham parish, namely St John's, where I started, St Peter's and St Margaret's, for which I had oversight. I have had a fantastic four years plus in this Caversham parish. As I move to pastures new in the Hambleden Valley, just beyond Henley, I know I will miss all the folk I have met during my time ministering here. You are a wonderful community.

As I give thanks for you, so you can all give thanks for one another. It is a vibrant place to live, and much is going on. Harvest Festivals offer perfect opportunities to count your blessings, and Caversham has so many. Don't take each other for granted, but value one another, your history and your community ties, your churches and your charities, your sports and your arts.

I received a warm welcome as I arrived and a sincere send-off as I leave. May that Caversham hospitality continue. As God has blessed the town with peace and prosperity, so I pray that you will go on being generous with your time, your money and your talents, helping

those around you, volunteering, giving to and sustaining so many worthy causes and community groups.

But may I urge us all, as we are warned in Deuteronomy, 'When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them... your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the LORD your God...' Let's make space to thank our Creator God. Whether in church or not, we remind ourselves we enter the world with nothing, and leave it with nothing. We thank Him for what He has given us in the present. Let's never take it for granted! Thank you.

Rev Andrew Storch

Curate, Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish



Andy's last service at St John's

photo P Cuthbert

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.cavershamparkurc.com

Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube

Details on their web site at:

<https://cpurc.org.uk/live-stream>

METHODIST CHURCH CAVERSHAM

Rev'd Jeongsook Kim

Tel: 0118 947 2223

Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592

Current services

Sunday – Caversham Heights Methodist Church,

Highmoor Road – 10:30 – (also available on YouTube)

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 December 2023 issue should be
submitted by 1 November and for the January 2024
edition by 1 December These should be e-mailed to:

editors@cavershambridge.org

Dates for advertising copy are 1 November for the
December 2023 issue and 1 December for the January
2024 issue. These should be e-mailed to:

advertising@cavershambridge.org



Caversham Bridge

Changes to subscriptions

by The Editors

HAVING considered the impact of rising costs, and feedback from our volunteer deliverers, we have decided to make changes to our subscriptions for 2024. Over the last few years, the costs of printing and delivering the Caversham Bridge have gone up. In addition, the paper has increased in size, with 2-3 20-page editions each year, incurring additional design and print costs.

At the same time, our volunteers have commented on the difficulties they encounter in collecting subscriptions in January, due to the dark evenings and poor weather. Because of these two factors we have decided to increase the cost to subscribers of the paper to £7 but to offer 13 editions for 2024 and 2025 for that price. Existing subscribers will not be charged for the January 2024 paper, meaning the new subscriptions will not be due until February 2024 and will last for 13 months, up to and including the February 2025 edition. Subscriptions for 2025 will be due in March of that year and will last 13 months, up to and including the March 2026 edition. From 2026, annual subscriptions will then continue to be due in April.

We hope you understand why we have made these

changes. The cover price will remain at £1, so the annual subscription continues to offer very good value for money. A small number of our subscribers pay by standing order, and we would be grateful if you could make the necessary changes to both amount and payment date. If you have already paid your subscription to the end of 2024, this will be extended to include the January and February 2025 editions.

So please note, subscriptions for 2024 will be due in February, and can be paid by bank transfer, or by cash or cheque to your deliverer. Payment details are as follows:

Cheques should be made out to Caversham Christian News for £7. Writing your postcode and house number or name on the back would be helpful.

For direct bank transfer our bank account details are:

The Caversham Christian News Ltd

Sort Code: 30-67-99

Account Number: 72808960

Please include your postcode and house number or house name as a reference! Last year several payments were received which did not contain address details, meaning we have been unable to allocate the payment to the subscriber.

IN THE NEWS

Daily Mirror sells out with local garden featured

CAVERSHAM resident, Dave Freeman, was surprised to find he and his Gosbrook Road garden were featured in the 2 October edition of the Daily Mirror.

Dave's daughter, Lucy, had sent photos of his garden to the Mirror's Community Corner. Lucy described how the garden, which had always been beautiful, had been 'taken to another level' following the death of his wife, Maggie, in 2021. Cornflowers were her mum's favourite flower and bloom in a part of the garden dedicated to her memory. News of the article spread on social media in the area and, possibly as a result, copies of the Mirror had sold out in local shops when neighbours looked for them!

Thanks to Caversham Bridge subscriber, Jane, for passing this on.
The Editors



The 89th Reading Scout group gearing up to help the local community to save money this Christmas.

Scout Christmas Post

by Robin Kent

IN A BID to help you this Christmas, the 89th Reading Scout group will once again be providing a Christmas Post service to the residents of Caversham, Caversham Heights, Emmer Green and Caversham Park Village.

The exact locations of our boxes are currently under wraps, but we will be announcing them on our website in the coming weeks. Each year we use opportunities like this to raise money for the benefit of both the community and the scouts at the 89th. Funds raised from previous postal collections have gone to many things, including the community defibrillator sited outside the 89th Scout HQ.

We will announce the recipient of the 2023 postal fund on 25 November, when our boxes will be open to you.

The Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers of the 89th are getting ready to help you spread the joy of Christmas through card giving to all your friends. So get writing those Christmas cards and look out for our bright red Scout post boxes across Caversham and Emmer Green.

Scout Post 2023 – Starts on 25 November 2023

Full details of postal box locations and how the service works will be available on our website: www.89th.org.uk

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Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

photo F Smith

All Souls' Service – Caversham Methodist Church

AT THIS time of the year, the Caversham Methodist Church invites you to a special service at its Gosbrook Road chapel. On Sunday 5 November at 10:30 we will remember family members or friends who are no longer with us. We think particularly of those who have died in the last year or two, who can be named if you wish. There will be time to reflect privately in the silence or together as candles are lit. All are very welcome to join us in a supportive and caring environment.

Brenda Caborn

A SAFE, CALM PLACE

by Myra Fowler



THE CAVERSHAM Drop In first opened its doors in March 2007. Our idea of a Christian Community Action Drop In became possible because Caversham Baptist Church offered the use of their premises free of charge. Local churches and Churches Together in Caversham have continued their support for us.

The Drop In runs every Wednesday between 12:00 and 14:00 at the Baptist Church. Our aim is to provide a safe, calm place for people whose lives are so often not safe or calm. The Drop In is staffed by a team of 10 people, mostly drawn from churches all over Caversham. We work together to provide a welcoming place for anyone in difficult circumstances. These

may be accommodation problems or financial difficulties, but there are lots of different reasons. We make no judgements and ask no questions, other than a first name. Some people just pop in for 15 minutes or so, some stay for the whole two hours. We have regulars and people we see only once.

We offer a cooked snack meal with a variety of menus. Sandwiches, cakes, biscuits and fruit are always available and, of course, hot and cold drinks. There is no charge.

To learn more about the work of Christian Community Action in Reading, visit their website at www.ccam.org.uk

You ARE welcome!

photo and article by Anna Clarke



HAVE YOU ever been invited to something and then, on later reflection, wondered: 'Did they really mean that? Do they really want me there?'

If you have, then you're not alone...

A recent piece of research into families with toddlers revealed that 44% of parents who received an invitation to a church event/service/activity were concerned as to whether they would really be welcome.

As someone heavily involved in church activities, this figure shocked me... to think that almost one in every two toddler parents I invite to something has a nagging doubt as to whether they would really be welcome horrified me! But then I started to think about things from their perspective...

Will there be space for me to bring a pushchair in? Can I breastfeed there? Is it ok to eat snacks there? What if my toddler makes loads of noise? Is there somewhere to change my baby? What time will it finish because I need to get back for nap time?

Suddenly that nagging 'Will I really be welcome?' thought becomes understandable.

So, in the run up to Christmas, the 'season of invitations', I want to encourage anyone reading this to know that YES, you really ARE welcome. And if you have questions like the above then ask away!

And you know what? God doesn't require us to come in our 'Sunday-best' and be in top form before coming. It was 'Whilst we were still sinners [that] Christ

died for us' (Romans Chapter 5, Verse 8). God knew we were messed-up individuals, and yet he still chose to show us the greatest love possible. He didn't wait till we had it all sorted to welcome us. He welcomes us as we are. So neither do we need to sort ourselves out before coming to church. Come as you are... snotty-nosed toddler and all! Because you ARE welcome.

And if you're the one doing the inviting, then help people to know that they are truly welcome. Wouldn't it be amazing if our Caversham churches were places that reflected the open-armed welcome that we receive from God?

What might you do to play a part in that?



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GABRIELE SCICLUNA



Will Writer Heads Upstairs

by Adrian Raffill, Caversham Writers

"I'M A WRITER, not an author," said Will Carver to the Caversham Writers at Fourbears Books on Thursday 28 September. Will had come to talk to our creative writing group to share his experiences in getting published, and to answer questions from members about his writing process. So, what is the difference between a writer and an author? For Will, a writer is more interested in the craft of writing than in the business of writing. Read any of the 11 books he has published so far and it's immediately apparent the craft is to the fore.

The Reading-based author (sorry, writer!) kicked off by giving us a reading from his new novel, *Upstairs at the Beresford*, a tale of the macabre goings-on at a grand old building, just outside the city, where any soul is welcome. It is a prequel to last year's first foray into horror, *The Beresford*. But Will Carver is difficult to categorise.

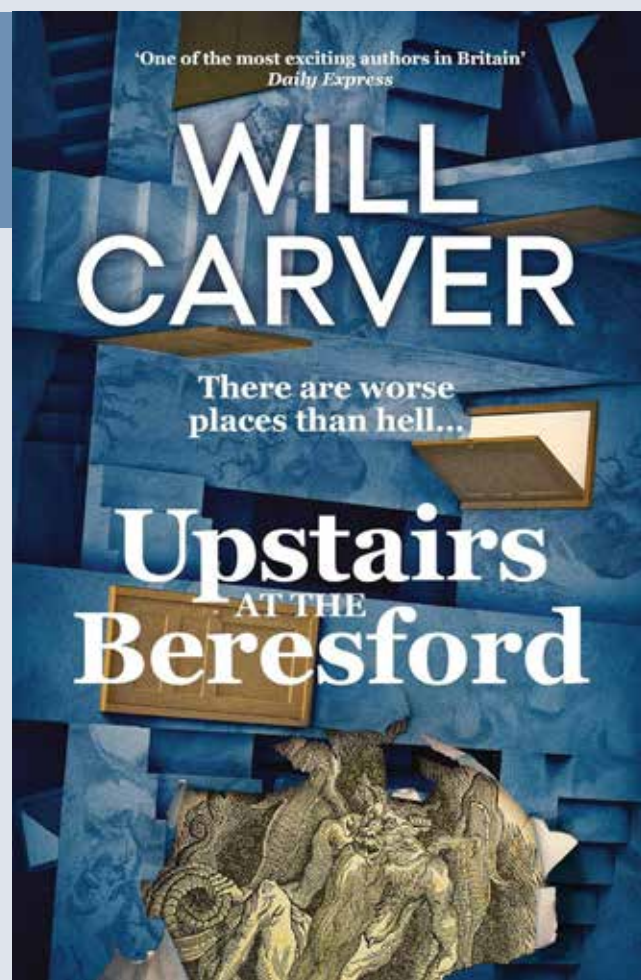
He is most often referred to as a crime or thriller writer, a legacy from his first three books, published by Random House. The January David series falls firmly into the crime genre, which Will was encouraged to pursue by his publisher. But despite critical acclaim for these, Will was let go. "I was in despair," he said, "My dream job had been taken away."

He took this as an opportunity to reinvent himself, and become the writer he wanted to be, rather than the one his publishers wanted. His subsequent novels are genre-busting cult classics which have been nominated for multiple awards, including the Guardian's Not the Booker Prize. In the Detective Pace series, DS Pace is often not even the main character. Instead, we get to meet an array of dark, compelling individuals who explore extremes of behaviour involving murder and addiction.

Carver uses these characters and situations to express his own irritations and preoccupations, which provide his stories with a furious narrative drive. He's learnt to slow the pace occasionally though, so as not to be 'in the face' of the reader. "I use humour to achieve this, you have to give them a break along the way."

Our members certainly had a lucky break when Will agreed to chat with us. His insightful approach to the craft of writing was a valuable lesson - we won't be changing our name to Caversham Authors any time soon!

Upstairs at The Beresford by Will Carver is published on Thursday 9 November.



Write to the editors

White Bryony

Following publication of our October edition, we received the following by email from John Roberts:

HAPPY WANDERER may be pleased to know that he has solved the problem of identification of a climber that appeared in my garden in Kidmore Road. I found it a few inches long, probably germinated from a bird dropping. It was obviously a climber, so I moved it to entwine amongst some shrubs. Thanks to the information in the article, it is now at the bottom of my green bin, joined by the root, of remarkable size in a few months. Next year any self-sown seedlings will be quickly dealt with. Additionally, I can report several sightings this year of Jersey Tiger moths in my garden and other areas nearby. My first ever sighting was in the garden in 2020, and another that year in Hemdean Road, near the shop now serving as our Post Office. It is a lovely moth to see in increasing numbers. My thanks to Happy Wanderer for increasing my knowledge of both plant and moth.



Reading Bach Choir Concert

by Kathy Munns

Reading Bach Choir is delighted to be revisiting St Andrew's Church for their next concert on Saturday 25 November; it is our regular rehearsal venue and we know lots of Caversham folk are among our audience. This time, we invite you to immerse yourself in the Renaissance and Baroque periods, with works from Tomas Luis Victoria – a Requiem composed in 1605 – and the master himself, J S Bach. We will sing his wonderful motet *Jesu, meine Freude* (Jesus, my joy), and combine these with a short piece by Heinrich Schütz, *Selig sind die Toten* (Blessed are the dead), composed in 1648. Do join us for some beautiful music.

Full details on the choir website
www.readingbachchoir.org.uk

Ooops! Cinema confusion

FOLLOWING his article on the Changing Face of Caversham in the October paper, Francis Sargent contacted us with a correction. He had erroneously swapped the names of the two cinemas situated on opposite sides of Church Street in Caversham.

The Regal was a short-lived cinema on the south side of the road on what is now the site of Waitrose, and was demolished. The Glendale was situated on the north side of the road and is now the New Testament Church of God.



Regal cinema, Caversham, closed in 1958



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WHAT'S ON in NOVEMBER

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/archives/category/around-caversham

Caversham Library – 09:00-17:00 Tuesday and Friday, 13:00-19:00 Thursday and 10:00-15:00 Saturday. Regular events include:

Rhymetimes for the little ones – so please book first! Every Tuesday at 10:15 and 11:15.

Games Club, Friday mornings 10:30-12:00. All adults welcome – refreshments!

Sit and Stitch 17:30-19:45, on 2nd and 4th Thursdays every month. Refreshments – come and be inspired.

Tel. 01189 375103 or see 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 every day.

Mondays – **Caversham Park Bridge Club** – at the Milestone Centre, 19:15 for 19:30 start.

Phone Lin 01183 348195 for further information. bridgewebs.com/cavershampark

Tuesdays – **Babies and Toddlers** – Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. Term time 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.

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

Wednesdays – **Caversham Writers** – Welcoming enthusiastic hobbyists and aspiring authors alike. Meeting weekly in person or via Zoom. Free to all.

For details: [meetup.com/CavershamWriters](https://www.meetup.com/CavershamWriters) or [@CavershamWriter](https://twitter.com/CavershamWriter) on Twitter

Wednesdays – **Light on the Hill Café** – 19:30-21:30 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

Thursdays – **Friendly Over-60s Social Club** – 10:00-13:00 at Milestone Centre, Caversham Park Village. Hot lunch, quizzes and the chance to chat. Contact Cheryl at 079647 50182 or Trina at 07477 570541

Thursdays – **Baby Massage with midwife Katie** – 12:15-12:55 at the Weller Centre during term times only. Suitable for babies from 6 weeks to crawling. 50p donation towards costs. Refreshments available.

Fridays – **Toddler Group at Hemdean House** – 09:45-10:45 at Hemdean House School Hall. Ideal for children 6 months+. £2 donation per child, coffee and tea included.

Saturdays – **Keep Caversham Tidy** – A local charity dedicated to eliminating litter and improving public spaces in Caversham. Free to join and no ongoing commitment. Families welcome! Email: Keepcavershamtidy@gmail.com, FB: Keep Caversham Tidy

Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays – **Caversham Chess Club** – Coaching and play for children and adults. For details, see: www.coachingwithdino.co.uk or call 07449313414

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

Sundays – **Nordic Walk** (or just walking). Free to all. Tel. 07931 754096 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

To 10 November – **Reading International Festival** – Talks and exhibitions – Reading International Development Forum Info at www.facebook.com/ReadingInForum/ or tel 01189 586692

Wednesday 1 November – **The History of Trinity House**, a talk by Eddy Roach – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. www.cavershamheights.org

Friday, 3 November – **Chazey Women's Institute** – 14:30 at St. Andrew's Church Hall, Albert Road, RG4 7AW. Art, craft and book groups, plus coffees and lunches.

Email: chazeywi@berkshirewi.co.uk

or FB: Chazey Women's Institute

Friday, 3 November – **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 more information, call Gill on 0118 9478772

Saturday 11 November – **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

Wednesday 15 November – **What the science is telling us** – An online talk by Doug Stewart – 19:30 – Caversham Horticultural Society.

See www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/events to book.

Wednesday 15 November – **Improving Your Sleep and Well Being** a talk by Dr Lindsay Browning – see details at www.cavershamheights.org on 1 November above

Thursday 16 November – **Caversham Women's Institute** – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham.

www.thewi.org.uk or Tel. 01189 475176

Sunday 19 November – **Christmas Market** – 10:00-15:30 at Southview Park, Marsack St, RG4 5AF. Local artisans and makers. Santa's Grotto and more than 35 stalls, children's craft activities, BBQ, vegetarian food, craft beers. Free entry. See www.madebytamalia.co.uk

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 has now launched a consultation on what transport in Reading should look like in 2040. The draft strategy outlines the challenges and opportunities to achieve a cleaner, greener area, where it is easier to leave our cars at home. See the link to the consultation below. Responses are invited up to 11 December.

Achieving this in North Reading presents major challenges. We are all very aware of the downward spiral, where traffic congestion leads to unreliable public transport, which leads to lower usage, reduced takings and hence further reductions in service. CADRA welcomes Chris Maddocks, Strategic Transport Manager for Reading Borough Council and Robert Williams, CEO of Reading Buses to talk on the subject: **Reading Transport Strategy 2040 – Issues for North Reading**

The open meeting will take place at 19:30 on Monday 6 November in the Caversham Baptist Church, Prospect Street. To ensure a good cross section of questions on the night, some questions are invited in advance. Please email your question to info@cadra.org.uk by Thursday 2 November. This promises to be an interesting evening on a subject which affects us all. Everyone is welcome.

The main planning issue this month is an application for the Spice Oven. The right scheme including restoration of the front of this prominent listed building, has the potential to be positive. In Reading there is a new application for 820 units on Forbury Retail Park opposite the Gaol and St James Church and we expect an application to demolish and replace Napier Court.

The Transport Strategy consultation is at consult.reading.gov.uk/dens/reading-transport-strategy-2040-statutory-consulta/

Wednesday 22 November – **Carol of the Bells** – 14:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Highmoor Road. Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild. Singalong and have a go at hand bell ringing with Carol Wheeler. For details ring Mrs Margaret Miles 01491 681223

Friday 24 November – Le Cercle Français – 19:30-21:30 at Church House, 59 Church Street, RG4 8AX. For those who are learning French, love France and for French nationals. Admission £5 welcome drink included.

Email: readingcerclefrancais@gmail.com

Saturday 25 November – **Concert of Renaissance and Baroque music** – at St Andrew's Church, Caversham RG4 7PL Reading Bach Choir www.readingbachchoir.org.uk

Saturday 2 December – **Green Christmas Tree Sale** – 9:30-13:00 Caversham Court Gardens – Econet – See <https://econetreading.org.uk/programme>

Friday 8 December – **Late night shopping in Caversham** – 17:00-21:00 See www.facebook.com/Choosecaversham

Saturday 9 December – **Christmas Concert by Candlelight** with The CinC Chamber Orchestra – 19:30 at St Andrew's Church, Caversham RG4 7PL. Concerts in Caversham. To book tickets and more information, see www.concertsincaversham

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**Reading Transport Strategy 2040:
Issues for North Reading**
**Monday
6 November 2023
7.30 pm**
Speakers:
Chris Maddocks
Strategic Transport Manager, RBC
Robert Williams
CEO, Reading Buses
Caversham Baptist Church
1 Prospect St, Reading RG4 8JB
www.cadra.org.uk

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WHEN, IN 1991, the body of the Oetztal Man was discovered in an alpine glacier preserved for over 5,000 years, he was found to be carrying pieces of birch polypore, threaded together on a leather string. I first saw the fungus as a boy, growing out of the trunks of birch trees, and have seen it many times since, but I had no idea of its many uses until I came to write this article. I have also been surprised to see, during an Internet search, how many opportunities there are for buying bottles of 'birch polypore tincture', or for buying pieces of dried fungus, so that you can make the tincture for yourself (you do this by steeping the pieces in alcohol – rum and vodka are suggested).

The purpose of these prehistoric pieces threaded on string was probably medicinal. The fungus has been claimed to boost the immune system, to be anti-viral, anti-bacterial, anti-oxidative, and anti-inflammatory, and it also kills parasitic worms in the gut and reduces the proliferation of cancerous cells. It has also been used for dressing wounds, and as tinder for starting a fire.

... carried away on the wind...

What you see growing out of the birch trunk is the fruiting body of the fungus. The 'polypore' part of the name signifies something with many pores, and they can be found on the underside of the bracket, if it's in good condition. They're the tubes from which the spores are released to be carried away on the wind. Using a sharp knife, it's possible to peel off this lower layer of the bracket, the paler part containing the pores, and this is what was used for dressing wounds.

For tinder, you dried the whole bracket, and then applied a burning twig from your fire to it, and let it smoulder. I've read that it would continue to smoulder for many hours if you kept it in a container, although I've never tried it. You could carry it around with you and, when you wanted to start another fire, you had just to blow on it and it would burst into flame.

But you could also dry off the underside, nail it to a board, and use it as a razor-strop. This is the reason for the English name, the Razor-Strop Fungus, and presumably a similar arrangement could be used for sharpening knives and tools.

In the 1950s, I had two uncles who used cut-throat razors, but their strops were leather straps hanging by the kitchen sink. (Their old houses didn't have bathrooms). Barbers, too, used cut-throat razors and leather strops. Father used a modern safety

razor with disposable blades made by Gillette. I remember the portrait of the company founder on each packet of blades, King C. Gillette.

The Razor-strop fungus is fairly common on birch trees, and birch trees like the rather acidic soils of heaths and commons, rather than chalky soils. And where you find birch trees, you may also find Fly Agaric toadstools with their bright red caps with white spots.



The Birch Polypore, or Razor-strop Fungus

photo Happy Wanderer

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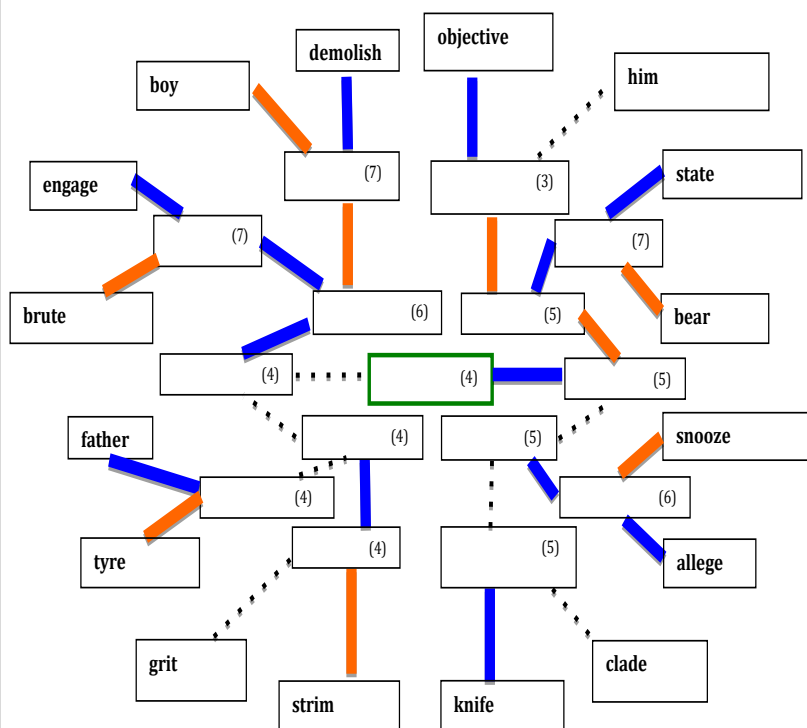
Puzzle Corner

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

THAMES TRIBUTARIES

Can you find 22 tributaries of the River Thames in the grid?

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

Aldbourne
Blackwater
Cherwell
Chess
Churn
Cove Brook
Enborne
Holy Brook
Kennet
Lambourn
Loddon

Mole
Ock
Pang
Sul
Thame
Tillingbourne
Vastern Ditch
Wey
Windrush
Winterbourne
Wye

Making Caversham Greener



TREES FOR STREETS

READING BOROUGH Council (RBC) has teamed up with Trees for Streets to offer residents the chance to sponsor a tree and to choose where it is planted. This is your chance to help make your local community and the roads where you live brighter, more environmentally friendly, and more attractive.

Since RBC published its Tree Strategy in 2021, it has been on a drive to achieve the planting of 3,000 trees on Council land by 2030. This is part of an ongoing commitment to increase tree canopy cover and to make Reading greener, and now you can help.

The one-off fee to sponsor a tree is £395, or £295 if you commit to watering the tree.

Based on information from Reading Borough Council.

The process is simple:

- 1 Visit www.treesforstreets.org/reading to request a location for a new tree, answer a few simple questions, and submit your sponsorship details.
- 2 The Council will survey the location to check for suitability.
- 3 If acceptable, an 'instant-impact' tree (normally 5-7 years old and 3-4 metres high) will be planted, during the November to April planting season.

Westfield Park Tree

photo F Smith

Over the years, the Caversham Bridge Newspaper has carried reports of the holidays organised by what is now known as the Caversham Group Holiday. Michelle Hill, who is part of the organising team, has provided an update which celebrates the forthcoming anniversary of something which started as the Caversham Parish Holiday back in 1964.

ALMOST 60 years ago, a curate in Caversham had the brainwave of organising an affordable holiday for local families. And Rector John Grimwade, although uncertain, took his family along too, and they discovered the concept had a magic of its own, which can still be experienced today.

Times and locations have changed, but the essentials remain the same. Over the years, many have experienced one of these breaks either at Embley (near Romsey), Sandroyd (near Shaftesbury) or, more recently, Chafyn Grove School in Salisbury.

...everyone feels included...

During the week away, we make full use of the school's facilities, including a swimming pool, tennis courts, sports hall, library and performance hall. We accommodate family groups in dormitories and classrooms, and are treated to three meals a day.

This year we had our usual 'friendly' competitions, including badminton and table tennis, less energetic bowls and croquet, and whist and Othello for the less active. Where doubles are possible, inexperienced or young entrants are partnered with a more experienced holidaymaker to make the competitions more sociable



Farm visit and Jim's winning quiz team
all photos C Linsell

and to ensure everyone feels included.

Highlights from this year's entertainments included Frances and Steve's legendary quiz, where it's a given that Jim's team wins, although there's always a fierce battle for second place, and the Murder Mystery evening, with participants sourcing costumes from the well-stocked charity shops of Salisbury. There were other memorable events, such as youngsters and the young at heart decorating and later launching water rockets and Emily and Matt's Team Challenges, where our skills to think laterally were pushed to their limits. Good times.

We rounded off the week with our great party night. This year's 'Fiesta!' themed evening kicked off with mojitos on the terrace, followed by a tasty Mexican meal, and finished in the performance hall. We played traditional family games with a South American twist, announced the competition winners and handed out the 'wooden spoon' awards commemorating the unique moments from the week.

We had a couple of newcomers join us this year, who hadn't been sure of what to expect, but enjoyed themselves immensely. One, Ruth, said: "I might just have found my perfect holiday".

To find out more about the Holiday and plans for 2024, contact Michelle by email: michellehill3142@gmail.com.



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On your bike

text and photos Hilary Smart



Young skills to the fore



Reading Cycle Festival

READING Cycle Festival 2023 took place on a rainy Sunday in September. It's a brilliant event for everyone from the cycling-hardcore to the cycling-curious. And the stunt riding displays, food and fairground rides were pretty cool, even if you had no intention of getting on a bike.

Avanti (who run the Bikeability training in schools) were there with a collection of ramps and adapted bicycles for kids to try. Reading Cycle Campaign and WATCH Wokingham both had stands, providing route advice and working for better bike paths. For social cycling there was Reading Cycling Club, and Kidical Mass ran a family-friendly ride and gave advice on family cycling afterwards. If you needed bike maintenance, then Reading Bicycle Kitchen was there to help you. AW Cycles and Velospeed brought electric assisted bikes for attendees to try out (warning, they are quite addictive if you try them!). Many



Impressive stunt display at the Festival

other wonderful community groups also had stands (their gazebos provided welcome shelter during the downpours).

If you're reading this and regretting missing out, for the rain or other reasons, all of these organisations would be delighted to hear from you – and watch out for next year's event!

Reading Cycle Campaign – <https://readingcyclecampaign.org.uk>

Reading Cycle Club – <https://readingcyclingclub.org>

Kidical Mass – <https://kidicalmassreading.co.uk>

Reading Bicycle Kitchen – www.readingbicyclekitchen.org



by
Tricia
Marcouse

THE HEAT IS ON



AS TEMPERATURES drop, our heating systems come into use, with the associated cost of fuel. Staying warm whilst keeping costs down is a challenge. Standard government advice is to turn the output flow temperature from the gas boiler down to 60°C to save energy. But this does not apply to all boilers.

If you have a combi boiler providing hot

water on demand, rather than via a storage tank, the flow temperature controls for the radiators and hot water are usually separate.

Try setting the temperature for the radiators at 60°C and see how it works for you. If it heats the house enough, or the weather is warmer, turn the temperature down one degree at a time until you get to the 'not warm enough' temperature

for your house and lifestyle. Some houses will sail through a winter at 50°C. Hot water temperature is a personal choice, depending on whether you are heating for hand washing or a bath. If you also need to run cold water to reach a safe temperature, turn down the boiler temperature, one degree at a time.

Homes with a hot water cylinder need a different approach. Most systems (even if they have separate dials for hot water and radiators on the boiler) actually have one output from the boiler feeding both radiators and the cylinder. Check with your service engineer if you cannot find out in the manual. It is important for the temperature IN the hot water cylinder to exceed 60°C regularly to avoid bacterial growth in the tank, including Legionella. That means the boiler output temperature needs to be around 65°C for hot water and,

by default, for central heating in most cases. Your best bet for reducing costs further is to monitor when you actually need the hot water and change the time settings so you don't have a tank full of hot water cooling off during working or school days, or overnight. You could turn down the boiler output temperature at times when hot water is not needed, or perhaps plan to heat the tank above 60°C twice a week. But it is easy to forget to do this.

Smart boiler control systems can take over from manual adjustments of room thermostats, timings and boiler output temperature, but the more complex versions are expensive. Unless you are having work done on your heating systems, it's best to see what you can realistically achieve in energy savings through manual adjustments and lifestyle changes before paying for sophisticated control systems.

Caversham Court Green Christmas Tree Sale

Tricia Marcouse

COME TO Caversham Court on **Saturday 2 December** from 9:30 to 13:00 for the annual sale of Scots Pine Christmas trees, natural decorations, and a multitude of other environmentally friendly Christmas gifts.

The trees hold their leaves, smell beautiful, but are a more open structure than the standard Norway Spruce. We'll also have holly, willow stars, huge

pinecones and bundles of ornamental greenery to sell for natural decorations in the house. We're joined by a range of charities selling environmentally friendly Christmas gifts. Local honey and beeswax candles from Reading Beekeepers; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds with a range of goods including food and homes for garden birds and hedgehogs; beautifully wooden bowls and light-pulls from our local woodturner; and Fair Trade, offering a wide range of food and gifts from around the world.

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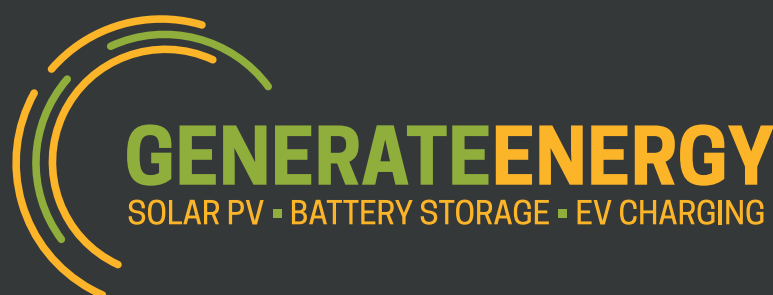
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A NEW STATION

by Trish Lopes

BACK IN April this year, ten local schools were invited to participate in a Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) challenge called 'Look Draw Build @Reading Station'. The result saw Hemdean House School achieve the Gold Award.

The competition challenge was set by Gemma Sollanellas from ARCHI-adventure¹, supported by a group of young Engineers and Architects working for local companies in partnership with Reading Civic Society and Great Western Railway. Haslams Estate Agents sponsor this challenge and photographer and film maker, Chris Forsey, provided photographs.

The brief for schools was to design and create a model station which:

- Integrated a good layout, including facilities to satisfy the needs of users
- Demonstrated innovation, invention, and originality
- Was a solid and stable model (within the restraints of the materials supplied)
- Highlighted the importance of safety on the railways
- Responded to the issues of sustainability, accessibility, and other social factors
- Indicated critical thinking and problem-solving skills

The project started with a tour of Reading Station, with a discussion of safety issues, followed by a train ride to Didcot. The children were able to ask questions and to make initial sketches of the essentials of a station. They continued their designs at school, before Gemma arrived with her team to guide the children through a workshop to build their stations.

The school had the tricky task of picking one of their seven



Working together on a model

photo C Forsey

stations to enter in the final competition. The Year 6 team were the winners of a democratic vote. Their design was named Britain Bear Station (BBS), and celebrated Britain in the coronation year with a red and blue coloured signage and a bear mascot. The children gave careful thought to the design, including modern innovations, but with attention to detail for a safe and efficient journey for a diverse community. They were keen to consider the environmental impact of their station, so incorporated solar panels, skylights for maximum natural daylight, and a curved sloping roof to capture rainwater for flushing toilets! There were features making it accessible to all including: brightly coloured information kiosk for easy visibility, retail outlets, timetable and destination boards, braille maps, seats, lifts and escalator access

to and from the different levels. On the platform there were clear destination boards and colourful seating. The platform included safety features such as yellow lines and tactile tiles. They even designed a new train powered by magnetism and levitation to reduce emissions.

The whole event was a valuable experience in teamwork, problem solving and applying all their STEM skills. Everyone was delighted to be involved in an incredible community initiative, and we extend congratulations to St Martin's and English Martyrs Schools who joined us in the silver and bronze positions.

1. To learn more about ARCHI-adventure and their mission, see www.archi-adventure.com/mission-1

On our doorstep – Checkendon School



Blossom

photo Checkendon Primary School

*Although the school is in Oxfordshire, children from Caversham are made welcome at this small village school. Head teacher **Sarah Hillier** writes.*

I WOULD like to share some information about our charming school. Checkendon Church of England Primary School is in a quiet Oxfordshire village, just a 15-minute drive from Caversham. Our school is small, and provides a diverse curriculum catering to the interests of our students and reflecting the values of our community. We aim to create a welcoming environment which celebrates diversity and fosters positive relationships with all members of our community. Our school has a close connection with the local church, which we visit regularly for worship and other important events. We are also building relationships with other schools, both public and private, which our students may attend in the future.

Currently, we have three classes with a maximum of 15 students in each year group. Our students benefit from small class sizes, weekly forest school sessions, wrap-around care from 7:30 to 17:00, and a variety of PE classes, including judo and swimming. Additionally, our children benefit from expert teachers who provide music, art, and sports lessons to enrich their education.

To give a flavour of the activities our children have enjoyed over the last year I have outlined some of the highlights here:

Oak Class (Reception, Years 1 and 2)

- Adventured to Windsor Castle to learn about castles and mediaeval life
- Developed our learning in the new all-weather outside area
- Achieved fantastic results across our key stage one and phonic tests

Willow Class (Years 3 and 4)

- Taken on a trip to Henley's Pizza Express as part of our healthy eating project
- Explored the Wittenham Clumps with the Earth Trust to understand life as an Anglo Saxon
- Achieved fantastic results across the year 4 multiplication test

Silver Birch Class (Years 5 and 6)

- Achieved fantastic results across Year 6 SATS, with every child achieving the level expected for his/her age
- Journeyed to Winchester Science Museum to develop our scientific knowledge
- Enjoyed our annual residential trip with PGL
- Put on a production of 'Cinderella Rockafella', including opportunities for younger children across the school

Please get in contact with our school office for more information or to arrange to have a look around our school, email;

Office.3801@checkendon.oxon.sch.uk

Artists & Makers Fair Saturday 11 November



10 am - 4 pm

Caversham Methodist Church Gosbrook Road, RG4 8EB

artistsandmakersfairs.co.uk

[artistsandmakersfairs](https://www.facebook.com/artistsandmakersfairs)

[artistsandmakersfaircaversham](https://www.instagram.com/artistsandmakersfaircaversham)

Free Entry

PRIMARY SCHOOL, HERE WE COME

by Hilary Smart

THE LEAVES are falling, the temperature's dropping, and the days are getting shorter. We must be approaching primary school application season!

Children with birthdays between 1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020 are due to start school in September 2024. Applications for Reading's state primary schools should be submitted by 15 January 2024, and up to four schools may be listed on the application form.

Full details of the process are on the Brighter Futures for Children website, brighterfuturesforchildren.org

I would really encourage families to attend open days for the schools they are considering. Three years ago, we looked

at every school we thought we'd get into and managed to fall in love with St Martin's, which was previously at the bottom of our list, as it was furthest from our house. It was small, calm and happy, we loved what they said to us, and we came away with a gut feeling that it would be perfect for our slightly-shy four-year-old.

Similarly, we know other families who chose (and love) almost every other school in the area. Every school has its strengths, and what will suit is so individual to the child and family. We're lucky here because there aren't really any bad choices.

I hope you find the perfect school for you and your child.

Primary School Open Days 2023

The following table contains information supplied by the schools or available on their websites at the time of writing, 10 October 2023. Only dates in November and December are included.

Caversham Park

Queensway, Caversham Park, Reading, RG4 6RP



The school is offering the following Open Afternoons for a tour with the Headteacher:

Wednesday 8 November at 13:45 - Wednesday 15 November at 13:45

Please contact the school office to book onto one of these tours.

Phone 0118 937 5433 or email: admin@cavershampark.reading.sch.uk

Website: www.cavershamparkprimaryschool.co.uk

Caversham Primary

Hemdean Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7RA



The school lists the following dates on their website,

all Fridays starting at 10:30. 3, 10, 17 and 24 November

Please call the school office to book a place on 0118 9375454.

Email: admin@cavershamprimary.reading.sch.uk

Website: www.cavershamprimary.org

Emmer Green

Grove Road, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8LN



Please contact the school for information.

Phone 0118 937 5464 or email: admin@emmergreen.reading.sch.uk

Website: www.emmergreenprimary.com

Micklands

Micklands Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 6LU



The school is offering a presentation by the Headteacher, followed by a tour of the school and grounds

Monday 6 November 9:30 – 10:30

Please call 0118 9375500

or email: admin@micklands.reading.sch.uk to book your visit

Website: micklands.reading.sch.uk

St Annes

Washington Road Caversham Reading RG4 5AA



The school is offering Open Mornings and Afternoons through to January but are equally happy to book one to one/family show rounds with the Headteacher. Both options include a tour of the school and a chat about life in the school. Open days are:

Wednesday 8 November 9:30 – Tuesday 21 November 14:00 – Wednesday 6 December 9:30

To book a visit, please email: head@st-annes.reading.sch.uk or phone 0118 9375537

Website: st-annes.reading.sch.uk/reading/primary/stannes

St Martins

Pendennis Avenue, Caversham Park Village, RG4 6SS



The school welcomes applications from all parents and carers, of all faiths and none. Their open days are:

Friday 10 November – Thursday 23 November – Monday 4 December. Visits 10:00 to 11:00 and 14:00 to 15:00

Please contact the school office to make an appointment for a tour.

Phone 0118 937 5544 or email: admin@stmartins.reading.sch.uk

Website: www.stmartinscaversham.co.uk

Thameside

Harley Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 8DB



Visit the school on

Thursday mornings 2 and 23 November starting at 10:00-10:30

Meet in the school office where you will be greeted by Senior Leaders who will show you around our school.

Contact the school office to book your place.

Phone 01189 375551 or email: sbm@thameside.reading.sch.uk

Website: www.thameside.reading.sch.uk

The Heights

129 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham. Reading, RG4 7LB



Visit the school on

Tuesday 14 November and Tuesday 5 December starting at 9:15

Contact the school office to book a place on 0118 3570123

Website: www.theheightsprimary.co.uk

The Hill

Peppard Road, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8TU



New parent tours available on

23 November at 9:30 and 30 November at 16:00

Contact the school office to book a place on 0118 9375560

Website: www.thehillprimary.org.uk



TRYING THINGS

BY LES COOPER



WILL LET you into a secret. In trying to be a garden writer I am a plagiarist. Yes, every time I start to write my monthly article, I go online to check what I should be writing about. I do



Alstroemeria

photo E Cooper

realise I am not alone, because I know most garden writers do something similar.

Apparently, or so I'm told, this month is when the weather starts to get more wintry and our gardens need some protection.

I probably read the same thing in November 2022 too. And did I take any notice? The answer is NO! I was under the impression harsh winters were a thing of the past. After all, had we not been warned that global warming was happening? I thought I was being ultra-efficient when I covered my perennial salvia plants with a thin mulch, but I did nothing to protect three pots of alstroemeria or a large tub with a small palm tree - they will be fine I thought. How wrong I was, because they all died, including the salvias.

...way back in the past...

My delphiniums growing in the ground were completely happy, but I heard folk with delphiniums in pots did lose them. I do wonder if my alstroemeria might have survived if they had been growing in the ground rather than in pots. Probably not. In the past I have struggled to get alstroemeria plants

established and later, when I became bored with them, as I do, I struggled to get rid of them. That was way back in the past. Perhaps the new varieties of alstroemeria are more amenable.

This year I will do my best to insulate the more delicate plants with bubble wrap, because it always seems to protect plants well. This will probably guarantee we will have the mildest winter ever, apart from the occasional hurricane!

On another issue, I am plagued with ground elder, like many gardeners. Last spring, when I noticed *Tagetes Minuta* in my seed catalogue, I took note and decided to raise a few plants. Evidently this *Tagetes* is not grown for its beauty but, or so it is said, for its reputation as a weed suppressor. It is purported that its roots have strong herbicidal secretions which the weeds don't like. As I write, I haven't a clue whether this is true or not, but the plants are growing apace (they could reach 8 feet high). If they don't grab me round the throat like *Triffids* and if they do their job, I will let you know. Although it does occur to me if they suppress weeds, surely they will suppress everything else!



Preparing for winter

by Louise Hampden

WITH THE autumn leaves in full colour by November, it's not long before all the leaves have fallen, and the garden goes into its winter dormancy. There's still ample time to plant bulbs in



Cosmos 'Apricotta'

gaps that may have appeared in the garden, and it's the prime time to plant tulips.

Removing some of the soggy top growth of perennials is a good idea, as this can sometimes rot the crown of the plant, but it is worth leaving the seed heads on plants like asters as the birds will find food and insects to feed themselves over the coming months. Dahlias may well be blackened by frost by now, and you can risk leaving them in situ in pots by a warm house wall but, if not, dig them up and dry them before storing them in a shed or garage until next spring. Last winter, the dahlias I left outside, which had been grown from seed, fared much better than those I had stored in pots in the cold greenhouse.

I like to review the annuals I grew, and I tried a *Cosmos* called 'Apricotta', which was a joy. The colour is quite extraordinary - its apricot flowers morph into lilac hues

toward the centre of each flower. For the cost of around £2.50, I had an abundance of flowers to pick and bring into the house and, with regular deadheading, they kept flowering for months. I still have loads of seed left, and this from only half a dozen plants sown, pricked out and planted out in May. I will grow them again next year.

Chrysanthemums are becoming a firm favourite of mine as they don't tend to flower until late October, and will continue into November. I have a variety called 'Esther' that I cut and bring into the house to enjoy. I bought a few young plants a couple of years ago and they are bulking up year on year. They don't always flower in the first year of purchase, so patience is required. I have also invested in a few 'tula' strains which come in extraordinary colours, and I'm looking forward to seeing how they perform next year.



Chrysanthemum 'Esther'

One thing you can do now is plant up a pot of perfume and cheer to carry you through the coming months, and place it by your front door. You can't go wrong with the scented and evergreen *Sarcococca*, or *Christmas box*, which will flower early in the year. Plant a few miniature bulbs around the edge of the pot and cover the top with some flowering violas for instant colour. That should keep the joy coming throughout the winter.



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Plenty of competition entries

photo P Chatfield



Floral entries

photo E Rae

GROWING SUCCESS

by Francis Serjeant

THIS YEAR'S Caversham Horticultural Society Autumn show was a resounding success. After several rainy days earlier in the week, the Saturday remained dry, which was a factor in the show being well attended by society members and visitors alike. Entries for all categories were up, and there were more first-time entrants for many of the open class categories. Despite another year of variable weather, both drought and deluge, the standard of gardening entries was very high. This show is more than just plants. Various domestic categories, such as cakes and preserves, and also arts' categories, offered those reluctant to exhibit plants

opportunities to display other skills. Several children entered the junior categories, which ranged from cooking and cress gardens to vegetable monsters.

A date for your 2024 diary. For the first time the society will host a spring show of flowering bulbs and other plants on Saturday 23 March at Caversham Baptist church, between 13:00 and 15:00. The 2024 autumn show will be on Saturday 31 August between 14:00 and 16:30 at Emmer Green School.

Details will be available on the Society's website, www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk



Toys and Teens Appeal is BACK for 2023!

by Paul Cooper, Reading Family Aid

READING FAMILY Aid is a local charity supporting disadvantaged children and their families. Each Christmas, our Toys and Teens Appeal helps guarantee children who would otherwise not receive a single present, have something to open on Christmas morning.

Last year, over 3,000 children received a gift at Christmas, thanks to the generosity of our donors and supporters.

With the cost-of-living crisis hitting families hard, this support makes a real difference. Here's just one of the many 'thank you' messages last year, showing how much your donations mean to families:

"Hi thank you so much for the fantastic toys we received. This was the first time we had received toys from you. Our families were so grateful. Everything was brilliant. We are so grateful to you for what you do. You made many children very happy, especially this year when things are very tough for so many. A massive thank you."

There are two ways you can help us.

1. **Donate toys** at one of our donation points (or we will collect)
2. **Donate money** to our appeal, to go towards additional toys

For details of how to donate toys, please visit:

www.readingfamilyaid.org/donate-toys

To donate money, visit our GoFundMe page:

www.gofundme.com/f/christmas-toys-and-teens-appeal-2023

Please help us to make this Christmas extra special for children and families who deserve it, this year.

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Getting into the festive season...

by Elestr Lee



NOVEMBER'S here, no point in avoiding the approach of Christmas and the perennial problem of coming up with gifts to please everyone.

At least it's easy to find perfect and even original solutions on our doorstep. Step inside **Nood Stores** for an astonishing array of carefully selected plants and handmade dried flower bouquets, plus locally made vegan skincare products, as well as exquisite candles and fragrances. Nood also organises various workshops; perhaps offering someone the chance to make a Christmas Wreath would be the perfect present..?

Another place to find creative inspiration is the new **Artology Studio** in Prospect Street, opened by Joan Harris in place of Art Jam. As well as ceramics, Joan offers painting workshops and furniture up-cycling using chalk paints. For the more intrepid, try learning blacksmithing skills with **Billy Goodworth** – see Bill's Workshop website for details of Woodland Blacksmithing, as well as his Garden Sculpture courses.

At a time when many of us are becoming increasingly concerned with both environmental and ethical issues, we are fortunate to have the **True Food Community Co-op** in Emmer Green. It has a vast range of organic and ethically sourced food and drink, much of it locally produced – all that's needed to sustain

us through the festive season! And if you are looking for something slightly different which is ethical and sustainable, visit the **World Shop** in London Street, Reading, where you will find a fascinating range of Fairtrade arts and crafts from around the world.

If you are looking for unique items made closer to home, check out the forthcoming **Artists and Makers Fairs** on 11 November and 9 December, offering items made by local craftspeople, as well as a chance to get to chat to the makers themselves (see advert on page 10 for details) And to get your Christmas shopping experience off to a truly festive start, head to the **Artisa Christmas Market** which this year takes place at the Creativ.Spaces studio in Marsack Street on Sunday 19 November, from 10:00 until 15:30, where you will find plenty of local traders with gift ideas on offer, as well as the chance to sample some mulled wine and even meet Father Christmas himself.

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Community Connections

by Adrian Raffill

This month we meet Damian Jones – Pop Classics



Damian Jones

photo A Raffill

ON MEETING Damian Jones, I was struck immediately by his enthusiasm for all things musical. He's been an avid and obsessive record collector since childhood, inspired by his father's collection. Born and raised in Reading, Damian has been married to Martina since 1988 and they have raised three daughters together.

Damian took media studies at Newbury College and went on to work for the iconic Reading printers Cox & Wyman. Starting as a compositor, he spent 20 years at the firm before redundancy allowed him to follow his passion – music. He'd been dealing at record fairs for years and began doing so online, quickly gaining a reputation for his knowledge and contacts. Such was his expertise that, when Channel Four's Posh Pawn series featured the owner of a large and expensive record collection, they turned to Damian for consultancy advice.

Reading Museum benefitted from Damian's knowledge of the industry when he helped with their exhibition marking 50 years of the Reading Festival, telling the story of the first event in 1971. Adding another string to his bow, Damian wrote sleeve notes for Acid Jazz Records, who also published his first book, 'Circles: The Strange Story of the "Fleur De Lys", Britain's Forgotten Soul Band', a labour of love co-authored with Paul Anderson. "Fleur de Lys were one of the most unsung mod bands of the 60s, they should've been huge, they were the Robin Friday of music", Damian told me, referencing Reading's legendary 'Greatest Footballer You Never Saw'.

In recent years the online record and music memorabilia business Damian has built up, Pop Classics, has seen a significant downturn in trade due to the increased costs of importing and exporting to customers in Europe. Even the war

in Ukraine has had an effect. "We had a surprising number of customers in Russia", said Damian. But the resurgence of vinyl records encouraged him to serve more customers in the Reading and wider Berkshire area by opening a shop in St. Martin's Precinct, Caversham. Why not pop along to revive your own collection?

How long have you lived in RG4?

I live in Southcote, but the shop has been open in St. Martin's Precinct since September.

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

Quattro and River Spice.

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

Recycle and upcycle more, donate to charity shops and most importantly – consume less!

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

I've spoken with local traders about this – we could put on more local events and entertainment, using spaces such as the precinct.

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

Live music in St. Martin's Precinct!

Meet the Maker

Pam Chatfield chats with **Therese Wicks**

text and photos Pam Chatfield



Stained glass window

"I HAVE always been creative from a child", says Therese Wicks. Therese is a stained-glass artist living in Caversham. We met at the Caversham Artists' and Makers' Fair, and intrigued to learn more about her creative journey, I visited her in her studio. It is fair to say Therese has had an interesting life. I found we had something in common, having both begun our careers as nurses – Therese trained at Wexham Park Hospital.

After having a family, Therese felt she needed to learn a new skill, so went to evening classes and completed a Study Start Course. This led to an access course in Art and Design, and then a Post Graduate Diploma in Art Psychotherapy, a field in which Therese practised for 15 years, chiefly

with children. She also has a City and Guilds qualification. Other ventures include running a nursing home and a takeaway burger outlet!

Therese finds working with glass captures the intensity of colour in a way that she can't with paint and her stained-glass career started out with commissions and restorations. You may have seen her work, as she is a regular exhibitor on the Caversham Arts Trail. Stained glass is heavy to transport and difficult to display, so Therese has begun to work with fused glass and, as we chatted next to her kiln, she describes how nail-biting it is waiting to see the end results of her work. Theresa says her inspiration often comes from something she is reading, and she 'just sort of doodles'.

The results of her doodling are beautiful, as I observed just looking around her house. To meet Theresa and see first-hand her talent for working with glass, you can find her at the Caversham Artists' and Makers' Fair on the second Saturday of the month at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church and at the Caversham Arts trail next year. With the festive season approaching, I am sure you can find a beautiful and original gift for someone, created with love, in Caversham.

She is happy to be contacted by email:

theresewicks@yahoo.co.uk

or by phone 0118 947 3823.



Therese Wicks at work, and below one of her pieces



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WHO RISKED EVERYTHING
SUPPORTING BRITISH TROOPS
IN AFGHANISTAN**



photo Ben Birchall

LIKE LOTS OF children, Larisa Brown loved writing little stories, and thought it would be amazing to become an author one day. However, she was realistic enough to realise this might be something of a pipe dream.

But in fact, Caversham resident Larisa has achieved her ambition, with her gripping account of one family's escape from Afghanistan following the end of the NATO engagement in August 2021. *The Gardener of Lashkar Gar*, (reviewed right) published by Bloomsbury in August with a book launch at Fourbears Bookshop in Caversham, was the product of Larisa's campaigning work while she was Defence Correspondent at the Daily Mail, and currently, as Defence Editor of The Times.



Shaista Gul, gardener at the British military base – Jamal's father, employed as an interpreter by our troops

"I never had any particular idea about what I wanted to do, however I was always very interested in history and in war. Having grown up in Preston, I went to study History and Politics at Newcastle

University. While there I got involved with the student newspaper, which inspired me to get involved in journalism. Someone told me about an internship in Kenya, so I went out there and worked on KenyaKidz. After that, I joined the Daily Mail graduate scheme, which gave me lots of experience, and I moved around doing various jobs, staying with them for ten years.

"In 2014 they offered me the Defence Correspondent job – I became the first female to take this on. I had always admired journalists such as Kate Adie and John Simpson, so I jumped at the chance. And in October 2014, a few weeks after starting the job, I found myself going out to Helmand in Afghanistan, joining British troops in the 'packing-up op' and being with them on the last flight out of Helmand.

...very emotional...

"It was incredible to be there at this moment, it was very emotional. It really didn't feel as though it was 'mission accomplished', although they were calling it the end. At the time, I had no idea about the situation regarding the Afghan interpreters who would be vulnerable to extreme reprisals once the troops left. A year later, my journalist colleague David Williams heard about an interpreter called Popal who had been executed by the Taliban, and we wrote a news story about this in the paper. The Daily Mail's editor Paul Dacre was appalled and decided to launch a campaign to highlight their plight," Larisa explained.

Larisa and David began to publicise the cases they unearthed; however they were frustrated at the lack of any interest in the government – and without a change in policy, Afghan nationals who had worked



Desperate crowds outside the Baron Hotel, Kabul, hoping for evacuation, August 2021
Photo: Esmatullah

for British troops would be trapped. But finally the power of the press campaign produced results. "Eventually, Gavin Williamson, then Ben Wallace began to change government policies in recognition of the Afghans' plight," Larisa said. "As a former member of the Scots Guards, Ben Wallace understood – in talking to soldiers, they would all tell me how important the Afghan interpreters were."

The Daily Mail campaign was known as *Betrayal of the Brave*, and Larisa and David's work won Campaign of the Year at the British Journalism Awards in 2018. However, government policy in allowing interpreters to enter the UK only very slowly relaxed, so the two journalists continued to highlight the situation, which was becoming increasingly grim not only for the interpreters but also for their

families, under increasing threat as the Taliban returned. Although President Biden gave notice that the US would withdraw from Afghanistan in August 2021, no prior plans were made by the UK government to evacuate vulnerable Afghans, resulting in the chaotic and traumatic events at Kabul airport which forms the climax of Larisa's book. At present Larisa is on maternity leave from the Times (first time mother to twin boys!) but she is still in touch with the situation and filing stories.

"For example, there is the case of Sajid, who was able to enter the UK with his wife. His son, now three, stayed behind in Afghanistan with grandparents. Sajid recently applied for his child to join them – but the Home Office decided that Sajid didn't earn enough as a taxi driver to care for the child, so I filed a story in the Times



For your bookshelf....



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

by Alex Forbes

THE BOOKS this month have a couple of things in common. Although very different, they are both excellent, both books for adults and both by local authors..

Regular customers know at Fourbears Books we are big fans of Will Carver, so I was delighted to get my hands on a preview copy of his new book *Upstairs at the Beresford*. Published 9 November, it's a prequel to the bestseller *The Beresford*. The Beresford is a grand old building, and this book is set at a time when it was an hotel. We get an insight into the lives of the guests and some of

their sordid activities, while we also see how Mrs May, a central and fascinating character in *The Beresford*, came to it.

The short snappy chapters, which are classic Carver, keep the reader gripped. As with his other titles, it is excellently and uniquely written. The book doesn't shy away from graphic descriptions, which can be full-on at times until the dark humour brings some light, and you keep reading on for more. I'm sure this is going to be another bestseller and a perfect Christmas gift for anyone who likes a dark, original, thriller.

The other book is *The Gardener of Lashkar Gah* by Larisa Brown. This is the powerful true story of the Afghans who were left behind when UK and US armed forces left Afghanistan. *The Gardener of Lashkar Gah* follows the extraordinary journey of Shaista Gul, a kind man who built a beautiful garden inside a British military base in Helmand Province. It became famous as a calm oasis for soldiers with troubled minds. Shaista and Jamal (his son), along with the rest of the family, were heavily impacted following the withdrawal. Brown has spent so long fighting for the interpreters, and that fight continues. In the meantime, this book shines a beautiful light on their situation. It's moving and emotional and will invoke anger at times, and hopefully keep that conversation going. Only available in hardback, it makes a great Christmas gift for those with an interest in these affairs.



Larisa with interpreters Abdul Jamil Tareen (left), Jamal Gul and former Kabul defence attache Simon Diggins, at the book launch
photo Haroon



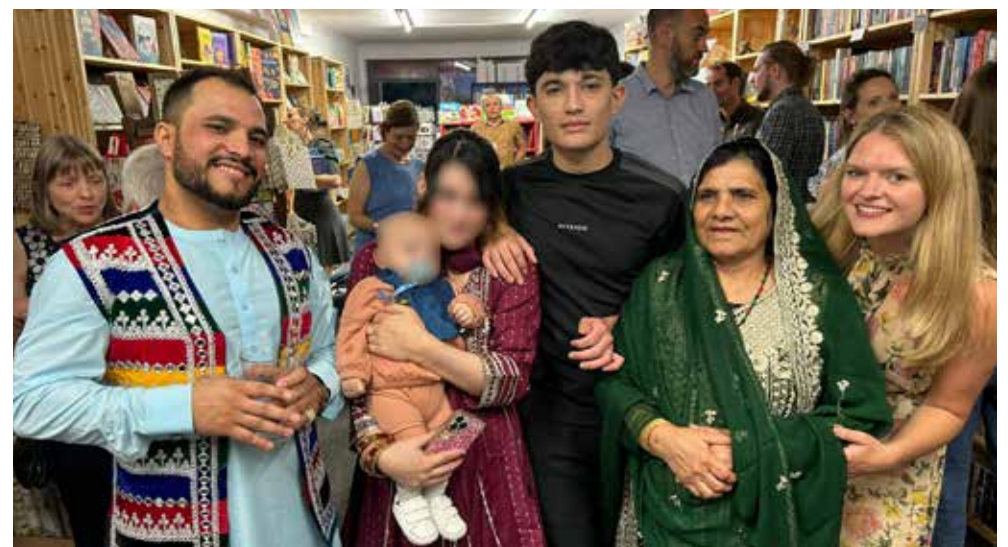
Did the bear bend the book?

photo A Forbes

We have lots of events in November, including Janice Hallet, Tom Hindle and Julie Mae Cohen, plus some poetry evenings. Please check out the *What's On* page on our website, www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk and come along to some of the entertaining author talks.

Book Fact: In the last couple of years Crime books have sold more copies than all the other adult genres combined, which is slightly scary in some respects.

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



Jamal with his wife Spozhmai and baby Jibrail, brother Esmatullah and mother Razagulla with Larisa
photo B Barron



After a harrowing time the Gul family are now safely reunited in the UK

photo L Brown

about his case," Larisa revealed. Being able to influence political decisions which have a profound impact on people's lives has become a driving force for Larisa, who believes strongly that well-researched, accountable journalism has an important

place in shaping public opinion and ultimately governance.

"After his story appeared in The Times, Sajid wrote to me, 'The Home Office have now overturned their decision. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.' I still

get lots of people contacting me, and some have come to my house to meet my twins. One man said I had helped him because I had sent him a map which helped him reach the right gate at the airport – he called me 'My distinguished life saver!'

"As a journalist," she concluded, "I believe you have a moral duty to help those you can."

Find out more:

The Gardener of Lashgar Gah: The Afghans who risked everything to fight the Taliban, by Larisa Brown, published by Bloomsbury
Copies signed by Larisa are available from Fourbears books, Caversham, fourbearsbooks.co.uk



Settled in Scotland, Shaista is enjoying gardening once again

photo Najeebullah



First Impressions Matter *by Laura Harmsworth*



Job search tips for the over 50s

CV

- Use a simple fresh format and a modern font e.g., Calibri.
- Don't include your date of birth.
- Profile – summary of your key relevant experience, transferable skills, and technical abilities if relevant.
- Use an EARLY CAREER section, without dates, for anything more than ten years ago. Only include the last ten years in detail (unless something particularly relevant in earlier roles).
- Exclude anything you're skilled in that is outdated technologically.
- Consider a more "functional" CV instead of the typical reverse chronological CV, so the focus of page one is on your skills and achievements.
- Create/update a LinkedIn profile and add this to your CV – keep it up to date and engage on the platform, demonstrating you're up to date in communicating and networking.
- Use a current email e.g., Gmail.

Learning

- Ensure you're up to date with skills relevant to your role, and also more generic tools such as video conferencing.

- Demonstrate your desire and ability to learn new skills by attending courses and adding to your CV/LinkedIn profile.

Cover letter

- Demonstrate your up-to-date knowledge in a cover letter – show you understand the most pressing issues in your field. Read books, articles and the news, and listen to podcasts. This shows you're engaged and will help during networking/at interview.
- State that you are willing, eager, and able to learn new skills, and give examples of where you have done this.
- Be succinct (1 page is fine) and don't use older style language.

Interview

- Plan what you will wear – look at current employees of the company on LinkedIn/company website and see if there's a general trend.
- If interviewers suggest you're overqualified, you can respond that you don't see yourself as overqualified but that you have a wealth of expertise to bring to the company and can add value. Highlight a couple of the responsibilities on the job ad and explain what excites you about them and how you will bring value.

- Be forward looking – recruiters don't want to see that you have achieved everything you've wanted to – plan an answer for "Where do you want to be in 5 years time?"
- If you haven't had an interview for a while, have a couple of trial runs with a friend or family member, and use the STAR (situation, task, action, result) technique. Prepare a bank of examples and achievements that are relevant to the role you are being interviewed for.
- Use body language and your smile to show your energy and positivity.

Networking

- You may well have contacts from a wide variety of backgrounds; get in touch with them stating the type of role you're looking for.
- Otherwise, attend groups and events, get on LinkedIn, and start engaging.

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



Photo caption; The band, from the left: James Champion (3); Simone Pharoah-Metcalf (4); Gabriel Pharoah-Metcalf (2); Peter Ellis (5) (conductor of the peal); Jenny Page (1); and Doug Beaumont (6)

photo Debbie Bark

RING LOUD, RING LONG

by Doug Beaumont

THE BELLS at St Margaret's rang out for nearly three hours on 16 September to mark a special year for the church and, in particular, for its bells. The oldest of the six bells in the tower, the 3rd, was cast in 1623. So now, in 2023, it has been calling people to church for 400 years. It seemed appropriate to ring what bellringers call a peal to celebrate this anniversary.

Plans were put in place earlier this year – the bells were booked, a band of ringers was assembled, a decision was made as to what method to ring - Plain Bob Minor - and one of the ringers selected to conduct the peal. So we met at St Margaret's on the afternoon of 16 September, readied ourselves, checked the bell-rope lengths, and put an information notice in place for visitors to the church. The peal was started at 14:20 and, after a warm afternoon's ringing, the bells 'came round' just after 17:00 – success!

The ringers are shown in the photograph (with the number of the bell they rang). It was the first peal for Gabriel – so congratulations on this achievement.

Our thanks go to the clergy and churchwardens of St Margaret's for permission to ring the peal; to steeple-keeper Roger Hopkinson for maintaining the bell fittings in good order.

A note on the bells at Mapledurham. There are six bells in the tower. The lightest is the treble, numbered 1, which weighs 161kg, the heaviest (tenor) 395kg. The 3rd, 4th and 5th are 17th century bells – 1623, 1664 and 1690 cast by the Knight foundry in Reading. It is not known whereabouts in Reading this was located. The tenor was cast in 1764 by Robert Wells of Aldbourne, the treble in 1787 by Thomas Janaway of Chelsea, and the 2nd in 1907 by John Warner & Sons of Cripplegate in London.

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Five steps to banish dull skin

DO YOU FEEL your skin looks dull and you can't seem to find a way to achieve that bright, glowing complexion you desire? Try my top five tips to see if they help. Remember, skin changes take time, so take a before picture as your reference and be prepared to give yourself 12 weeks to see a positive change.

1. Hydration

Keep your skin hydrated by drinking plenty of water. It's simple, cheap and it works! Moisturise daily with a good quality cream, and use something with sun protection (SPF) to protect your skin whatever the weather. Hydrated skin looks plump and healthy, which reduces the appearance of dark circles and dullness.

2. Exfoliation

Regular exfoliation will remove dead skin cells that leave skin looking dull. Microdermabrasion is a great choice for a deeper exfoliation to reveal brighter skin and rejuvenate your complexion. It's a firm favourite in my salon. To work even deeper on dull skin, you can look at a skin peel which is a chemical exfoliation of the dead skin which provides fantastic results, fast.

3. Healthy Diet

Make sure your diet is rich in antioxidants and vitamins, which can help to promote skin health and radiance.

4. Sleep

Getting enough sleep will allow your body to repair and rejuvenate overnight. Lack of sleep can cause skin to look dull and tired. Aim for 6-8 hours per night.

5. Facials

Lastly, my favourite, getting regular facials to deep-clean pores and improve circulation and blood flow. Microneedling facials (collagen induction) are another incredible way of rejuvenating skin and revealing the plump, hydrated and glowing skin you dream of.



Perry Walker

photo P Walker

by Perry Walker

Owner of Perry's Beauty, Caversham

@perrys_beautyroom



Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Strengthening as we age

NOT ONLY do we lose muscle mass as we age, but we also lose muscle mass from quite an early stage in our lives (as early as age 30 for women!). In addition, our bone density decreases as we lose minerals faster than we can lay down new bone.

Perhaps it is best to start adding in daily movements which involve load bearing and then, if we enjoy the way it feels to be stronger and more capable, it might lead us to create our own intentional 'loading' practice.

We can start by thinking about the term 'load bearing' – I like to think of load bearing in three ways:

- working with our own bodyweight
- adding load to these same movements to increase the demand on our muscles and bones, to increase the beneficial outcomes of these movements

- specific movements that are all about moving extra loads either up and down (lifting) or from A to B (carrying, pushing and pulling)

Our own body weight is a great place to start, as we often miss this one out and skip forward, and then wonder why we get injured.

The best types of movement to start with are whole-body movement patterns, starting at ground level, such as taking our weight through our arms, legs or both (whether on all fours or inverted) either to move around at a low level, such as crawling in all its various forms, bum shuffling, hip walking, or pushing our body off the ground in a whole variety of ways.

...lifespan predictor...

If we want to continue to be capable of getting off the ground with minimal help as we age, it means practising these movements regularly. We need to see it as a key skill we don't want to lose. Losing it can often result in a reduction in the variety of things we can choose to do. But did you know, our ability to do so is also seen as a significant independent predictor of lifespan?

Upright versions of bearing our own body weight are walking, running and, for the more adventurous, jumping and climbing. We may not see walking as a 'strengthening' movement, but it absolutely is and, again, if we want to keep walking well over a variety of terrains and distances, we need to keep practising it for life! Not such a hardship if it's something you love anyway.

I've started by putting my walking shoes on a low shelf right by the door. I have to squat low, grab my brightly coloured shoes and a bottle of water, and then step out, putting one foot in front of the other, bearing my own load with strength and poise!



THE CHALLENGE SOLUTIONS:

(From left to right from the top)

destroy, aim, recruit, declare, employ, claim, hire, **fire**, flame, dire, blame, sire, accuse, grim, blade.

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EDITORS: Dr Alison Johnston, Mrs Heather Gale, Phil Chatfield, Judith El-Nager, Sue Silk

Email: editors@cavershambridge.org

ADVERTISING: Mrs M Ancombe Tel: 0118 328 2754 (answerphone)

Email: advertising@cavershambridge.org

COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr R Harper.

SUBSCRIPTIONS and DELIVERIES: C Clifford: Email: subscriptions@cavershambridge.org

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

COMPANY TREASURER: Mrs J Belcher: Tel: 0118 328 2754 (answerphone)

Email: treasurer@cavershambridge.org

POSTAL SUBSCRIPTIONS: Mrs J Belcher: Tel: 0118 328 2754 (answerphone)

Email: treasurer@cavershambridge.org

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