



# Caversham Bridge

No 707

[www.cavershambridge.org](http://www.cavershambridge.org)

January 2024

## Out with the chill in run-up to Christmas

by Fred Smith

PEOPLE FROM around the area came to the centre of Caversham for late night shopping and to enjoy live music and the new Christmas lights in St Martin's Precinct on 8 December. Organised by the Caversham Traders Association, the event included everything from the Hemdean House School junior choir singing in the precinct, to a Reverse Santa at Fourbears Books. Several of the traders from the regular Sunday Farmers and Artisan Market, such as Happy Fox Bakes and Emmer Green based Cherry Me, had stalls set up around the precinct, as well as other businesses such as Dolly Rose Vintage and Henley Gin. The Baptist Church hosted local craft producers and a Fair-Trade stall, providing a chance to buy original gifts whilst warming up and meeting friends.

There was also an opportunity to provide support for the local food bank, Readifood, with a stall at the front of the New Testament Church of God taking donations. In addition to food and drinks available from local restaurants, freshly made crêpes were available from Maria's Crêpes



Galore and warm mulled wine from the Angel Bar stall. Janina Maher was artist in residence at the bookshop, providing inspiration to budding young artists visiting Santa. The gifts given to Santa were collected for Reading Family Aid.

The Pop Classics record shop, which opened this year, invited Small Faces tribute band, The Small

Fakers, to perform instore, and they then went on to play in the precinct itself. Although cold, the weather stayed dry, allowing all who came to enjoy the entertainment and make the most of what was on offer.

Following this, everyone could look forward to the Nativity Live event on Christmas Eve!

Hemdean House School junior choir singing in the precinct and (below) The Small Fakers added their music  
photos Mark Apcar



## A FRESH START TO THE YEAR

by Phil Chatfield

WE WISH ALL of our readers a Happy New Year. The Caversham Bridge newspaper will celebrate its 60th Anniversary in October, and we aim to bring you some highlights from the past throughout the year.

The theme of A Fresh Start runs through this month's paper. It is the subject of our regular Talking Point feature (p2). The paper itself has had a refresh, with a new look to pages 2 and 15 as we have moved the listing of our local clergy and churches to page 15. Our January Creative Caversham features Ade Breton, who left her job to make a fresh start as an artist (p12). Our monthly First Impressions Matter article from Laura Harmsworth looks at making a start on writing your CV (p14).

We look into the past with Happy Wanderer, who writes about The Old Normandy Fete of 1903 (p7), and the latest My Music article, which remembers youth clubs of the past (p8). We also have our second article with an historic literary link, this time inspired by Thameside mud (p11)!

January is not a good time for gardeners, but perhaps they should spend some time indoors reading their gardening books (p10) or considering the wellbeing benefits of houseplants (p15). We are always pleased to hear from local schools, and this month Hemdean House School is in the news with their road safety campaign (p14).

Looking to the future, we have our regular report from the Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA) on local planning matters (p6), and an article from Helen Lambert of CADRA on the current Reading Borough Council consultation on transport policy (p2). The Parish Council for Eye and Dunsden also has a current consultation on their Neighbourhood Plan, which will be of interest to some of us (p3).

We do hope you enjoy this edition of your local paper. Your comments and contributions are always welcome – email us at [editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)

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# A Fresh Start



## Talking Point

by Rev  
Penny Cuthbert

**W**HEN I was at theological college, one of our tutors asked us what we thought about posters on church noticeboards. I think he was expecting us to say they were boring, cheesy or generally a bit naff. But, before anyone could say anything, one of my fellow ordinands said, "A poster on a church noticeboard changed my life!". At one of the lowest points of his life he'd seen a poster which said, 'God offers a fresh start'. With hope barely alive, he'd ventured into the church and discovered a God who loved and accepted him as he was, who was willing and able to mend his heart and help him to get his life back together again. A God who, just as the poster said, offers a fresh start.

Perhaps some of us would quite like a fresh start at the beginning of the New Year? Maybe 2023 was an 'annus horribilis' for you, or maybe you just sense there must be more to life than you are currently experiencing. Often at this time we make all sorts of New Year resolutions about losing weight, getting fit, giving up smoking, or spending more time with the family. We don't always get far into January before our willpower fails. But what if God was offering us something completely different - a fresh start and a new direction?

My 'fresh start' came when I was at university. I had been exploring Christianity, watching the lives of my Christian friends and asking questions most of us wrestle with at some point: what's the point of life? Why is there so much

suffering in the world? What happens when we die? Then one night I heard someone tell Jesus' story of the prodigal son – how the younger of two sons asked his father for his share of the inheritance, went off and wasted it on parties and prostitutes; and how, when he was destitute, he came to his senses and decided to return home; how his father saw him in the distance, ran to greet him, embraced him, and then threw a huge party to celebrate his return. "That", said the preacher, "is what God is like. It doesn't matter what you've done, he's there waiting for you, waiting to pour his love into your life, and to give you a fresh start."

I said, 'Yes please' to God that night, and found forgiveness, freedom, joy, and a whole new purpose. The Bible and Church history are full of stories of people who are given 'fresh starts' – people whose lives were turned around by the grace of God. Come to church, and you will find similar stories today. God is still in the business of offering fresh starts.

If you'd like to find out more about what Christians believe and explore questions of faith informally, why not try Alpha? Our next course is running on Tuesday evenings beginning 16 January.

Contact [penny@ctmparish.org.uk](mailto:penny@ctmparish.org.uk) for details.

*Rev'd Penny Cuthbert,  
Associate Vicar, St John's Caversham*

# Transport in North Reading 2040

by Helen Lambert

Caversham Baptist Church was full on Monday 6 November when over 100 people attended a meeting organised by Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA), to hear about the issues for North Reading in Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Draft Transport Strategy.



Traffic chaos in Caversham  
photo  
Anke Ueberberg

**S**TEVE MADDOCKS, RBC Strategic Transport Manager, and Robert Williams, CEO Reading Buses, set out the key points from the strategy and the Bus Improvement Plan. Bus passenger numbers are now at 88% of pre-pandemic levels, with routes 22, 23, 24 and 25 slightly lower. A study into bus priority options for North Reading is planned, although there are no obvious solutions.

The strategy includes aspirations for a third Thames Crossing, Park and Ride, and Express Services. The Council is keen to produce schemes in collaboration with other authorities, but the challenges are considerable. The inclusion of these schemes in the strategy is essential if they are to progress. Regarding a possible charge for traffic coming from Oxfordshire and crossing Reading, options such as a clean air charge are being considered as a part of the solution for the congestion problem. On walking and cycling, the policy on 20mph speed limits is to look at individual areas. There was support for a scheme for the Last Crumb traffic lights. The issue of pavement parking is currently a police matter.

Concern over bus services dominated much of the meeting,

covering the service to Station North, linking timetables, including the Oxford services, recent changes around Kidmore End Road, the low frequencies and heavily restricted evening and weekend services. Key to improving bus services is improved highway efficiency, with predictability for buses and funding for services which are not self-supporting.

*...prevent being left behind...*

Helen Lambert, CADRA Chair, posed the final question: "Given that none of the major schemes, including a third bridge, may be achievable by 2040, how can we prevent North Reading from being left behind?"

The responses at the meeting included:

- ◆ The importance of responding to the consultation
- ◆ Redouble efforts to achieve the Bus Service Improvement Plan
- ◆ Bid for further funding
- ◆ Generate more ideas
- ◆ This meeting has been useful to that end



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# Caversham Bridge

## A FRESH LOOK FOR 2024

by The Editors

WE HAVE made a few small changes to the layout of the paper this month. In addition to the changes to pages 2 and 15 mentioned on page 1, the solutions for The Challenge (p7) will now be found on page 14, and information on deadlines for contributions to the paper will now be on this page.

### Subscriptions

As a reminder, the subscription for 2024 is not due for payment until 1 February. It can be paid by bank transfer, or by cash or cheque to your deliverer. We will also be available for subscription renewals and other enquiries at Fourbears Books on Saturday 6 January, from 10:00 to 12:00, when you will be able to pay by card as well.

Payment details are as follows:

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

For direct bank transfer our bank account details are:

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

### Future editions:

Contributions for the February 2024 issue should be submitted by 1 January and for the March 2024 edition by 1 February. These should be e-mailed to: [editors@cavershambridge.org](mailto:editors@cavershambridge.org)

Dates for advertising copy are 1 January for the February 2024 issue and 1 February for the March 2024 issue. These should be e-mailed to: [advertising@cavershambridge.org](mailto:advertising@cavershambridge.org)

## We have a plan...

EYE AND DUNSDEN Parish Council has contacted the paper to advise of their Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which is currently out for consultation. The area covered is adjacent to the eastern boundary of Caversham and Emmer Green, from Clayfield Copse down to the gravel pits adjacent to Amersham Road and the Thames, so may be of interest to local residents.

An NP is a locally created and influenced statutory development plan that, if approved and adopted, South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), as Planning Authority for the Parish, has to have regard to when considering future planning applications.

This pre-submission consultation is open until 23:59 on 12 January 2024. The draft NP and supporting documents, along with details on how to respond are available online at <https://eyedunsden.org/plan>

In addition, printed copies of the NP and supporting evidence documents will be available to review at the following locations during their usual opening hours:

- The Mill, Sonning
- The Crown, Playhatch
- Loddon Brewery, Dunsden Green

The Editors



Matt presents the award

photo Office of Matt Rodda MP

## Mama's Way a winner

THE RESULTS of the Small Business Saturday – Reading East competition, which local MP Matt Rodda runs, were announced on 2 December.

Amongst the winners this year was Mama's Way, an Italian Delicatessen in Duke Street, Reading, run by Caversham resident Dario Simoncini and his business partner, Walter Gumina. The shop has just celebrated its second anniversary, and this is its second award – quite a record.

This is the third year Matt has run the competition, aiming to shine a light on the many amazing small businesses in his constituency. He asked local residents to register their votes for their favourite local small business in the run-up to the day.

To find out about all the winners, visit [www.mattrodda.net/news](http://www.mattrodda.net/news)

For more about Mama's Way, see [www.mamasway.co.uk](http://www.mamasway.co.uk)

and on [Instagram @mamaswayuk](https://www.instagram.com/mamaswayuk)

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# Why are we waiting...

words and photos by Anna Clarke



Messy Church kitchen team (left), and Martyn Strong leading the singing (above)

A WONDERFUL team of volunteers from Churches Together in Caversham came together at the start of December to deliver a fabulous final Messy Church for 2023! With it coming right at the start of December, the theme for the session was Advent, thinking in particular about it being a season of waiting – waiting for the arrival of Jesus, the One who brings love, joy, peace and hope.

We explored this theme through a range of crafts, including hope baubles, peace doves, and love cards, as well as some specific Advent activities such as preparing an Advent jar of different things to do throughout the season of Advent, and even an edible Advent wreath made from a doughnut, icing and candy sticks!

It was a winning day for those called Ben, with Benjamin (age 8) winning the first round of our

waiting game, followed by Ben (Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Youth Worker) winning the second round. Penny Cuthbert from St John's Church helped us to understand the importance of waiting, and thought about the meaning behind the candles on a traditional Advent wreath.

To finish off, we enjoyed an amazing Christmas buffet prepared by the kitchen team who ALWAYS do such a brilliant job!

Having celebrated the birth of Christ, we move forward into the New Year knowing the love, peace, hope and joy that He brings even as we travel the ups and downs of life, and we continue waiting and trusting that one day He will return.

In the meantime, why not join us for one of our future Messy Church sessions! These will take place on the following dates from 16:00 to 18:00 at The Weller Centre: Sunday 4 February, Sunday 24 March, Sunday 12 May and Sunday 7 July. For more details, contact: [anna@ctmparish.org.uk](mailto:anna@ctmparish.org.uk)

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## Warm Welcome Space at Caversham Baptist Church

by Sue Cantwell

FROM FRIDAY 5 January, Caversham Baptist Church extends its Warm Welcome Space and will be open from 10:00 to 13:30. This is part of the national Warm Welcome Space initiative, and is supported by Churches Together in Caversham and Queen Anne's School. Originally set up to support people struggling to heat their homes, the Warm Welcome Space hub provides a welcome to anyone who would like friendly company in a warm, relaxed environment

with refreshments provided (includes hot soup from 12:00).

Everything is free of charge, including food to take away (subject to availability), provided by the Co-op Foodshare scheme.

- **The time:** Fridays from 10:00 – 13:30
- **The place:** Caversham Baptist Church, South Street RG4 8HY
- **Contact:** [office@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk](mailto:office@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk)  
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Welcome to 'Fourbears Reviews' where we briefly review a couple of titles chosen from our book shop 'Fourbears Books' in Caversham.



**H**APPY NEW YEAR! The festive season is usually a chance for me to get as much reading done as possible, and the 'To Be Read' pile reduces dramatically. However, having moved house in December and with it being a busy month, both in the shop and organising external events, reading may take a back seat in order to nap and recharge ahead of an exciting 2024. We have Fourbears Fest, a book festival for adults and children coming in May. I will provide more details in the coming months.

The first of our two books this month is *Mavis the Bravest* by Lu Fraser. Lu's picture books are always heartwarming and filled with a fun story with nice rhyming language. Mavis is a chicken, and she is scared of everything. Mavis likes spending time in the barn away

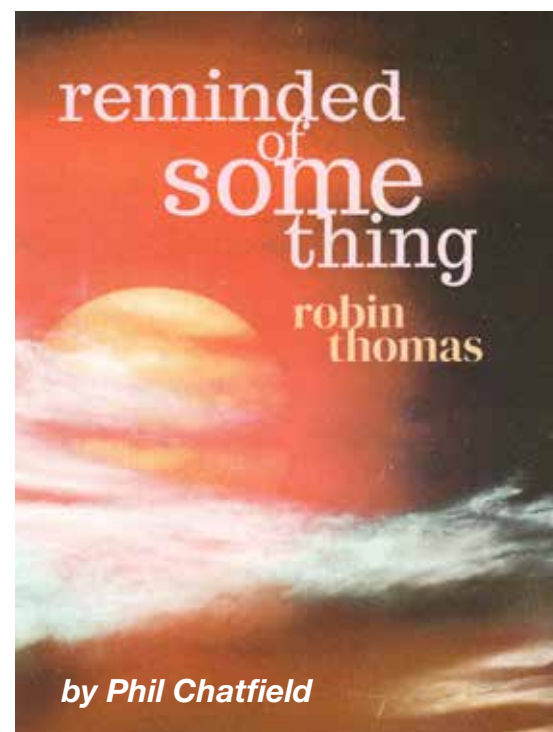
from everyone else, concentrating on her knitting. But, when a thief comes to take Sandra the Sheep, Mavis has a decision to make: whether to stay put or to save her friend. A lovely picture book with a sweet message. Sarah Warburton is the illustrator and her illustrations fit the story perfectly. An enjoyable book which you'll be happy to re-read to the little ones, time and time again.

#### ...compassion and giving...

The second book came out a couple of years ago but deserves to be continually talked about. It's called *A Terrible Kindness* by Jo Browning Wroe. It is October 1966, and William Lavery is having the night of his life at his first black-tie do. But, as the evening unfolds, news hits of a landslide at a coal mine. It has buried a school – Aberfan. This

book shows how compassion and giving can often help you to heal yourself. I missed this book the first time it came out. The shop was brand new, and I wasn't managing to read much, but I'm glad I've now discovered this gem of a book – incredibly moving and filled with humanity. As unlikeable as the main character, William, can be, there is a part of me still rooting for him throughout. It's not completely without fault. Some of the language and social opinions of the time are expressed. I think they could have been toned down, or a different voice being more compassionate might have been beneficial but, all in all, I think this is one we'll recommend whenever anyone wants to try something different.

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



SINCE IT opened in December 2020, Fourbears Books on Prospect Street, Caversham, has supported local writers with special events, book launches, and by stocking their books. The owner, Alex Forbes, always maintains a good stock of books with local connections, such as Janina Maher's *Stroll Through Caversham*, which was launched at the store in September 2022, and Larisa Brown's recent book, *The Gardener of Lashkar Gar*, which we reported on in our November edition.

More recently, Fourbears hosted the launch of the latest book of poetry by Caversham poet, Robin Thomas, *Reminded of Something*, on 19 November 2023. The book is dedicated to his wife Mary, who died in October 2021. The poems are filled with both love and loss. Alex writes, 'There is subtlety and wit in abundance, alongside his memories and emotions, resulting in complex and heartfelt poetry'. This is a book which invites both full immersion and re-reading.

We featured Robin in our October 2022 Creative Caversham article at the time of the publication of his last volume, *The Weather on the Moon*.

The article is available at <https://cavershambridge.org/archives/4887>

Other books by Robin Thomas

*The Weather on the Moon* – Two Rivers Press  
*Margot and the Strange Objects* – Ad Hoc Press  
*Cafferty's Truck* – Dempsey & Windle  
*A Distant Hum* – Cinnamon  
*Momentary Turmoil* – Cinnamon  
*A Fury of Yellow* – Eyewear

All available through Fourbears Bookshop, Caversham, [www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk](http://www.fourbearsbooks.co.uk)



Mavis protects the Bear!

photo A Forbes

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# WHAT'S ON in DECEMBER

IF YOU have an event planned, please send details to [whatson@cavershambridge.org](mailto: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](http://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** – popular, 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. 0118 9375103 or see [reading.gov.uk/leisure/all-libraries/caversham-library](http://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 0118 3348195 for further information. [bridgewebs.com/cavershampark](http://bridgewebs.com/cavershampark)

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

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

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

**Wednesdays – Light on the Hill Café** – 19:30-21:30 at Grace Church, 119 Peppard Road, RG4 8TR. A wellbeing café for adults 18+. Come as you are for tea and a chat. Please see: [www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk](http://www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk)

**Wednesdays – The Waltham St. Lawrence Silver Band** – Neville Hall in Waltham St. Lawrence RG10 0JJ. 20:00 – 22:00. Free and friendly club for brass instrumentalists. Email: [waltham.band@gmail.com](mailto:waltham.band@gmail.com)

**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 07964750182 or Trina at 07477570541

**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 School Hall. Ideal for children 6 months+. £2 donation per child, coffee and tea included.

**Fridays – Warm Welcome Space** – 10:00-13:30 at Caversham Baptist Church, South Street, RG4 8HY. All welcome, just drop in for free refreshments, including hot soup from 12:00. Tel 0118 954 5353 [www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk)

**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](mailto:Keepcavershamtidy@gmail.com), FB: [Keep Caversham Tidy](https://www.facebook.com/KeepCavershamTidy)

**Sundays – Caversham Artisan & Farmers Market** – Caversham Precinct. 10:00-15:00. See: [www.facebook.com/CAFMarket](https://www.facebook.com/CAFMarket)

**Sundays – Nordic Walk (or just walking)**. Free to all. Tel. 07931754096 or email Pat at [Wirralbird@hotmail.com](mailto:Wirralbird@hotmail.com)

**Sundays – Redifolk Song and Music Club** – 20:00-22:30 in the Community Hall, Watlington House, RG1 4RA. £8 admission for performances, £3 on singing nights. See [www.redifolk.co.uk](http://www.redifolk.co.uk)

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

**Friday 5 January – 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](mailto:chazeywi@berkshirewi.co.uk) or FB: [Chazey Women's Institute](https://www.facebook.com/ChazeyWomen'sInstitute).

**Thursday 18 January – Caversham Women's Institute** – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. [www.thewi.org.uk](http://www.thewi.org.uk) or Tel. 01189 475176

**Monday 22 January – Birds, Bins and a Brew: getting to know the birds in your garden** – 14.00 at Abbey Baptist Church, Abbey Square, Reading. Talk to Reading u3a by Ailsa Claybourn of the Reading and District Natural History Society. Free entry, non-members welcome. Further info: [www.readingu3a.org.uk](http://www.readingu3a.org.uk)

**Sunday 21 January – Hymn Café** – 15:00-16:00 at Caversham Baptist Church. Relaxed café style setting with hymns, prayers, testimony and cake.

**Friday 27 January – 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](mailto:readingcerclefrancais@gmail.com)

**Friday 26 January to Sunday 28 January – The Big Garden Birdwatch** – For details and to register, see [www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch](http://www.rspb.org.uk/whats-happening/big-garden-birdwatch)

Advanced notice

**Saturday 23rd March 2024 – Spring Show** - Caversham Horticultural Society – 13:00 - 15:00. Caversham Baptist Church Hall (Prospect St, Caversham). Their first Spring show for over 10 years! Put the date in your diary. See [www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/spring-show](http://www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/spring-show)

# 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**

Perhaps the most significant planning news this month is the Partial Update of the **Reading Local Plan**. Comments are invited up to the end of January, either by email or by responding to the online questionnaire. To help identify areas of particular interest, CADRA has produced a summary of the issues covered so you can pick those which concern you most. You will find this on [www.cadra.org.uk](http://www.cadra.org.uk) under 'Latest News' shown on the Home Page.

**New planning applications** include a replacement house on Conisboro Way, a proposed rear extension to Spitiko Restaurant on Prospect Street, and an extension of the temporary permission for the car wash on Hills Meadow for a further 10 years. An appeal has been lodged against refusal of permission for a **5G mast** at the junction of Henley Road and Donegal Close. (Note the proposed changes to the criteria for such masts in the update of the Local Plan.) All the application links are on the CADRA Planning List.

**...Historic England objected...**

For the application at **Caversham Park**, Historic England has formally objected on heritage grounds and a long list of amended plans is now online.

**Air quality** has long been a local concern. A series of reports have been issued, along with a consultation on the Air Quality Action Plan, for which the closing date is 17 January. Open consultations are available at <https://consult.reading.gov.uk> The consultation on the Transport Strategy closed in December and the CADRA response is available on our website.

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WAS GOING through a collection of local history books which had belonged to a friend who died in the summer, and there it was – the handbook for a three-day fund-raising event at the Large and Small Town Halls, some 65 pages which, at the time, cost 6d. The event was intended to raise funds for the Reading Wesleyan Methodist Circuit.

The money was needed to clear the debt on the manse at Wesley Church, and to fund a ‘great forward movement in Reading.’ £17,000 was to be spent on ‘aggressive Christian work’. The Circuit leaders, ‘recognising that evangelical churches are not providing adequately for the increasing population of our town, have resolved to build, within the next five years, three modern mission halls, and new churches in the growing settlements of Caversham Heights and Tilehurst’. In the end, only two of the mission halls were built – Elm Park Hall and Whitley Hall. The Tilehurst Chapel opened in 1905.

...exceedingly chaste in design...

By 1903, Caversham had a Methodist Chapel already. The handbook describes each of the twelve churches which were then in the Circuit. Caversham had gone through three phases, with an iron chapel, then the Sunday School which is now the hall, and then the chapel, described as being ‘exceedingly chaste in design.’ This leaves me perplexed. With its spire, which has since taken down, (but photographs exist), I would have described it as exuberant.

The Chapel on Caversham Heights came right at the end of the ‘great forward movement’. A second bazaar, this time on the theme of ‘Old Abbeys and

Castles’, was held in 1905 but, even so, when the chapel opened in 1909, the trustees had to take responsibility for a debt of around £1,420.

One of the features which you might not have expected to encounter in the ‘Official Handbook’ is a sense of fun. The Town Halls were to be decorated by a well-known scene painter to resemble old streets in Rouen, Lisieux, Bayeux and Caen – a ‘triumph of scenic art’. There were stalls run by the twelve churches, and there were also entertainments – concerts, marionettes, a conjuror, a shooting gallery, and a lightning artist who would sketch your portrait on a card, suitable for framing. Competitions included needle threading, candle blowing, and eye guessing, whatever that might have been.

I particularly liked the ‘Official Regulations’:

1. Coming into the Bazaar without paying is forbidden, but paying without coming in will be permitted
2. Change will be given, but will not be pressed upon purchasers
3. No purchaser is expected to pay twice for any article, but such payment will not be refused
4. Lotteries and Raffling together with Grumbling or Faultfinding, are strictly forbidden
5. Purchasers will be allowed to spend as much as they please

The three days must have been expensive to stage and must have involved an immense amount of organisation – this is just a brief summary of what’s in the handbook. What an act of faith it must have been on the part of the executive committee!



Official Handbook of The Normandy Fête image 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 14

### SEWING

Can you find 21 words related to sewing in the grid?

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

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Basting  
Bobbin  
Buttonhole  
Cotton  
Dart  
Embroider  
Fabric  
Mercerised  
Needle  
Overlocker

Pattern  
Reel  
Scissors  
Seamstress  
Sewing Machine  
Smocking  
Stitch  
Tension  
Thimble  
Thread



**L**IKE MANY young people in the 1950s, I joined a Caversham youth club. It was great fun and a place to meet up with friends, especially, of course, girls. We played table tennis, listened to music on a record player and chatted. Frequently we had social nights where we played games. A favourite was 'winking', where the girls would sit in a circle with a boy behind them. However, one boy had an empty chair and he would wink to call one of the girls across to him. When the girl tried to dash over, the boy behind would try to grab her and keep her. If you were lucky and the girl really fancied you, she would try hard to get across to you.

Obviously, music was the thing then. If we had a new 78rpm record, we would bring it so others could hear the new Johnny Rae song, but I cannot remember us dancing much. It was very much a 'getting to know each other' Saturday evening.

Two older men and their girlfriends ran the club. There wasn't much for them to do because everyone seemed to get on amicably without much supervision. I cannot remember a single punch-up.

Then National Service came along, and I spent two years serving Queen and country. I returned and one Saturday went to

the Youth Club. I was welcomed and became a kind of helper i.e., clearing up afterwards!

Then one of the leaders decided to marry his lady friend and move away. I was asked to take his place and, because I was rather old to be a member, I became a co-leader. Gradually, as the Saturdays passed, I found myself more and more in charge.

One day one of the club members came up and asked if I would like his friend's rock group to play for us. I agreed as it would make a nice change to have live music.

The following Saturday, when I went to open up, I found a number of girls already waiting at the door. A few minutes later, a scruffy van turned up and five long-haired youths started to unload instruments, amplifiers and a drum kit. This wasn't quite what I was expecting.

"Where do you want us to set up?" one youth asked. I indicated the end of the hall.

"Where are the plugs?" someone called.

Meanwhile more and more girls and boys were coming in. There were one or two I recognised, but most were unfamiliar.

The band began to tune up. I use the word 'tune' loosely because it was more volume than melody. The drummer clearly had a grudge with his drums as he thrashed at them.

"Do you want us to start", a guitarist yelled at me.

I shrugged my shoulders. The group threw themselves into



their first number. The building shook and the pigeons on the roof outside took off.

The now huge crowd of youngsters were ecstatic. I felt sure protesting neighbours would soon be berating me. Luckily the 'band' was short on numbers to play, although I couldn't tell the difference between any of them. I guess they managed an hour. The onlookers loved it and, amazingly, I never heard a word of complaint from anybody.

It would make a good ending if I confessed the music was from a newly formed group called 'The Rolling Stones'. Sadly, they weren't, and I never heard of them again.

## What does wine sound like?

by Pamela Chilvers



Pamela performing in Tolmezzo photo courtesy P Chilvers

*Local classical music composer and pianist, Pamela Chilvers, has been in the news with her compositions inspired by wine from northern Italy. Here is her account.*

**F**IRST ARRIVED at Ronchi di Cialla, Northern Italy, in May 2019, where I met the Rapuzzi family, who produce some of the most exquisite wines I have ever tasted. Following a further visit in 2022 and a meeting of minds, Ivan Rapuzzi and I discussed creating a unique experience combining wine and music. Bringing together the senses of taste and hearing, my piano pieces based on the contrasting wines of Ronchi di Cialla began to emerge.

Book One, *Five Pieces from Ronchi di Cialla*, covers the first five wines. I performed my compositions, combined with wine tasting, to an invited audience of journalists, winemakers, broadcasters and wine merchants, in Tolmezzo, a village at the foot of the Alps, in March 2023. I played a Fazioli Concert Grand piano, and the setting in the Michele Gortani Museum was just beautiful. The Rapuzzi family

hosted my stay after sending me many cases of wine for inspiration!

I took the pronunciation of each wine after tasting it, and changed the syllables into rhythms as melodies appeared and the wine compositions took shape. When I had finished each composition, Ben Capp, my sound engineer, recorded them for YouTube, I remember thinking, 'Did I write those?!'.

After I performed *Five Pieces*, Ivan told me that he produced seven more wines. There was a pause and I said, "So would you like me to write seven more pieces?". He enthusiastically replied, "Oh! Si!". And so more cases of wine arrived and *More Pieces from Ronchi di Cialla* was born.

What an exciting project this has been. A QR code will be printed on the wine labels so that the music to go with the wine can be accessed immediately. Astrum Wine Cellars, London, is the importer. Details of how to listen to the music, and purchase copies, can be found on my website:

[www.pamelachilvers.co.uk](http://www.pamelachilvers.co.uk)

*Pamela's other compositions, published by Mozart Edition UK, include Kites for solo piano, which is on the Music Teachers' Board (MTB) Grade 8 Piano syllabus.*

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# The Green Menace Arrives

**A**S I STEPPED out of my back door early in November, I heard a familiar but alien sound coming from a neighbour's garden. Sure enough, there it was, sitting on their bird feeder: the green invader which has become so familiar to Londoners. The ring-necked parakeet, sometimes called the rose-necked parakeet, has been a common feature of London parks since the 1990s. I would often hear them as I cycled through Hyde Park on the way to work – their call is very distinctive, if rather ugly to my mind. They were much more difficult to see, although sometimes you would catch one flying between trees with nesting material.

*...grown rapidly since mid-1990s...*

No-one is sure how they became established in London, although it is generally thought they are descended from birds which escaped captivity. They are native to Africa and India, and are non-migratory. The population was low until the mid-1990s but has grown rapidly since then. Although most common in London and the southeast of England, colonies have been reported as far north as Newcastle. I had

*by George Grubb*

seen some close to Henley whilst walking near the Flower Pot Pub in 2006, but I had not spotted any in our area until this year, when I heard one flying past a couple of times in the summer.

During the cold spell at the end of November, I spotted one in my neighbour's apple tree, feeding on the apples which had been too high to pick. They are large birds, weighing about the same as a blackbird, and feed on fruit, berries, nuts and seeds. In some countries they have caused serious damage to fruit crops and are regarded as pests. There are also concerns about their impact on local species. Whilst not aggressive, they are large and may deter smaller native birds at bird feeders. They are not protected in England and so can be culled lawfully without the need for specific permission. But perhaps it won't be necessary, as there is plenty of evidence of them becoming a regular part of the diet of Peregrine Falcons, Hobbies and even Barn Owls.

I have not yet been able to take a photo, but you are bound to recognise them if you see them!



Ring-necked parakeet

*photo Neil Phillips*

For more information, see the RSPB web site, [rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/ring-necked-parakeet](http://rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/ring-necked-parakeet)



## Winter Wildlife Home Improvements *by Tricia Marcouse*



Blue Tit at bird box

*photo R Stallard*

EARLY JANUARY is the time to be putting up new bird boxes and cleaning out the nesting material from your existing ones you meant to do in the autumn. Garden birds can be pairing up and choosing nest sites in late January, depending upon weather conditions. Choose a site with an entrance between north and east, and a minimum of 4 metres from any feeders.

This is partly to avoid the disturbance around feeders, but particularly because squirrels are attracted to bird feeders and then inspect the surrounding area. They will quickly spot opportunities to enrich their diet with a nutritious chick. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the British Trust for Ornithology websites provide information about suitable bird boxes. The RSPB sells a wide range of boxes. Try to avoid the designer boxes at garden centres, and keep well away from anything with a convenient perch just outside the hole for a magpie to sit on and collect the chicks inside!

The birds can fly into your garden, but hedgehogs need holes in the fence to wander between gardens and avoid the roads. Conservation initiative Hedgehog Street and local campaigners have been writing to manufacturers and retailers of fence panels to get hedgehog holes included in the design (only 13 cm by 13 cm). If you are replacing fence panels or gravel boards this winter, then please ask for these, or cut your own holes, perhaps one every 5 metres.

There is a list of companies selling such products on [www.hedgehogstreet.org/hedgehog-friendly-fencing](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/hedgehog-friendly-fencing) or, if you don't need to purchase anything, please help by writing a letter to any local company which is NOT signed up. There are template letters on their website.



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# READING MATTERS

BY LES COOPER



**If we are honest with ourselves, with most newspapers and magazines we purchase, we usually only select the bits we are interested in**

IN OCTOBER last year the Amateur Gardening magazine closed down. It had been published for 139 years and was apparently the oldest gardening magazine in the world. Sadly, I hadn't bought one for ages, so I was no help. In some ways I was a traitor, because from 1990 to 1993 twenty-six of my articles were published in it. Most were about delphiniums, and I suspect they were getting boring and repetitive when the Editor decided to move on to other things. I always thought I would submit new articles on other garden topics, but my good intentions foundered, and I never did.

I had read Amateur Gardening articles for a number of years, because I remember my Dad buying it soon after the war, and I continued to read it. When I say read, I really mean some parts of it. As with most magazines, I doubt if I ever read the complete thing from start to finish, but then who does?

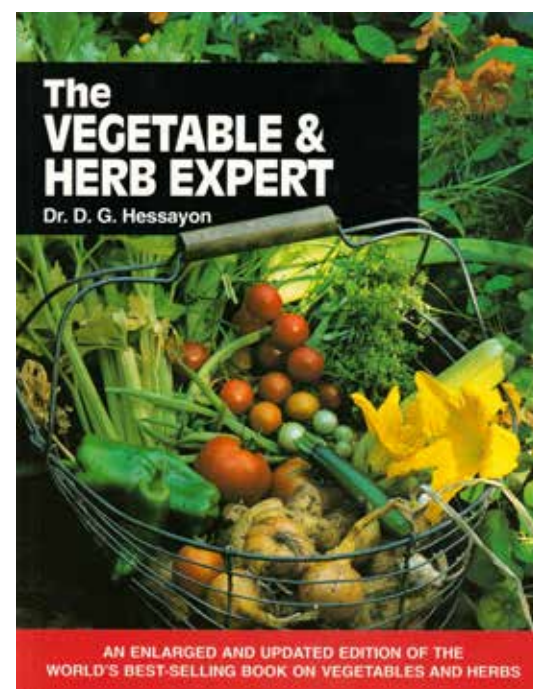
If we are honest with ourselves, with most newspapers and

magazines we purchase, we usually only select the bits we are interested in. How many magazines do you ever read from start to finish? I have quite a number of garden books, but only one or two have I read from cover to cover.

I have garden books mostly for reference. My absolute favourites are my tattered The Expert manuals by Doctor Hessayon, which I have owned for years. I often glance into one or another to find out how I should do something or other, things like sowing distances for example. The beauty of these handbooks is they are easy to read, with short sections, headed lists and lots of illustrations. I confess I find they are useful when I am writing garden articles. Wikipedia tells me Doctor David Gerald Hessayon, OBE, started the series in 1958 with *Be your own gardening expert* and, by 2008, fifty million copies had been printed. There are over twenty Expert titles, in twenty-two languages, and The Vegetable and Herb Expert is still a bestseller. Incidentally, Dr Hessayon is ninety-five years old and, unsurprisingly, has received many awards and accolades.

Dr Brent Elliott, a RHS librarian once wrote, 'I would say that the Expert Books have been the biggest innovation in gardening publications since the death of William Robinson in 1938'.

Personally, I think I had better learn more about William Robinson.



Expert guide still a best seller

photo F Smith



Emily Gillmor (above) photo: Caversham Picture Framers

## ART AND CRAFT COMBINE TO DRAW THE CROWDS

by Elestr Lee

A WIDE RANGE of unique and often tantalising items were on offer throughout the run-up to Christmas in Caversham and the surrounding area. Independently run small-scale events drew together highly skilled artists and craftspeople, creating an opportunity for us all to buy beautiful items as Christmas gifts, made in our very own area.

And the crowds came out to see what was on offer, whether at the Artisa Christmas Market in Marsack Street, or at the annual Christmas Gala, held as usual in St Andrew's Hall. There was a definite buzz in the air at the hall, with a large number of visitors attending, eager to inspect the array of handmade silk scarves, paintings and prints,

pottery, jewellery and handmade soaps. With cakes and drinks on offer to raise funds for the Ways & Means Trust, the café area was packed with friends who had met up at the event enjoying a get-together on an extremely chilly winter's day.

From the beginning of December, the Caversham Picture Framer in Church Road has been exhibiting the screen prints of Reading-based artist Emily Gillmor. The exhibition was launched with a private party at which Emily gave a brief demonstration to the crowd of how screen prints are made – she even invited members of the audience to give it a go themselves!

Her work combines her talent for drawing plants as well as domestic scenes – with her sharp eye for detail – and the range of effects which can be achieved making screen prints in the hands of an expert like Emily.

The exhibition at the Caversham Picture Framer will continue until 6 January, and can be viewed between 10:00 and 16:00 from Tuesdays to Saturdays.



Arts and crafts at St Andrews photos: Li Sheng



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# An Education in Mud:

*Lessons from Science and Elizabeth Bennet*

text and photo Roslyn Weaver

I AM attempting to run, but the squelching, splattering and sliding are making a mockery of it. It is Parkrun, it is muddy, and it is all my fault. What's a little mud, I said earlier. That's what trail shoes are for! Tomorrow, we should do that walk from Caversham to Goring we've been talking about – yes, it will be slippery, but we have wellies!

The other household member had agreed, in that sort of dubious way that suggests a future reckoning of who turns out to be right. I now know the answer, and what's worse, he's much faster and has probably finished Parkrun by now, while I'm still on lap two. Plenty of time to slop about in the mud and rue this idea. We are definitely not walking to Goring.

I try to remind myself of the delights of dirt. Of petrichor, that scent of dry earth after rain, a potent combination of bacteria-produced geosmin, plant oils and ozone, and so intoxicating that some perfumes even attempt to mimic it. Of a different soil bacterium, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, thought to influence serotonin levels and positively affect mood – something gardeners already know.

*...six inches deep in mud...*

Everyone's favourite muddy walker, Elizabeth Bennet, knew this joy too. When Lizzy walks three miles to Mr Bingley's home in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, she appears with dirty stockings and a petticoat 'six inches deep in mud'. Bingley's uppity sisters condemn her 'wild' appearance, while Darcy admires her glowing complexion. I am not sure if Austen herself might have walked these soggy Thames paths during her time at school in Reading, or if young schoolgirls did no such 'wild' things, but I am sure that Lizzy would approve of this muddy endeavour.

My own rosy cheeks are on full display by run's end, thanks more to unfitness than dirt-fuelled happiness, and bathed in the smug virtue that only a finished run and conquered mud can bring. Maybe that walk to Goring isn't such a bad idea after all. We can discuss who turned out to be right.

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## In the garden

by Pam Gumbrell

CAVERSHAM COURT Gardens were buzzing with activity early on a very cold Saturday morning in December for the annual Econet Green Christmas Tree sale. Despite the intense cold, the day remained dry and there were plenty of customers for the trees harvested from local heathland and natural materials for wreath making. A steady stream of the trees left the site to become the centrepieces of Christmas decorations in homes across the area.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds birdboxes, feeders and hedgehog kennels were popular, as were the locally produced honey and beeswax candles. The fairtrade stall nearly sold out of wool socks, gloves and bobble hats, and many of their eye-catching handmade Christmas decorations from Bethlehem and Kashmir found new homes.

The sale is always a friendly community event, with old friends and new families all preparing for Christmas. If you have any photos of your trees, do send them in to the paper, and watch out for us next year.



Econet wreath materials

photo P Chatfield



Fairtrade stall

photo P Chatfield

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# Artist who has found the perfect place to fulfill her dreams



**French-born artist *Adeline Breton – Ade B* – talks to *Elestr Lee* about her decision to give up her career in sales and set up her studio here**

IT'S BEEN something of a journey for Ade B, who grew up in Chartres in France but now resides in Caversham. She has set up a studio in her home where she creates her strong, vibrant acrylic paintings in her distinctive style. Ade sells her pictures in London and Reading, as well as through open studios. Last summer she held her first solo exhibition at the Caversham Picture Framer and will soon be selling her work through her own website and via Etsy.

"The exhibition at the Picture Framers was my first very successful solo show and we had a full room at the launch,"



Ade also loves to paint pet portraits

Ade recalled. "I sold one of my largest paintings, and a few more, thanks to the help of owner Alex Foster and the gallery manager Lydia Gledhill."

Ade moved to Caversham three years ago, having previously lived in London for six years. She is a self-taught artist - "I have always painted" - who had been advised to take a 'sensible' degree (she did Business Studies at university while in France). "Afterwards I had no idea what I wanted to do. I was in my early 20s, so my parents suggested I should learn English. I came to London and signed up to an advertising school for six months. After that, I got my first job, in a call centre, so I began a career in sales, where I learnt a lot about selling, and presenting myself."

"At weekends I would be visiting museums and painting," Ade added. In fact, it was while she was living in London, she switched from using oils to acrylic paint, as she needed something which would dry quickly. "I found acrylics fascinating, and there is so much you can do with them by changing the characteristics of the acrylic paint at a molecular level with various mediums. The pursuit of the perfect technique and creating texture is something I particularly enjoy while painting."

Like so many people, the pandemic caused Ade to re-evaluate her life. "I was unhappy, and things needed to change. Working from home during lockdown



highlighted how pointless things seemed to be – meetings about meetings! I decided to give it all up."

Ade is delighted with her decision to move to Caversham, and the brave move she has taken to live from the proceeds of the art she creates. "I'm still at the early stage of establishing myself and, although the move was not easy, I am happier. I think of people who are hesitating to act on fulfilling their dreams. Whatever dream you have, you must believe in yourself," she affirms. "It is harder and even more painful to remain in doubt and feeling blue, than actually to try and fail...or even succeed!"

## ...artists are dreamers...

She realises that, although it made her unhappy, her experience of working in sales has given her confidence. "Artists are dreamers but have to be grounded. We need to sell our work – and that means marketing our work, creating websites, being able to do accounts. These are all aspects of the business world."

Ade is now building up her business through selling at art markets and fairs. "Each one is different – sometimes they are outside, sometimes inside, but you always meet lots of other artists. You invest slowly in the materials you need, and you learn from each event. The planning beforehand is a job in itself – so important. However, the proximity to London is so useful," she adds.

Ade is also a member of the Reading Guild of Artists. "I took along my portfolio and was delighted to be accepted. The RGA offers support to young artists, and I would like to see even more collaboration

between the young and the older artists. If you are interested, please come along and join us! However, I'm sad that there is no gallery in Reading where the RGA could hold its main summer exhibition, so they have to go to Henley."

Pet portraits are an additional feature of Ade's work. "The British people are in love with their dogs!" she laughs. "This is very different from my other art, and it feels good to work on the classical techniques of portraiture and gives me the chance to paint with a looser brush than when creating my other pieces."

"But it is my contemporary paintings which I work on mainly. They are bold and colourful and filled with allegories, and I want people to see something in them. Each painting is a personal story. It's lovely when people are looking at my work, and they begin to open up, and tell me their own stories."

"Before I became a fulltime artist, I was melancholic, and everything seemed grey. That's probably why I now go for bold colours. I wanted to transform my life, and I have done so. Looking back, having worked in sales for a decade this gave me business skills; many artists don't have this experience. It has made me grounded: after all, if I don't make money from my art, it's not sustainable. But we also need space, and a community. Living in Reading has given me that."

Find out more:

Website: [adebreton.com](http://adebreton.com)

[instagram.com/adebreton.art](https://www.instagram.com/adebreton.art)



"Bold and colourful and filled with allegories," says Ade of her work

All photos: Ade B



# Grace Church, Emmer Green



Drawing by Janina Maher

[www.janinamaher.artweb.com](http://www.janinamaher.artweb.com)

**W**HEN I went to find Grace Church to research for this article, walking up the Peppard Road from Caversham, I found it in a continuation of the road that I had not been down before – a turning off the main road just before Buckingham Drive in Emmer Green, know locally as the Old Peppard Road. Set back from the road and surrounded by housing, the Church has a rather magical appearance, painted white, and miniature in scale, built in the Gothic style Janina Maher has captured in this month's drawing.

As I approached the church, I was greeted by the cheerful sound of children singing 'The wheels on the bus go round and round', and I realised that I had arrived at the end of an energetic session of a toddler group. I bumped into Cathy Lamsdale, who is the church secretary and leader of the toddlers. After storing all the play equipment, Cathy kindly gave me a tour of the premises and explained some of the fascinating history of the church and its congregation.

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw a 'great evangelical awakening' and the rapid spread of the non-conformist movement. In 1821, a James Sherman was appointed as permanent minister of the Castle Street Chapel in Reading, now St Mary's. He was an active preacher, and supported many of the rural non-conformist congregations in local villages who met mainly in farmhouse kitchens. Sherman was approached by an elderly lady, Mrs Burchett, a farmer and landowner in the Caversham area who wanted to build a chapel on her own land at Emmer Green. Plans were drawn up, and in nine

months the chapel was built in Bath stone with a castellated tower, complete with a bell, which was very unusual in a non-conformist building. Today the bell is no more. The completed chapel opened in 1827. The rapid construction and limited budget meant that there were no proper foundations or damp course, which still causes problems in the building today. Mrs Burchett left the congregation an endowment of £1,500 for the purpose of 'perpetuating and preaching the Gospel in the said Protestant Dissenting Chapel at Caversham'.

A schoolroom was later built for weekday elementary education and a Sunday school and a manse, which is still next to the church, constructed for the Pastor. In the 1980s the schoolroom was demolished to make way for a modern Worship Hall and community facilities – again self-financed by church members. The original chapel became the church hall, and the whole complex is now used for a lively programme of activities for young and old, including a well attended youth group, pop-ins for support, and a café for chat and refreshment.

In 1964 the church became affiliated to the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches and is now a New Frontier Church. The thriving congregation still holds to their fundamental Christian faith led by the Bible. Sunday worship is a lively family affair usually accompanied by live music and a warm welcome.

Janina's book, *A Stroll Through Caversham*, is available from Fourbears Books and through her website, <https://janinamaher.artweb.com>

## READING BACH CHOIR

### A PASSION FOR PASSIONS

by Kathy Munns

**D**O YOU have a Passion for Passions? Of the choral variety, that is! You are warmly invited to join Reading Bach Choir for their workshop day on Saturday 20 January at Caversham Heights Methodist church, from 10:00 to 16:30. Choirs across the world will be performing the famous Passions from the repertoire during March and April, and this is a chance to sing some of the best-known choruses and chorales from Bach's timeless St Matthew and St John Passions.

Our Conductor, Daniel Mahoney, will trace the history of the Passion as a musical form and genre, exploring the traditions that influenced Bach and looking at the music that he inspired. Music and refreshments will be included, and the day will wrap up with an informal performance for friends and family.

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[www.readingbachchoir.org.uk](http://www.readingbachchoir.org.uk)  
for more details.



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## First Impressions Matter

# Making a start on your CV

by Laura Harmsworth



*You might not write well every day,  
but you can always edit a bad page.  
You can't edit a blank page. — Jodi Picoult*

**ARE YOU** looking at a blank document on your computer screen feeling overwhelmed and wondering where to start with writing your CV?

First, there are several information-collecting exercises you can go through.

- Compile a list of skills you have that are relevant to the type of role you'll be applying to. Seek input from others, highlight skills from adverts for your ideal role, and take a personality questionnaire such as [www.16personalities.com](http://www.16personalities.com).
- Brainstorm your achievements. Think through all your roles and write down positive feedback, awards,

targets achieved, teams recruited, training given or undertaken, projects managed, challenges overcome, problems solved, initiatives implemented that have saved money/reduced resources and improved profit/sales/enquiries.

- Source keywords and requirements from job adverts.

**But then what, or what if this is too daunting?**

I suggest starting with the simple things to get you in the right mindset:

- 1 Type your name, email, contact number, and LinkedIn profile at the top of the page
- 2 Add section headings including profile, key skills and achievements, career history, education and training
- 3 Add basic information under each section, e.g. job title, company name, dates

At this point you might feel like stepping away knowing you have a structure to start filling in with everything gleaned from the information-gathering exercises. Or you'll be on a roll and continue writing.

Then it's a matter of editing, tailoring, and running spelling and grammar checks.

I won't lie, you're not going to write your CV in an hour, and some of these points are more time-consuming than others, but you can get a large amount done and often starting with the basics is the kickstart you'll need.

You can follow Laura on:

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

on LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lauraharmsworth)

website: [www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk](http://www.cavershamcvwriting.co.uk)

Email: [contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk](mailto:contact@cavershamcvwriting.co.uk)



## Stating their case

**S**TUDENTS AT Hemdean House School were invited to Reading Borough Council's office on 13 November 2023 to address the Traffic Management Sub-Committee about road safety outside their school in Hemdean Road. Representatives of the School Council presented a petition calling for the implementation of speed calming measures on the road, including digital road signs and the installation of speed cushions, to address the growing concern regarding speeding vehicles in the 30 mph zone outside the school.

The students highlighted the urgency of the matter, emphasizing the need for increased safety measures due to the high speed of passing vehicles within the designated school zone. They also raised the lack of noticeable signs indicating the presence of their school on Hemdean Road, contributing to the potential hazards faced by students and parents.

The situation is made worse by the narrowing of the road due to parking on both sides, causing congestion.

The road is also on a bus route. The School Council's delegation, consisting of representatives from Years 4, 5, and 6, made their case to the committee members and received applause and commendation from them. Reading Borough Councillor John Ellis commented "The school must be proud of you, you are such a credit to the school, and it's great seeing young people get involved in such important issues like traffic safety [...]."

The School Council have sought support from the local community by setting up an online petition and have delivered letters to the school's neighbours. Following their presentation to the Sub-Committee, the Hemdean House School Council will now submit their formal request in writing to Reading Borough Council.

For more information and to support their initiative, see their petition at

[www.change.org/p/implement-digital-speed-signs-in-caversham-reading-uk](https://www.change.org/p/implement-digital-speed-signs-in-caversham-reading-uk)

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At Reading Borough Council offices

*story and photo  
by Trish Peres*

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(From left to right from the top)

bee, whirl, concur, span, agree, spin, decide,  
resolve, **revolve**, stride, devolve, march,  
dissolve, strike, delegate.

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## The benefits of indoor plants

**W**E MAY only just have put our Christmas decorations away, but whether it's combating SAD or beautifying our homes and workspaces, the presence of indoor plants has long been praised for soothing the winter blues and boosting our mood. At this time of year, when we spend a large part of our day indoors, it is more important than ever to bring these 'breathing' additions into our living environments. Numerous scientific studies have explored the impact of indoor plants, and results are now shedding light on the matter.

The benefits of indoor plants have been shown to be:

- An improved mood - cleaner air.
- Reduced stress levels.
- Increased worker productivity (adding plants to office environments in particular).

- Increased speed of reaction in a computer task.
- Improved attention span (in some scientific studies, but not all).
- Reduced diastolic blood pressure.
- Reduced fatigue and headaches by 20-25 percent in one study.
- Patients in hospitals reported greater levels of wellbeing and decreased post-operative pain

In school settings, students showed an increased interest in plant names and types, and a sense of responsibility towards helping them grow by watering and feeding them.

But are there any side effects for people exposed to indoor plants? Encouragingly, the presence of plants had very few negative effects when studied, with a very low level of reported skin or respiratory irritation. Also,

night-time release of carbon dioxide by houseplants is unlikely to be a problem, as emission levels are very low. It's important to know which plants are toxic if there are children or pets in the home. Asthma or allergies can be aggravated by some plant species, but there are plenty of indoor plants which are safe for all.

*...the bigger and leafier, the better...*

According to a 1989 NASA study, houseplants can help improve air quality by removing cancer-causing chemicals like formaldehyde and benzene from the air. Another study found that the soil in potted plants can also help clean indoor air. The bigger and leafier the plant, the better, the study says. Plants can become part of small indoors spaces just as easily as larger rooms and workplaces.

A beautiful exchange happens: the indoor plants depend on us for care and, in turn, they take care of us by improving the air we breathe and making our space more beautiful. I personally also think plants are hopeful. As they grow and blossom, they can be an important reminder for us of things to come.

**Happy New Year everyone!**



## Local Clergy and Church Services

### ANGLICAN

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##### St Margaret, St Peter, St John

Rev'd Mike Smith,  
The Rectory, 20 Church Rd, Caversham RG4 7AD  
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Rev'd Penny Cuthbert Tel: 07825 331 810  
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59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX

#### Current services

##### St Margaret's Church

Mapledurham – 11:15. 1st, 2nd, 4th Sunday Holy Communion, 3rd Sunday Service of the Word.

##### 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 Andrew's

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.  
Tel: 0118 947 2788 [www.standrewscaversham.org](http://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](http://www.standrewscaversham.org/services)  
Wednesday 8pm Compline (in church/vicarage)

### St Barnabas, Emmer Green and Caversham Park

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, [vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk](mailto:vicar@saintbarnabas.org.uk)  
Church Office Tel: 0118 947 8239

#### Current Services

Sundays: 8:00 BCP Holy Communion (1st Sunday only)  
9:30 Parish Communion (Service of the Word on 2nd Sunday)

11:30 All Age Worship (Café Church or Family Communion)

Wednesdays: 10:30 Midweek Communion

Morning Prayer: Tuesdays 8:30 in church; Mon/Weds/Thurs 8:00. online at

[www.facebook.com/StBarnabasEmmerGreen/live\\_videos](http://www.facebook.com/StBarnabasEmmerGreen/live_videos)

Full details at [www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on](http://www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on)

### METHODIST CHURCH

#### Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Rev'd Jeongsook Kim Tel: 0118 947 2223

#### Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

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

#### New Testament Church of God

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson  
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### UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

#### United Reformed Church, Caversham Park

Contact: Dr Alison Johnston

Tel: 0118 947 5152 [www.cavershamparkurc.com](http://www.cavershamparkurc.com)

#### Current services

Sunday – 11:00 – Livestreaming on YouTube

Details on their web site at:

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

### BAPTIST CHURCH

#### Caversham Baptist Church

Pastor: Colin Baker

Church office Tel: 0118 954 5353

Email: [secretary@cavershambaptistchurch.org.uk](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk)

See their web site for details:

[www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk](http://www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk)

#### Riverside Church (Reading)

[www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk](http://www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk)

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#### Our Lady and St Anne

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Tel: 0118 947 1787 [www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk](http://www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk)

#### Current services

See their web site for services at:

[www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk](http://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](http://www.cavershamchurch.org)





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