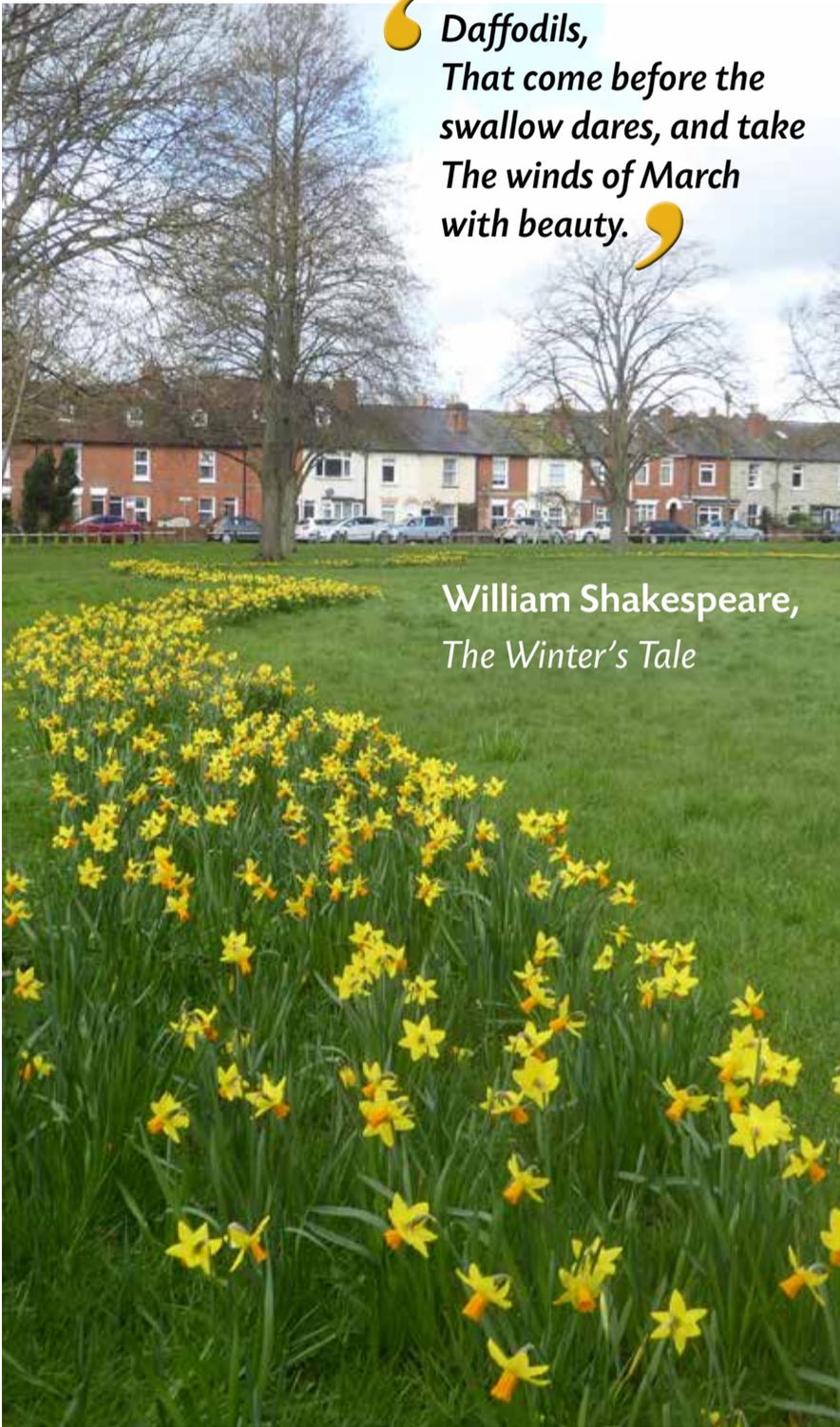


Caversham Bridge

No 709

www.cavershambridge.org

March 2024



Daffodils,
That come before the
swallow dares, and take
The winds of March
with beauty.

William Shakespeare,
The Winter's Tale

Helping our neighbours

by Rachel Paton

CAVERSHAM GOOD NEIGHBOURS (CGN) is a local charity offering essential transport to the elderly and disabled in the neighbourhood. It started life in 1965, when the initial motivation came from a local GP, Dr Beale, and a local priest, Rev Derek Eastman. Dr Beale realised some of his patients were having difficulty in attending his surgery, collecting prescriptions and getting to hospital. In his previous parish, Rev Eastman had experienced an innovative scheme to help housebound people.

The proposals for Caversham Good Neighbours were adopted in 1965 by the Caversham Parochial Church Council. They were for an independent voluntary organisation to provide transport for older or disabled people in Caversham to enable them to attend surgeries, clinics or hospitals, and to assist with the collection of prescriptions. Nearly 60 years on, we are still fulfilling this need.

We are now looking for more volunteer drivers and a few extra people to help in the office.

As a volunteer driver with CGN, you may drive people to their GP appointments, or to one of the local hospitals (Royal Berkshire and Henley). You may also volunteer to take someone to the hairdressers, or perhaps their chiropodist in Tilehurst. There are many different needs among those unable to drive or use public transport. Some trips take just 30 minutes, some can take longer. For instance, a client may be going to a lunch club, so you would return later to drive them home. Our drivers find it very rewarding getting to know our clients and helping them with essential transport.

Each driver decides which lifts they want to do and how available they will make themselves. Some



Volunteer driver Rachel *photo D Backhouse*

may offer one trip a week, others perhaps just once a month - there is no expectation or any minimum.

Volunteers working in the office in Church House in Church Street provide the essential link, matching requests for lifts with the volunteer drivers. Again, our volunteers choose which day or days they are able to work in any month, working between 9:30 and 10:30, when clients ring requesting lifts.

So, if you are keen to make a difference in your community, please contact Caversham Good Neighbours at www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk/contact.php or on 0118 948 3466.

Rachel Paton is the CGN Recruitment Officer and can be contacted on 07748 922058

text and photo Phil Chatfield

BY NOW the daffodils and tulips should be in full bloom, with their promise of longer days and warmer weather. Your March Caversham Bridge is another 20-page edition, looking forward to Easter and highlighting some of the people and activities at the heart of our community.

We have a number of articles featuring local groups in need of volunteers to help in their work. Caversham Good Neighbours (above) is appealing for more drivers, and the Read Easy charity (p11) is seeking support for their

work helping adults with literacy difficulties. We also look further afield, with a report on local links with The Gambia (p8), the work of the Reading Refugee Support Group (p9), and the Kukri Cookbook, produced by local Gurkha wives and their friends, and sold to raise funds for charity (p9).

Food and diet link several items this month, with stories from Amy Howard, about managing weight (p14), and Mollie Campbell who writes about her experience of battling with an eating disorder (p15). Perry Walker considers the impact of too much sugar on our skin (p14), whilst the True Food Co-op has provided us with a healthy Chocolate Chilli recipe (p17).

Happy Wanderer looks back at a lost local pub, the Golden Key (p7), and our My Music article focuses on the Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band, which is still active after more than 100 years (p12). Other regular contributions include Creative Caversham, with RABBLE Company Stage Manager Rebecca Welburn (p16), the Local Scene, featuring The Collective (p13), and the book reviews from Alex Forbes of Fourbears Books (p5).

We hope you enjoy reading this month's paper and, as ever, invite you to comment or contribute. Contact us at editors@cavershambridge.org or write to us care of Church House, Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX.

INSIDE

Bet Tickner –
friends
remember
– page 8



Adult
literacy –
Read Easy
– page 11



Community
Connections -
Esther Serdio Diaz
– page 15



No Longer Prisoners

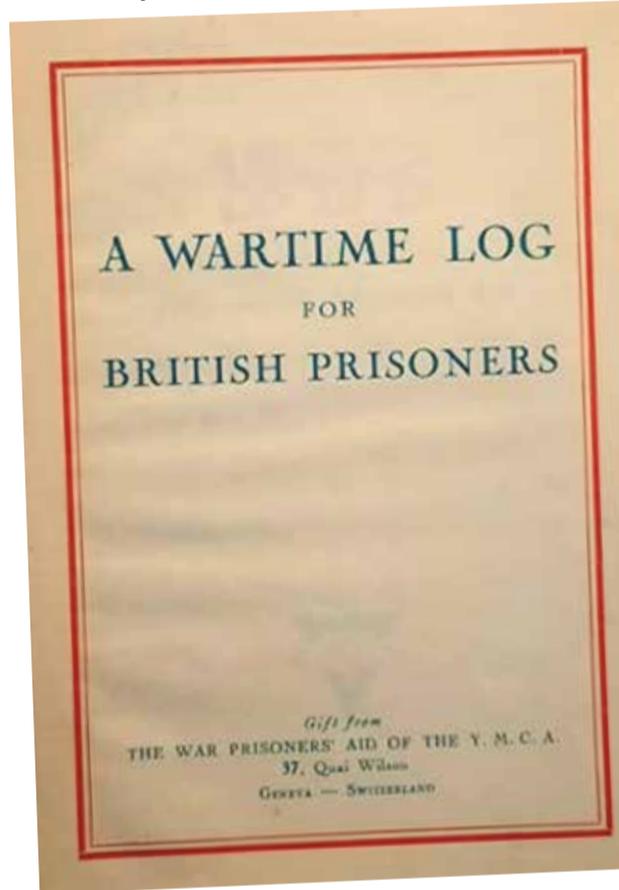


MY DAD, Jack Saynor, was a bomber pilot during World War II. He completed 38 operations with 10 Squadron during 1943-44, a remarkable number for a bomber crew at that time. He was shot down on his 39th operation flying to Brunswick. My Dad and all the crew managed to bail out, parachuting to safety. They spent the rest of the war in prisoner-of-war camps. After being caught, he was interrogated by the Gestapo and then sent to Stalag Luft 3. I have his logbook for all the operations he flew, as well as a diary he kept whilst in Stalag Luft 3.

The last entry in his diary, made on Wednesday 2 May 1945,

reads as follows: 'The first British tank arrived at 11.50am. I am no longer a kriegie so this diary comes to an END'. Signed J. Saynor. (Kriegie is German slang for a prisoner of war in Germany during World War II.)

As I read this entry, I remembered a conversation I once had with my Dad. I asked him about his wartime experiences as a pilot and in prisoner-of-war camp. I remembered him saying, "We knew we were fighting evil and we were fighting for the freedom of our families, friends and country". Few would dispute that the Nazi regime was indeed one of evil, especially when you read about the death camps, concentration camps and many other atrocities. I often think about Dad, and many like him, who made so many sacrifices so we may enjoy the freedom we have today.



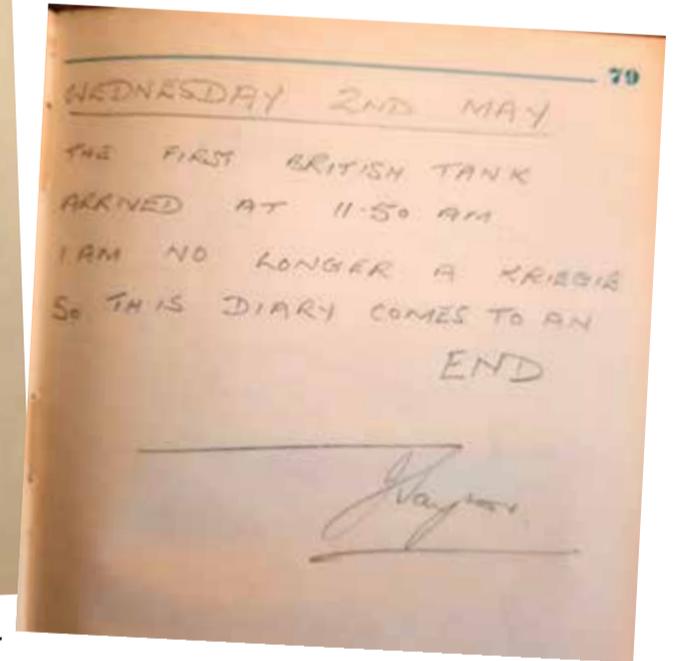
Wartime logbook and the last entry photo K Saynor

There is another we can remember who sacrificed His life so that we might enjoy even greater freedom: Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us Jesus loves us and gave His life for each of us (Galatians Ch2, vs20) so that we might enjoy freedom from death and guilt (Romans Ch6, vs23), from slavery and addiction (John Ch8, vs34,36), from fear (Hebrews Ch2, vs14-15), and from worry (Matthew Ch6, vs25-34).

Jesus sets us free to know God (Isaiah Ch59, vs2), to live a life of love - for God and for others (1 John Ch4, vs19) and to experience peace (John Ch14, vs27), change and transformation so that we can live the abundant lives He intended for us to enjoy and experience (Galatians Ch5, vs22). It is a life that transcends death into eternity (John Ch10, vs10)!

This week, as Easter approaches, I think of my Dad and give thanks for him and for all who sacrificed so much for the freedom we enjoy today and especially I give thanks to Jesus for the greater freedom He won for us all. Let me encourage you to reflect on these words and truths and spend time thanking Jesus for all He has done so each one of us can enjoy this wonderful freedom in our lives!

Keith Saynor – Pastor, Grace Church, Caversham



IN THE NEWS

Caversham Bowls Club Presentation

THE ALBERT ROAD-based Caversham Bowls Club raise funds for a selected charity each year. In 2023 they chose The Cowshed, a Wokingham-based charity which provides support to people of any background in their time of personal crisis. They help across Berkshire by providing clothing and essentials for free to those in need. The Club raised a total of £920, which was presented to Rebecca Mole of The Cowshed by Leigh Furlonger, President of the Club.

To find out more about The Cowshed, visit their website at

www.thecowshed.org

Details about the Club can be found at

www.cavershambowlsclub.org.uk



Rebecca Mole, left with Leigh Furlonger

photo H Walmsley

Outstanding Waitrose Caversham!

WAITROSE CAVERSHAM was named 'The Grocer' Magazine's Store of the Week, for the week ending 15 December, thanks to The Grocer 33 mystery shop.

The magazine conducts nationwide mystery shops, comparing supermarkets within a five-mile radius and, for this particular week, Reading and the local area were in the spotlight. Grocer 33, conducting the research, also incorporates shopper profiling and data from a long-standing analytical organisation.

Last year's major refurbishment in the layout and lighting, the increased food assortment and the much-needed new refrigeration system, all contributed. Branch Manager Wade Lavery and his ever-helpful team can rightly be proud of their branch.

"What I like about shopping here", remarked one customer, "is that help from the assistants is always conducted in a friendly and efficient manner. Nothing is ever too much trouble".

Waitrose Caversham, with its loyal customer base, has been serving 'The Village', as it is affectionately known, and the surrounding area for forty years.

For further information head to

www.thegrocer.co.uk

Information from Rowena Waddington

STOP PRESS

Open for business again



words and photo Phil Chatfield

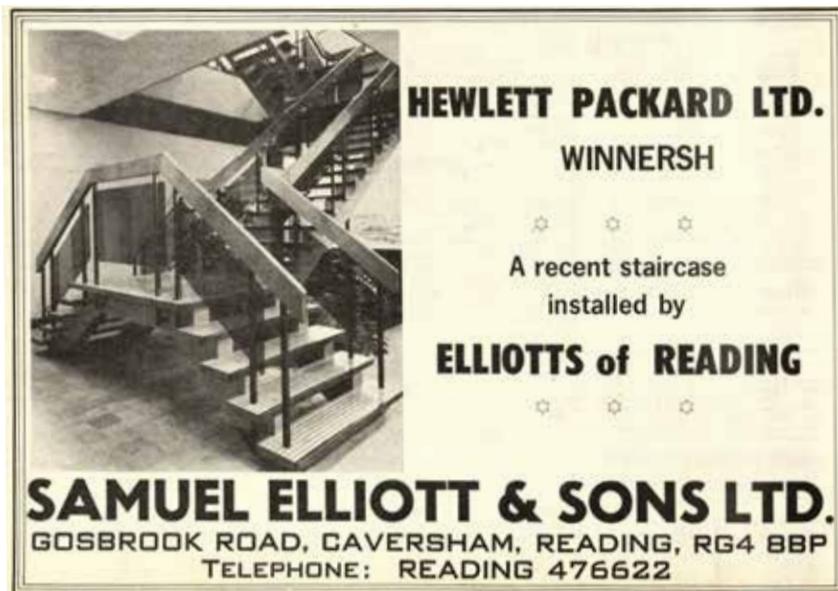
THE SUE RYDER shop in Emmer Green reopened on 5 February, having been closed for refurbishment in January. The shop is now open again for donations but does not accept electrical items or DVDs.

You can find it at 12, Milestone Way and it is open 9:30 to 17:00 Monday to Saturday. For more information, see

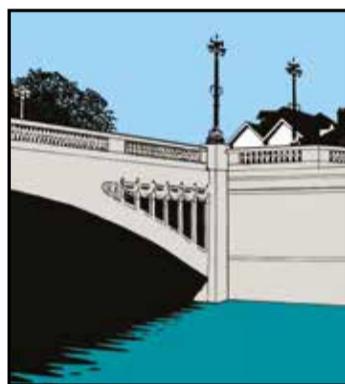
www.sue Ryder.org/support-us/shop-with-us

Oops - a correction

ONE OF OUR proofreaders, Paul Freeman, spotted an error in last month's paper on one of the pages he had not checked. The 'A Glimpse into the past' article on page ten misspelt the name of a local company, Elliotts, which should have had two t's. The full name of the company was actually Samuel Elliott and Sons (Reading) Ltd. The company advertised in the first edition of the Caversham Bridge, in October 1964, as Samuel Elliott and John P. White (Reading) Ltd. Paul went on to say, "My father worked there for over 50 years".



The advert here dates from the August 1975 edition of the paper.



Caversham Bridge

An update from our editors

THIS MONTH we are considering how we could provide a low-cost way for those running paid-for classes in our area to advertise their services. Currently, our What's On listing contains predominantly information on clubs, concerts and public services. Space is limited and we do not normally include information about the many classes which run locally, such as pilates, chess, dance and Tai Chi. However, we would like to gauge interest in small, low-cost entries in a listing of these activities with a similar format to our What's On entries.

If you would like to find out more, we would be pleased to hear from you. We would also be interested to understand if this would be a useful service for our readers. Please see the box on the top right for further information.

Renewing subscriptions - £7 for 2024

At the time of writing, the majority of subscriptions have been renewed, with a significant proportion paid by bank transfer. We would like to thank all who have paid so far and remind those who have yet to pay of our bank details.

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 name or number as a reference! Several payments have been received which did not contain address details, meaning we have been unable to allocate the payment to the subscriber. If your name is D Thomas, please do contact us at subscriptions@cavershambridge.org as we have an unallocated payment with this name!

Are You a Teacher?

Do you teach a free or low-cost class in our area, such as pilates, dance or pottery?

The Bridge would like to help you get noticed!

If you charge £10 or less per class, please contact:

editors@cavershambridge.org

for inclusion in an upcoming section highlighting the range of low-cost classes available in the Caversham and Emmer Green area

A few people have tried to use our website to register and pay subscriptions. Unfortunately, this facility does not allow you to make a payment. If you need help with payment, please email chair@cavershambridge.org

Our subscription session at Fourbears Books on 3 February provided an opportunity for subscribers to pay by credit or debit card and was well attended. We enjoyed meeting some of our readers and deliverers in person! The next such opportunity will be at the Artist and Makers Fair at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church on 9 March, between 10:00 and 12:00 (see advert on page 15 for details).

Can you help?

We still need volunteers who could help with both the production of the paper and the management of our website.

If you would like to become involved in this community activity, to find out more email chair@cavershambridge.org

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Monday to Friday 9:30am - 10:30am

www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk

HEART STARTING



New installation fills a gap in Caversham sites

by Fred Smith

A NEW DEFIBRILLATOR site has been fitted at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church, next to its Ardler Road entrance.

For many years the church has had a defibrillator inside the building. However, with the closure of the Crawshay Preschool, which had used the building most days, access would have been very limited. So a new external housing for the defibrillator has been fitted, with support from Reading Lions. The location is now recorded on www.defibfinder.uk which lists sites of defibrillators, showing how it fills a gap between sites in the centre of Caversham and the one at the Weller Centre.

The church would like to thank both the Reading Lions for funding the equipment and Richard Nicholas of RCBO Electrics, (www.rcboelectrics.uk) who installed it free of charge.



Defibrillator at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

photo F Smith



RE Inspired in our schools

by Anna Clarke

Pupils examine their new picture Bibles

photo Thameside School

AT SCHOOL, children learn about several different worldwide religions. Churches Together in Caversham run a project called REInspired, where volunteers from the local churches go into some of the local Caversham schools to help teach the Christian parts of the RE curriculum in fun, interactive ways, whilst also allowing the children to ask questions. The teams of volunteers love arriving at school and being met with the enthusiasm of the children, who are always excited to see them.

There are also opportunities to support REInspired outside of school. One of these ways is through attending the termly Craft Café held at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church. This is where we prepare all the crafts the children need for the term ahead, whilst enjoying cake and coffee! To stay up to date with the work of REInspired (including dates of upcoming Craft Cafés), follow REInspired Caversham on Facebook www.facebook.com/reinspiredcaversham or request to join the mailing list by emailing reicaversham@gmail.com

In other school-related news, I recently visited Thameside Primary School to donate three children's Bibles for use in RE lessons when they are exploring Christianity. The children were excited to receive these new books and I hope and pray they will love learning more about the faith as they explore the wonderful stories of Jesus!

Anna is the Children & Families Worker at St John's Church and REInspired Project Manager

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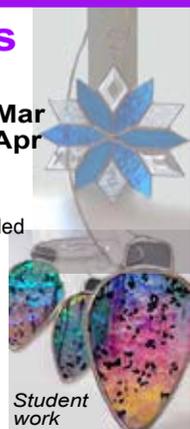
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by Alex Forbes



For your bookshelf...

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

MY FIRST choice this month is a children's book by Fiona Barker. We absolutely adore Fiona's books, which are always beautiful and thoughtful. 'A Swift Return' is about the delicacy of nature as Aria and Yusuf, two very different children, work together to save a bird which has lost its way. A simple story beautifully illustrated, with the English text accompanied by Arabic text. It helps remind us to look above the streetlights and houses at the wonderful nature all around.

The adult selection is 'The Axeman's Jazz' by Ray Celestin. Inspired by a true story, and set against the heady backdrop of jazz-filled, mob-ruled, New Orleans in 1919, a serial killer called The Axeman is on the loose. There are three groups of people

looking to unmask the villain. The official police, the mafia, and a private detective. As the three parties close in, The Axeman issues a challenge to the people of New Orleans; play jazz or you might be the next victim. The evocative prose brings the jazz filled, mob ruled, pre-prohibition America to life. The first in a four-part series, these books will be hits for years.

We have lots planned this year, including the Reading and Caversham Book Festival, also known as Fourbears Fest 24, over the weekend of 17-19 May. There will be around 20 events in Caversham (Caversham Baptist Church and Fourbears Books) and Reading (Progress Theatre) for children and adults. We also have some fantastic events in the shop between now and then, including Veronica Henry in March.



Time for a swift escape from the axeman...

photo A Forbes

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

Follow Fourbears Books at www.facebook.com/fourbearsbooksuk or better still, call in to browse their stock.

That Little Tent of Blue: Oscar Wilde's *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*



Banksy's Reading Jail Escape

text and photo Roslyn Weaver

THE NEWS THIS year of the long-awaited sale of Reading's former jail brings to mind one of its more famous inhabitants, Oscar Wilde, imprisoned between 1895 and 1897. This is his most famous connection with the local area, but not the only one. Only a couple of years earlier, Wilde had spent time in Goring, writing his play *An Ideal Husband*. Anyone familiar with the local area will find that link obvious from the character list, which includes the Earl of Caversham, Viscount Goring, Lady Chiltern, and the Countess of Basildon, among others – continuing Wilde's practice of naming characters after locations, as in *Lady Windermere's Fan*.

The light wit that characterises much of Wilde's work is absent in his final work, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Altogether more serious in tone, the poem concerns an execution, and is also more widely about prison life. What is also striking is Wilde's focus on the outside world. His earlier works are not exactly those of a great lover of nature, focusing more on the

social than the natural world, but *Ballad* repeatedly refers to the sky beyond prison walls:

*'I never saw sad men who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
We prisoners called the sky,
And at every careless cloud that passed
In happy freedom by.'*

It is probably not difficult for us to relate in some way to that longing for the freedom symbolised by the sky. We may never have been imprisoned but might understand other types of 'prison' experienced by us or those we love. Whether an illness that limits life to indoors, anxiety or depression that shrinks the world, grief that incapacitates, or other limitation, sometimes life may feel like looking at a patch of sky through thick walls. Yet *Ballad* is not devoid of hope. Wilde also writes of the spiritual 'peace of pardon', of how faith cleanses the soul of shame. No matter how small, that tent of sky is always there, always reminding us to hold onto the hope it offers for the future.

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What's On

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 – 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

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

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

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 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 cafe for adults 18+. Come as you are for tea and a chat. Please see: 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 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.

Thursdays – **New Caversham Heights Bridge Club** – 14:00 at the Caversham Heights Methodist Church, Highmoor Road. For details contact Duncan Knight on 0118 9475544 or email duncan.knight@googlemail.com

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

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](https://www.facebook.com/KeepCavershamTidy)

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

Sundays – **Nordic Walk (or just walking)**. Free to all. Tel. 07931754096 or email Pat at 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

Friday 1 March – **Bereavement Café** – 14:00-15:30, St. Barnabas Church, Emmer Green. A place to find others who have suffered loss and can appreciate something of your experience. Contact Gill at 0118 9478772

Friday 1 March – **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](https://www.facebook.com/ChazeyWomen'sInstitute)

Tuesday 5 March – **Caversham Women's Institute** – 19:30 at Church House, Caversham. www.thewi.org.uk or Tel. 01189 475176

Wednesday 6 March – **Rubbish. What Happens When it Leaves My Gate?** a talk by Oliver Burt – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. To learn more visit: cavershamheights.org or email: contact@cavershamheights.org

Saturday 9 March – **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 13 March – Caversham Horticultural Society Annual General Meeting – 19:30, Caversham Baptist Church. See www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk

Sunday 17 March – **Hymn Café** – 15:00 -16:00 at Caversham Baptist Church. Relaxed café style setting with hymns, prayers, testimony and cake.

Sunday 17 March – **Performance of two versions of the 'Stabat Mater' - by Pergolesi (1736) and Karl Jenkins (2008)** – 19:30 Reading Haydn Choir. St Joseph's College, Upper Redlands Road, Reading RG1 5JT. Tickets on the door or from rdghaydnchoir+tickets@gmail.com

Wednesday 20 March – **Forgotten Women of the Wars of the Roses** – Book Launch and Art Exhibition, 18:30 - 21.30 at MADEbyTamalia, Marsack Street, Caversham, RG4 5AF. Tickets available from £1 – email sketcherjoey@gmail.com to book.

Wednesday 20 March – **Bananas – how they are ripened and arrive in perfect condition.** A talk by Roger Crudge – 20:00 at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. The Caversham Heights Society. To learn more visit: cavershamheights.org or email: contact@cavershamheights.org

Saturday 23 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!. See www.caversham-horticultural.org.uk/spring-show

Sunday 24 March – **Visions** – a programme of sacred and secular choral music, 16:00. Glass Ensemble, St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green RG4 8RA. Entrance £15 on the door/under 18 free/advance booking £12.50 through Susie 07930 690 873 or asusied@btinternet.com Retiring collection for CIRDIC – Churches In Reading Drop In Centre

Friday 29 March – **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: readingcerclefrançais@gmail.com

Saturday 30 March – **Easter Egg Trail in Caversham Court Gardens** – 14:00 - 16:00. See page 10 for details

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

THERE HAVE been two new applications in Caversham Centre this month. The former **Barclays Bank** is proposed for conversion (240068). Two separate ground floor commercial premises would be provided – one in the original building and the other in the later extension. The upper floors would be residential with an additional storey added to the extension. **Archway House** is also proposed for conversion to residential with a revision to an application already permitted. There is a revised application for two detached homes at **5 Grass Hill**.

Plans for the previous Chinese Restaurant at **3 Prospect Street** have still to be decided, including permission for an additional storey. And the application for the **Spice Oven at 2-4 Church Street** awaits a final decision.

Thames Lido has applied for installation of solar panels and also an extension to the dedicated car park. The appeal for the **site between TGI Fridays and the Range** has been further extended with detailed submissions over policy changes, housing numbers and the new national policy on 'Achieving Well-Designed and Beautiful Places'.

The decision on the appeal for **Caversham Lakes** has now been published. The appeal against enforcement action was dismissed, citing nature conservation and highway safety.

As always, links to individual applications can be found in the **Latest Planning List** at www.cadra.org.uk



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AS SO OFTEN happens, when looking for one piece of information or one image, something completely different takes over my attention. Whilst looking for a picture of a building along the Kennet and Avon Canal, I came across this photo of a pub. According to the caption, its location was unknown, but since I've been wandering around Caversham for the last 40 years, I knew exactly where it had been taken.

In the past I'd heard the story that the golden key, from which this pub, formerly in Queen's Road, Caversham, had taken its name, had been used at the official opening of Caversham Library in 1907, or the opening of Reading Bridge in 1923. Apart from the fact that you probably wouldn't have needed a key to open a bridge, it turns out that The Golden Key in Caversham didn't open until 1935!

There had been an original Golden Key Public House in King's Road, Reading. It had stood near the end of King's Bridge, which was more usually known as Factory Bridge on account of the nearby biscuit factory. In the 1930s, the Corporation decided to rebuild both the bridges on King's Road – Crown Bridge and King's Bridge – in reinforced concrete. By then, both were old and narrow. The Factory Bridge, which caused the road to bend, was to be re-aligned so as to straighten the road. The Golden Key was a casualty.

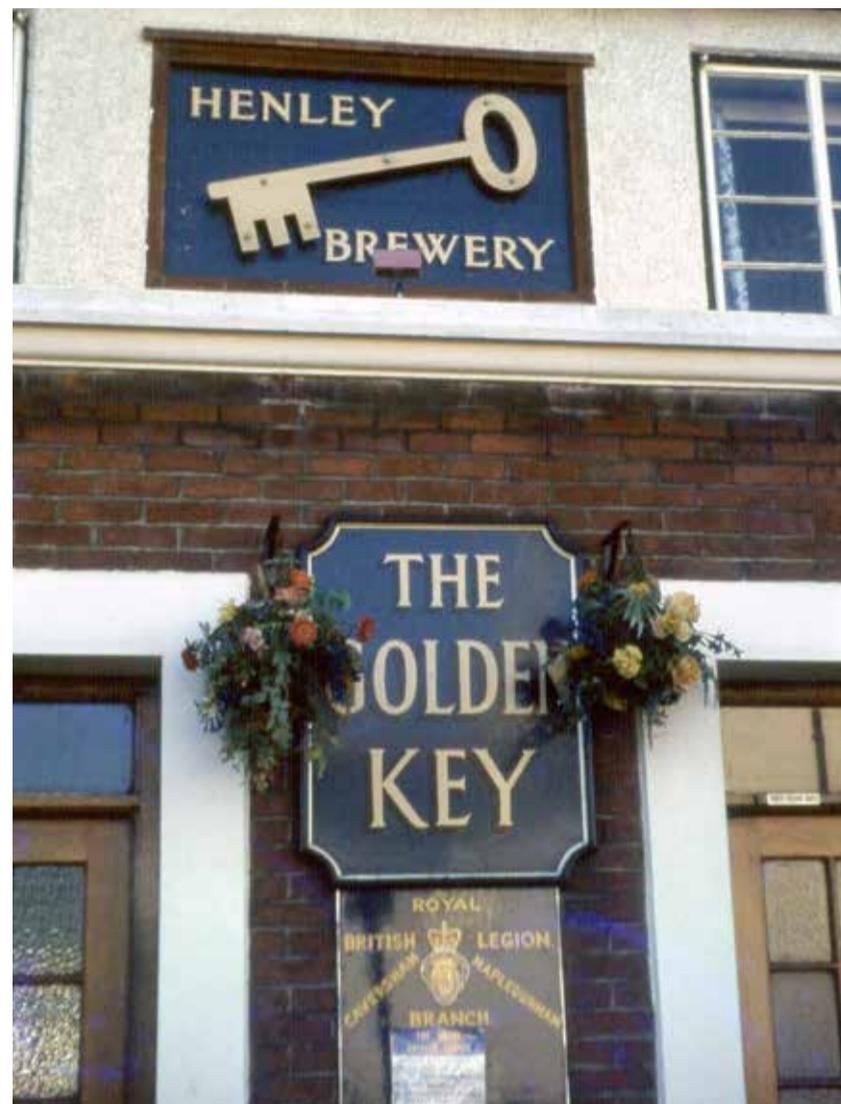
At the end of the 19th century and into the 20th, the Bodle family had run the pub – father Edgar, and son William. William's son, Walter, went on

to run The Clifton Arms in Caversham. This pub, together with the two Golden Keys, were owned by Brakspear's Brewery in Henley. The first Golden Key was described as 'recently rebuilt' in 1903. It was clean and in good repair, and frequented by workers from the biscuit factory.

The licence was transferred to the new building in Caversham in April 1935, and it seems to have been successful from the start. Its day trips to the seaside were popular, and photographs appeared in the local paper showing a crowd of customers waiting to set off. Three coaches were needed and, at the back of each, were crates of beer for the men and lemonade and crisps for the women and children. The sports pages showed that the pub took part in a number of sporting activities – such as darts, cribbage, pool, bar billiards, and football. Meals were served, and there was a beer garden. In the 1980s, there was live music on Sunday evenings.

...for better or worse...

The glory days came to an end towards the end of the century. The pub closed down in 2002, the building was damaged by fire, and it was eventually replaced by flats. For better or worse, the loss of 'local' pubs like this one has continued. In my 40 years in Caversham, I can recall the closing of The Star, The Gardener's Arms in Surley Row, and The Miller's Arms in Paddock Road. The last two of these had skittle alleys – a tradition which seems to have disappeared from our area.



The Golden Key Pub, Queen's Road, Caversham

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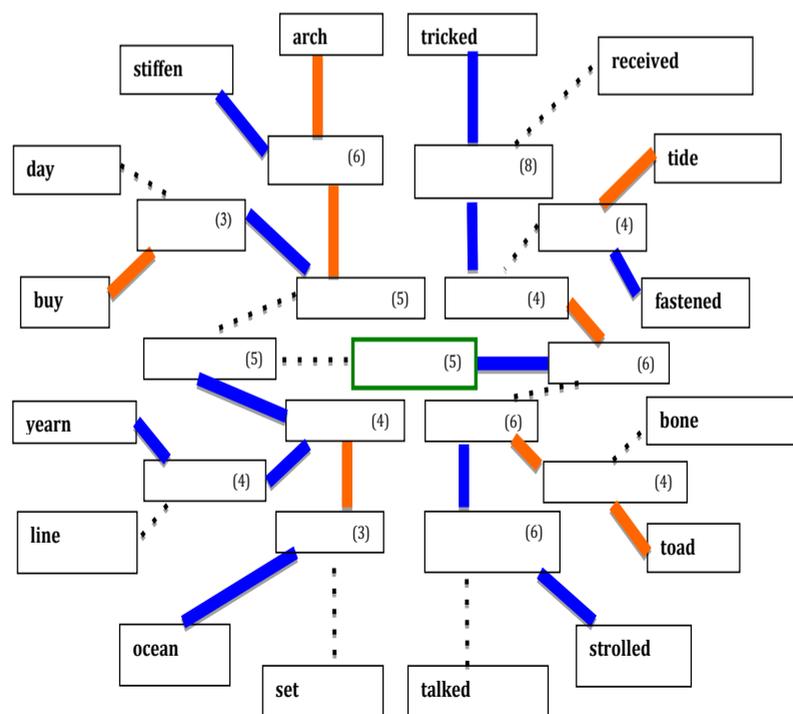
Puzzle Corner

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 15

GARDEN VEGETABLES

Can you find the names of 22 garden vegetables in the grid?

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

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| Artichoke | Curly Kale |
| Beetroot | Garlic |
| Broad Beans | Leeks |
| Broccoli | Mangetout |
| Carrot | Marrow |
| Cabbage | Onion |
| Calabrese | Parsnip |
| Cauliflower | Peas |
| Celeriac | Potato |
| Chard | Swede |
| Courgette | Turnip |

Bet Tickner – friends remember



photo Reading Borough Council

BET TICKNER, BBC journalist, linguist, walker, craftswoman and political animal, died in Caversham, Reading, on 6 January 2024, after a brief period of palliative care. She was born in London in 1946, attending Hornsey High School and then studied Russian and French at the University of Birmingham. Her first job after university was in Cameroon, where she spent two years translating and interpreting. In 1973 she joined The BBC Monitoring Service (later BBC Monitoring/BBCM), which sat within the World Service and was based at Caversham Park, Reading.

Bet began her long career with BBCM working in the French and Russian teams, later switching to editorial work on the Asia-Pacific desk. After a spell as a duty editor, she moved into management, spending two years as Head of the East Africa Unit in Nairobi. Accompanied by her son, Paul, Bet made the most of opportunities for exploring East Africa and beyond, where she rejoiced in trekking and learning about African textiles and crafts.

On her return to the UK, Bet moved into the then new Customer Services Unit at BBCM, which she had helped to set up, liaising with official and government customers. She relished the multilingual

and multicultural environment, and the insight into international politics at the heart of the operation. She served more than 30 years at BBCM before she retired.

A lifelong socialist and active member of the National Union of Journalists and the Labour Party, Bet was a local councillor for Abbey Ward in Reading for 16 years, serving as Mayor of Reading from 2006-2007. She also sat on the Royal Berkshire Hospital Board, and was a trustee of the Reading Refugee Support Group. After retirement she worked in the voluntary sector, pursuing her particular interests of health care and crafts.

Off duty, Bet was an enthusiastic member of a walking group who took off for long weekends and holidays in hilly and mountainous places from Derbyshire to the borders of Nepal. Closer to home, she devised superb walks for friends, exploring the Thames Valley and the Chiltern Hills that she knew so well.

Bet made a difference to the lives of many; she will be sorely missed.

A longer version of this obituary will be found at

<https://cavershambridge.org/archives/category/local-people/obituaries>

FROM CAVERSHAM TO THE GAMBIA

'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink'

by Alan Tuvey

Alan and Jane Tuvey of Caversham Heights could not have imagined what would result from a holiday to The Gambia in 2022, and the depth of the connection they have established there, as Alan explains here.

FRIENDS HAD encouraged us to seek out a small church they had found in The Gambia during

a visit a few years previously. So we duly contacted the pastor and, on Palm Sunday 2022, joined in a typically lively African-style service at the church.

The pastor told us of the vision of local Christians for the church across their country. They were passionate, he said, about reaching out to the remote communities and villages to the north of the capital, Banjul. One of their key needs was and is access to clean drinking water, as the 'utility water' supplied by the authorities is contaminated, causing illnesses among people who drink it.

I have a background in engineering and water, and Jane and I became inspired by the need and the pastor's vision for meeting it.

We felt equipping a small local church with its own water borehole pump, producing clean drinking water free for the whole community, is a wonderful way to show non-Christians the love of God and share the Gospel message. Church members in the



Gathering Well water

photo A Tuvey



Alan and Jane

photo M Burnell

villages are very capable of doing most of the construction and maintenance themselves, but they need building materials, plus all kinds of hand tools.

On our return, we shared our enthusiasm for this enterprise with our church - Greyfriars, Reading. With friends and family, we raised nearly £12,000 – enough to pay for borehole pumps in three remote communities!

On a return visit to The Gambia last November, we visited these three villages, while another borehole has been installed at the 'Mother Church', replacing a well which had collapsed.

We are now starting an appeal among the churches of Caversham and Reading for financial and practical resources. We would like everyone to check their sheds and garages for any plumbing or electrical fittings and any tools that can be donated. We are happy to collect any items, or they can be dropped off at 200 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham.

Alan Tuvey can be contacted by phone or text on 07486 542048 or by email at alantuvey@gmail.com



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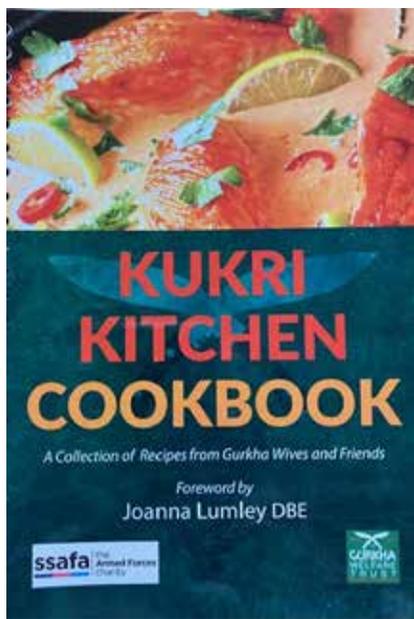
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Cookery book raises £4000 for Military Charities

'THE KUKRI Kitchen Cook Book' arose as a result of the many parties and social gatherings shared by local Gurkha ladies and their teachers, most of whom live in Caversham and surrounding areas. We got used to their delicious dishes and, gradually, they got used to ours. Marie Rogers, one of the teachers, suggested a cookery book with a mixture of recipes from Nepal and Caversham might be a good idea. This was greeted with great enthusiasm. It was decided that the book would be published and sold to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare Trust and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity.



Bimala's Chicken Biryani *photo R Pinches*

The Gurkha ladies' recipes were something of a challenge in that they made no reference to measurement of ingredients at all, and terms like 'some' or 'a bit' or 'a handful' were the norm. Chandra and Bhanu Burathoki had the unenviable task of persuading the ladies to conform to standard measurements – but it was a struggle.

...show the food to best advantage...

Local company SecureCloud+, an SSAFA sponsor, provided technical assistance and support at the start of the Project. Samantha Thirlby-Smith of 'The Happy Gurkha Catering Company' of Henley contributed recipes and helpful contacts. Richard Pinches, a local photographer, provided the use of his studio and technical expertise to photograph some of the dishes. Emma Reynolds, also local, who is a food stylist more used to working with the likes of Mary Berry, worked with Richard to show the food off to best advantage – both giving their services free of charge. Dame Joanna Lumley encouraged the Project from the start and supported it throughout.

The original print run was for 300 books but, after some publicity by the GWT which led to orders from all over the world, the book finally raised £4000 and, although requests for orders continue, there are no plans at this time for any future reprint.

Supporting Gurka veterans

The Gurkha Welfare Trust supports Gurkha veterans and their families in Nepal, with a smaller outreach service in the UK. A team of 500 work in Nepal, delivering vital medical and financial aid, as well as running community-based projects which implement clean water, sanitation, care homes and medical camps. See gwt.org.uk for current projects.

SSAFA has been providing practical, emotional and financial support to Forces families since 1885. In 2020, the SSAFA team of volunteers helped more than 79,000 veterans and their families who served from the second World War and in later conflicts. See ssafa.org.uk for examples of SSAFA in action.



Urmila's Salmon Curry *photo R Pinches*

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Refugee Support Group

by the Editors,
based on information
from Reading Refugee
Support Group

Reading has a proud history of welcoming displaced people...

One of the causes supported by former Mayor of Reading, Bet Tickner (see opposite page), was Reading Refugee Support Group, which works to help refugees rebuild their lives here in Berkshire. We thought it would be opportune to highlight their work this month.

THE READING Refugee Support Group was set up in 1994 following a Refugee Conference organised to look at the problems refugees were facing locally, and to find ways they could be helped. It was formed as a refugee-led organisation with the aim of helping refugees living locally. Reading has a proud history of welcoming displaced people, dating back to 1947, and hosting orphan refugees from Dusseldorf (now Reading's twinned town in Germany). Since then, Reading Refugee Support Group has become a registered charity and has provided practical help and legal advice for thousands of refugees and people seeking asylum across Berkshire.

The charity's solicitor and caseworkers are the only approved providers of asylum support in Reading, and their services are constantly in demand. They run weekly Drop Ins which provide a safe space to socialise, make friends, learn English, get advice from a Caseworker, and get help finding work. They also run English classes, a Homework Club, their own refugee football club (Sanctuary Strikers FC), and more activities to help refugees integrate, get back on their feet and rebuild their lives in their new home.

In 2019, they celebrated their 25th Anniversary, and were also awarded The Queen's Award For Voluntary Service. This year, they are holding a 'Sanctuary Fundraiser' to mark their 30th anniversary at The Concert Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading on Friday 26 April 19:00 – 21:00.

To learn more about the group and the Fundraiser, or to donate or read stories of some of the many refugees who have made Reading their home, visit their website at <https://refugeesupportgroup.org.uk>

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LET'S GET MARCH IN

BY LES COOPER



The strawberries were tiny and tasteless, and I quickly pulled out the whole lot...



Strawberries in raised bed

photo Pexels-magda-ehlers

MARCH HAS to be a favourite month for garden enthusiasts. I am not certain I should call myself a 'garden enthusiast' when I have spent most of the winter moaning and groaning about all the rain and the state of my garden... and doing nothing. So now is surely the time to get going!

Some years ago, my wife gave me a raised bed as a Christmas present. No, not one for me to sleep in, but a collection of four plastic boards that you put together to make a one foot high, five feet square, box. I filled it with compost and planted nine strawberry plants. The result was a success: the strawberries flourished and the blackbirds and slugs enjoyed themselves eating the fruit. Perhaps we were too idle to pick them, but we didn't appear to have too many strawberry feasts ourselves. In the raised bed the strawberries thrived, throwing out runners and masses of leaves, doing even better than their rivals, the weeds. They did so well it has made me wonder if the plants might do better outside the confines of the raised bed.

Way back in the past, I tried to grow some Alpine strawberries. They were not very good. In fact they were terrible. The strawberries were tiny and tasteless, and I quickly pulled out the whole lot.

Most of us gardeners are unforgiving and, when once we fail with an item, tend to give up on it. Hence, I have never tried Alpine strawberries again. But now I do wonder if varieties have improved and whether they might do well in my raised bed. So, I have decided to have another attempt using the raised bed.

The one I am trying is 'Mignonette' which, according to the blurb, will yield masses of dainty fruit all summer. The plants are compact, growing to about a foot wide and do not produce runners. I am starting them from seed and, as instructed, I am treating the seed like a half-hardy annual and sowing them in the greenhouse now. One negative factor is that the plants would prefer a shaded position; well you can't get everything right but let's see what happens.

In the November edition I mentioned I was growing *Tagetes Minuta*, which is allegedly a weed suppressor, especially of ground elder. I did say the plants are tall and I confirm they are, with mine growing to at least four feet or more. It has pathetic little flowers but, judging from my limited experiment, it does appear to deter ground elder. Please do not take my poor efforts as positive proof, but I suggest that if you want to see for yourself, give it a go.

Easter Fun in the Gardens

COME ALONG to Caversham Court on Saturday 30 March, between 14:00 and 16:00 for an Easter Egg Trail around the gardens. Explore the hidden corners of the gardens as you complete an Easter Egg Quiz on a nature theme, hosted by The Friends of Caversham Court Gardens (FCCG). The gardens should be looking lovely with spring bulbs and early colour in the borders. All young competitors will win an Easter Egg prize or a non-dairy treat. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Entry is free, but donations to FCCG would be appreciated. The Tea Kiosk will be open for refreshments all afternoon.

Text and photo FCCG

Contact: friends@fccg.org.uk

Website: home.fccg.org.uk

Easter Egg Trail
Caversham Court Gardens
Easter Saturday
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READING BACH CHOIR

Performing Dvořák's *Stabat Mater*, in its original form

FOLLOWING A popular Come and Sing with us in January, you are invited to visit Goring for the next Reading Bach Choir concert. We will perform *Stabat Mater*, by Dvořák, in its original form for choir and piano accompaniment. Directed by Daniel Mahoney, we are delighted to have our Assistant Musical Director, Nick Shaw on the piano. We will also be welcoming four young soloists from the Genesis Sixteen programme – they are all outstanding singers on the cusp of their careers.

The *Stabat Mater* text is highly appropriate for Lent, as it explores the suffering of Mary, mother of Jesus, as he is crucified. When he was inspired to compose it, Dvořák had also just suffered the loss of his infant daughter and this deeply moving cantata is the result.

You can hear the result on Saturday 16 March, 19:30 at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Goring. Tickets (£15, £5 under 18s) available from the choir website www.readingbachchoir.org.uk or any choir member.



Bach Choir Director Daniel Mahoney

photo K Munns

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Vital steps to reading

READING IS a basic requirement of everyday life and a skill many of us take for granted. Yet there are 2.4 million adults in England' alone who can barely read or cannot read at all. In turn, people who struggle with reading may also struggle with writing and have quite limited spoken vocabulary.

Learning to read as an adult can be life changing. The benefits can extend beyond the individual and enable families to break the inter-generational cycle of literacy difficulties. Read Easy is a charity, established in 2011, which aims to tackle this problem. They do this through free, one-to-one coaching for adults who want to learn to read via their trained volunteer reading coaches.

Read Easy is looking to launch a new group in Reading in the next six months, and their Regional Adviser, Michelle Baker, is seeking to recruit a team of at least six members, covering a number of roles, to get the group up and running. There are over 6,000 adults in Reading who need reading support, and the charity is passionate about transforming more lives in the community.

Michelle said, 'Becoming a Management Team volunteer for Read Easy is fun and fulfilling, yet requires commitment and passion. You'll be given lots of support, meet a diverse range of people, and be part of a genuinely life-changing organisation. From experience, we know that learning to read really does change lives and being part of that process is special'.

Read Easy UK currently supports 53 affiliated groups across the country, stretching from Plymouth to Leeds and Hull. In the last year, groups have been started in Swindon and West Berkshire, South and East Wiltshire, and further groups will soon be established in Reading and East Berkshire.

To learn more about becoming a Read Easy Management Team volunteer in Reading, please contact Michelle Baker at michelle@readeasy.org.uk

To find out more about the charity, visit their website at <https://readeasy.org.uk> 'Skills for Life Survey, 2011, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills – latest government figures.

Based on information provided by Easy Read.



Permeable Boundaries

by Tricia Marcouse

WE'VE HAD some impressive winds this winter, and a lot of people have damaged fences or fence panels that need attention.

If you want to put up new wooden panels, remember I mentioned the need for hedgehog highways a couple of months ago, and this is a reminder that information for buying suitable panels or DIY hedgehog holes can be found on www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/link-your-garden

However, a permeable boundary is far more likely to be resilient to strong winds in the future, and there are many options, depending upon your need for security and privacy and the space available. The best solution for permeability and biodiversity is a hedge, which can be a manicured monoculture such as a hornbeam or yew hedge, or a more random mixture of different species providing a range of food and habitats for wildlife. Unfortunately, a hedge takes time to grow to full size. An interim or permanent solution is a false fedge. A real fedge is simply a two-dimensional green boundary, such as one made from willow or bamboo stakes forming an outline structure during the winter and a green boundary during the growing season. Lovely, but requires a lot of pruning each year to keep it looking wonderful. A false fedge is link fencing with living material growing through it (see below). Easy to put up, providing instant security, permeable to strong winds, and easy to maintain with trimming. It could be varieties of small leaved ivy, types of jasmine, or simply annual climbers (the solution for year one). This is an easy green background to a border, or the base structure against which you'll grow a hedge for the future.



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A MUSIC MAN

I HAVE BEEN a Reading Football Club follower for years. I am fairly certain I can recall travelling to their old ground at Elm Park via a tram. Maybe that is fantasy on my part, but I certainly remember going down the Oxford Road in a trolley bus. We used to cycle there as well, leaving our bikes in someone's yard for a small fee.

Another of my great football memories is when the Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band provided a musical background at home matches. They looked great in their red jackets and black trousers. Although I have no idea what tunes they played, I thought they were terrific.

I also went dancing, I use the word dancing very loosely, at the Majestic Dance Hall in Caversham Road where the music was provided by the George Watkins Band. I thought they were good too.

Until I happened to look into the Reading Band website, I hadn't realised there was any connection between them and the dance band. But there was, namely George Watkins, who was not only the dance band leader but also the leader of the Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band.

This band came into being in the 1890s when

a ladies' sewing circle in the Spring Gardens Mission Chapel raised funds to purchase brass instruments for the Spring Gardens Wesleyan Mission Concertina Band. They became a brass band in 1899.

In 1934 the Chapel Leaders objected to the band selling scent cards and football tickets to buy uniforms, and the band severed its connection with Methodism.

George Watkins was appointed musical director in 1937. He was one of their baritone players who had been a member since 1926. When the war began in 1939, many of the players were called up and those who remained formed the Reading Home Guard Brass Band with George as Musical Director.

After the war the band reformed and enjoyed much success and, in 1976, George passed the baton on to his son Ted. Sadly, Ted died in 2000 aged 80.

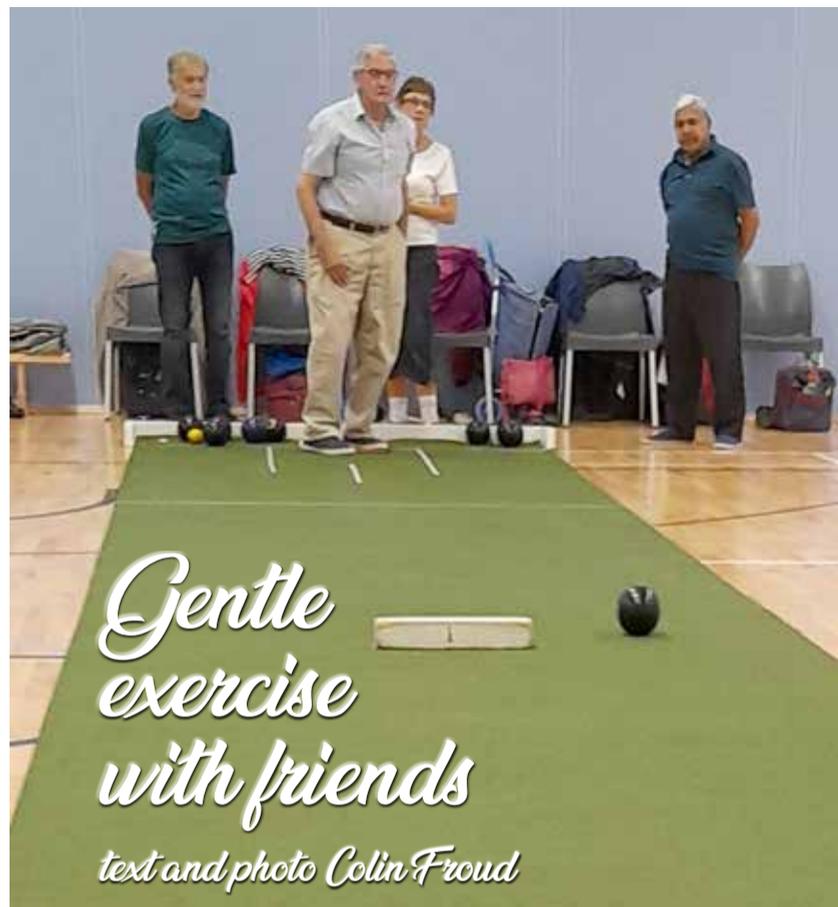
The Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band is still going strong and hopefully will keep playing for many years to come.

You can find out more at readingband.com



Reading Spring Gardens Brass Band

photo courtesy of the Band



Gentle exercise with friends

text and photo Colin Froud

CAVERSHAM SHORT MAT Bowls Club was founded about 35 years ago by a couple from Southcote who needed a hobby to keep them active. They chose to start a short mat bowls club, which is a smaller but similar version of lawn or indoor bowls. Short Mat was first played on the pub floors in Ireland and then spread to the UK.

It is played on a green or blue carpet some 35, 40 or 45 feet long and 6 feet wide. The aim of the game is to roll a bowls 'wood' until it either touches or hits a heavy, but smaller yellow ball known as the 'jack' in order to score points. But there is a twist; to do this the player has to avoid a foot wide wooden barrier placed in the centre of the mat. Most of the remaining rules are the same as those for ordinary bowls.

We play at Rivermead every Monday afternoon, commencing at 13:30 until 15:30. There is a green fee of £2.50, although a first 'taster' session is free. Some players use their own bowls, but the club is well supplied with spares for anybody to use. There are five mats in use every week, and the only club rule is to wear soft indoor shoes to protect the mats. No special clothing or club uniform is needed.

We have about 30 playing members - our youngest being 56 and oldest 96. We also run a couple of competitions each year.

At Christmas the club organises a meal at which we award the prizes for winners, for the 'Player of the Year' and for 'Best Newcomer'. Our club is a very social group of friends. Rather than having too many rules, we are there to enjoy what is a gentle exercise session amongst members who have become friends.

If you would like to try short mat bowls for yourself, just turn up at one of our meetings to see what it is like.



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The Collective



Drawing by Janina Maher

www.janinamaher.artweb.com

MY WIFE and I were walking to Caversham Court one day and passed the old shop on the corner of Church Road and St Anne's Road that had recently closed. A group of women were wielding paint rollers and feverishly painting walls, so we stopped and asked what the new premises would be. They enthusiastically described a café they were opening called 'The Collective'. Today it is well established as a very popular meeting place – good coffee, great food, and a stylish and welcoming interior.

Soon after the café opened, we had our first lockdown, which could have been a disaster for a new business. But The Collective adapted to the covid restrictions with a take-away service, and soon suitably distanced queues stretched down Church Road.

Since then, this speciality coffee shop has not looked back. Sam Smith, the owner, chatted to me over a cup of my favourite Americano with milk and I was tempted by the range of delicious items produced by local artisan bakers. From Tuesday to Thursday, a simple breakfast and lunch menu is on offer and, in the summer months, tapas and wine evenings are arranged. Very popular with customers is the sheltered courtyard garden at the back of the shop which can be heated to make it comfortable all the year round. Anna is Sam's part-time general manager and has been working there since the very beginning, and the energetic and supportive staff are all local.

Another side of the business is an eclectic mix of gift products for sale in the shop and online; health and beauty, jewellery,

special grocery items and wines and spirits, all chosen for their quality and good design.

One hundred years ago the premises was a bakers and confectioners run by C H Hamer. More recently, readers will remember the traditional newsagents and corner shop that occupied the premises for many years, which was the subject of a book called 'The Corner Shop' by Babita Sharma.

A selection of Janina's original paintings, including this one of The Collective, is displayed for sale at Fourbears Books on Prospect Street.



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SJP Approved 28/04/2023

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The Importance of Weight Management



Amy before...



and Amy after

photo R Howard

photo R Howard

by Amy Howard

MANY OF US are concerned about our weight but don't know where to start. Taking control of our weight management is important for our health and wellbeing. My experience of losing weight has completely changed my life. When I was growing up, I lived a healthy and active lifestyle and often enjoyed rowing. When I moved away to university in 2020, the pandemic made it challenging to continue this lifestyle. Eventually I lost all motivation to prioritise myself and eventually stopped rowing altogether. I quickly gained two and a half stone in the space of nine months. As a result, I often turned towards comfort eating as a way to help me process the negative emotions I was feeling.

In January 2023 I was fed up and I knew I was not going to be able to lose weight with my poor eating habits. So I found the courage to join a slimming programme. I had the warmest welcome from my first night and discovered Food Optimising would enable me to be able to eat my favourite meals and to lose weight.

Food Optimising is a programme which

Taking control of her weight has transformed Amy's life

teaches you to change the way in which you eat, without giving up the things you love or ever going hungry. It is rooted in the psychology of slimming. The programme I joined was run by Slimming World, and their Head of Research, Dr Jacquie Lavin, says, 'We might think we need to be overly strict with ourselves when we're losing weight – counting and measuring all our food and reducing portions sizes right down – but this type of restrictive approach ultimately leaves us feeling hungrier and more deprived'.

...rejoining rowing club...

Since I joined the programme, I have lost three and a half stone and won my group's Woman of the Year Award. I swapped my size 18-20 clothes to a size 12-14, and have recently found the confidence to re-join my local rowing club.

Taking control of her weight has transformed Amy's life so much she has decided to become a consultant for the programme, to help teach people about the importance of weight management for their health and wellbeing. For details, see her advert on this page.



Image by freepik

Does sugar age your face?



by Perry Walker
Owner of Perry's Beauty, Caversham
@perrys_beautyroom

WITH THE Easter season being so full of treats and indulgence, are you questioning what effect this increased sugar has on your skin? Does sugar age your face? It's a very common question and one I can answer for you.

The simple answer is yes. While ageing is natural and unpreventable, excess sugar consumption can speed up the process. Whilst we are all aware of the effects of sun damage and smoking, the sticky truth is that sugar causes something called glycation to our skin. The bottom line is, the more sugar we eat, the more our skin suffers.

So why does sugar age your face? Glucose spikes within the body trigger the glycation process. During the glycation process, sugar molecules attach themselves to collagen and elastin fibers. These form damaging by-products known as Advanced Glycation End products (AGEs). The process damages the proteins, making them unable to fulfill their function in the body. Collagen and elastin fibers are unable to support the structure and elasticity of the skin. This leads to sagging, loose skin and wrinkles.

My Top Tips:

- ♥ Be more aware of sugar sources. Unexpected foods contain high sugar content. Swap out high sugar fruits like bananas, grapes and mangoes for lower sugar alternatives or, even better, more vegetables
- ♥ Hidden sugars are in processed foods- think sauces, cereals and condiments – check labels
- ♥ Eat protein rich foods at meal times to avoid grazing – you will feel fuller for longer
- ♥ Reduce stress levels – high cortisol levels can impact collagen
- ♥ Get enough sleep- aim for between 7-9 hours every night



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Community Connections

by Sarah Stuffsins – This month we meet Esther Serdio Diaz



Esther Serdio Diaz photo E Serdio Diaz

ESTHER SERDIO DIAZ opened Caversham's newest food shop, a Spanish delicatessen, Serdio Ibericos, in Prospect Street, on 8 December, the day of Caversham's late night shopping event, so it was a very busy start to her new venture. However, Esther and her boyfriend are familiar figures locally, as they have been running a Spanish food stall at the Sunday market behind Iceland for the last few years.

Esther comes from Huelva, in the far south of Spain, near Seville, where she worked for several years, before embarking on an adventure, coming to London with no English to try something new. She worked in hospitality for a few years, learning English along the way, before starting a new job in a delicatessen, where she discovered her real passion. She learned to hand carve Iberico ham, and ended up with Waitrose, training their staff to carve ham in the London area. This all came to an

end with the pandemic and after moving to Bracknell, she turned her talents to selling traditional Spanish delicacies at market stalls in the Berkshire and Oxfordshire area in the summer of 2021.

Her croquetas proved the most popular, so the business became Miss Croquetas for the markets and online orders. When it came to opening the shop, Esther wanted to honour her father, who had been a big influence, and the ham that led her to following her passion, so the shop is called Serdio Ibericos. Running the shop has meant scaling back the markets, but she plans to stay in Caversham, with the support of her boyfriend, who has always worked the weekends with her, alongside a full-time job of his own.

You can already purchase fresh cheese, ham and some Spanish traditional dishes as well as a wide range of store-cupboard items. Paella will be coming soon, but Esther's

ambition is to open a Spanish taverna, open during the day and evening, specializing in tapas and wine, and sharing her knowledge of and passion for Spanish dishes through tasting sessions. To this end she is currently working with the planning department at the council to get a change of usage for the premises. Watch this space!

How long have you lived in RG4?

Since June 2023, but have been working at the market here for a few years

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

Papa Gee is a favourite restaurant and of course I love my own shop!

How do you think we can be eco-friendlier here?

I'd like to encourage shoppers to bring their own containers when buying from the shop.

How would you strengthen our sense of community?

I'd like to see community events, for example a picnic, to bring the community together over food.

If you could bring anything here, such as an event, experience or a shop, what would it be?

Can I be cheeky and say what Caversham really needs is a Spanish taverna?

BEATING THE DARKNESS

by Mollie Campbell

Dealing with eating disorders is hugely disruptive to many young people and their families. Local resident Mollie Campbell recently contacted us to share her journey and the support she had from the UK's eating disorder charity, Beat Eating disorders.

HI – I'M MOLLIE and I'm 16. With my Auntie Lianne, I took part in 'The London Winter Walk 2024' on Saturday 27 January to raise money for Beat – the UK's eating disorder charity.

Beat gave me invaluable support throughout my own battle with an eating disorder over the last few years. They helped save my life. Along with Beat, Lianne has always provided me with support, care and love, especially during my darkest times, for which I am forever grateful.

It is so special to us to be able to give back to Beat together, and help them to continue providing their lifesaving support to everyone who needs it.

At the depths of my eating disorder I did not think I would ever be able to commit to recovery. I would watch everyone else recover, only feeling more trapped myself. But Beat helped me to realise

that living with an eating disorder is not living; it's just surviving. With time and a lot of effort, it does get easier and you can start to enjoy life again. Because there is so much more to life than obsessing over food.

So far, we have raised almost £3,000 for Beat, and our JustGiving page is still open for donations.

To access our fundraising page, you can search 'Beat – London Winter Walk – Campbell' in JustGiving or scan the QR code. Alternatively, cash can be donated in the Alto Lounge, Caversham.

A massive thank you to everyone who has helped us to fundraise and to everyone who has donated so far.

Just a small message to anyone else struggling with an eating disorder: it does get better. You DO deserve support and you DO deserve to be free from your eating disorder. I promise it won't feel this hard forever. Reach out.

'Don't let this darkness fool you. All lights turned off can be turned on'.

Beat is open 365 days a year to support anyone struggling, and has many different programmes, as well as helplines, which can be accessed at any time. I would strongly encourage anyone struggling, as well as their families and friends, to reach out to Beat. Recovery is hard but nowhere near as hard as it is to live with an eating disorder.

To learn more about Beat Eating disorders, see beateatingdisorders.org.uk



Mollie and aunt before taking part in the London Winter Walk 2024 to raise money for Beat

photo J Campbell



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Creative CAVERSHAM



Bringing the magic of the theatre to us



photo A Crichton

What happens behind the scenes of a nationally recognised theatre company? **Elestr Lee** met RABBLE Company Stage Manager **Rebecca Welburn** to find out how the show goes on...

IT'S PROBABLY safe to say that RABBLE is the only professional theatre company ever to be based in Caversham. Now settling into its first proper home in The Stables at Caversham Court, members of the company are getting to know their new neighbours. It seemed time for us to meet someone with a key role...although she never appears on stage!

Since 2021, Rebecca Welburn has been Company Stage Manager for RABBLE – which entails ensuring everything is ready and

in place before the lights go down and the actors appear. “Ultimately, I am responsible for everyone – the actors and the crew – and for making sure everything goes smoothly,” Rebecca explained. “I have been working in stage management for quite a few years and have now reached this level. I can’t imagine doing anything else!”

Having grown up in Chilton, County Durham, Rebecca studied both Musical Theatre and Technical Theatre at the University of Cumbria, in Carlisle. “This was

great to experience ‘both sides of the curtain’, and it allowed an understanding of how important every role is in theatre,” she said. “I soon realised that I wanted to specialise in Technical Theatre. I knew I couldn’t go out there and act before an audience every night, because the desire to be a piece of the creative puzzle was stronger – to help create the wonders you see on stage.”

Following graduation, Rebecca worked for a theatre in Keswick. She then got an opportunity to become Venue Technician, and then Resident Stage Manager, at The North Wall Arts Centre in Summertown, Oxford. “They put on a complete variety of productions, like at Reading’s Hexagon. I’d get information about what each event required, and ensure the show went on smoothly.”

After six years in Oxford Rebecca was offered the job with RABBLE and is delighted to be discovering her new Caversham surroundings!

“I really like it here – I walk to work through Christchurch Meadows, and being adjacent to Caversham Court Gardens really sets me up for the day. There is such a community feel, and I’m thoroughly enjoying getting to know local businesses and making valuable connections, building new relationships in the area,” she said.

...iron out any issues...

The move into The Stables has certainly helped the theatre company focus its energy. “Prior to this, everyone had to work separately. Now we come together several days a week. The space upstairs can house props and costumes,” Rebecca explained. Work on the main theatrical productions takes lengthy preparation. “Typically, we begin the pre-production process around 12 to 16 months before opening to the public,” she said. “For me, every production, and every day, is different. I liaise and co-ordinate with everyone in the creative and design team, from the scenic team to the general crew. I oversee the Stage Management department and make myself available to iron out any issues.

“When we are performing here in Reading, the team’s large. However, when we took *Henry I* on tour to Winchester and London last year the production was scaled back, and I was only one of three, covering props, costumes and all the scene changes.”

While major RABBLE productions such as *The Last Abbot* and *Who Killed Alfred Oliver?*



To relax, Rebecca loves walking her dog Mya

have attracted deserved national acclaim, the theatre group is determined that its educational outreach work, for both children and adults, is also vital. “I’m delighted to be involved with both Young Company and Get Up On Stage productions. For these I step away from Stage Management, and offer lighting design, which really helps enhance the emotions and the mood of a production. I have also designed sound for their shows.”

Ensuring that everyone can have access to these experiences is important. “We apply for funding so those who qualify don’t have to pay. We are determined that what we provide is available to those who don’t necessarily have access to the arts,” Rebecca said.

Being Company Stage Manager is something which excites Rebecca, and she revels in the challenges each production brings. “For example, *Henry I* was my first outdoor production for RABBLE. It was really hands on, and I was thrilled to be part of the set build. There was so much to do for the show, but it all came together.”

When not busy with RABBLE, Rebecca is delighted to be planning her wedding this September to her partner of 12 years, Cecilia. The couple own a border terrier cross, and love dog walking. However, the lure of the stage lights is never far away. “The next big RABBLE production will be *Glitch*, the story of Pam Stubbs, a sub-postmistress from Barkham, near Reading, caught up in the Post Office Horizon scandal. Again, as with our other productions, we are championing women and representing those voices that are often silenced. We know how powerful drama can be!”

Find out more: rabbletheatre.com



When *Henry I* went on tour to Winchester (top left), Rebecca (centre) was joined by Elise Frost (left) and Emily Foster (right) to provide the stage management. The company (above) marking their performance in London last year
all photos R. Welburn



Chilli con Chocolate

(serves four)

This is a very popular dish among vegetarians, vegans and meat-eaters, alike. Many non-vegetarians do not even notice the absence of meat, because the dish is so tasty. Chocolate is so versatile. If you have never included chocolate in a savoury dish, this will be a great new experience! It does not make savoury dishes taste like desserts. Rather, the presence of chocolate adds a warm depth to the spices and flavours, and is reminiscent of the chocolate mole dishes of Mexico.

Ingredients – Chilli and Chocolate Paste

- 2 tbs olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp chopped chillies
- ½ tsp ground star anise
- ¼ tsp allspice
- 100 g currants
- 100 g sultanas
- 1 tsp sugar
- 3 tbs tomato puree
- 100 g plain chocolate
- ¼ tsp salt / ½ tsp chopped thyme or oregano (dried is fine)
- 3 drops vanilla essence
- 1 cup of cold water

Ingredients – Chilli

- 40 ml olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 small red pepper, chopped
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 2 celery sticks, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 tbs paprika
- 425 g tin chopped tomatoes
- 500g cooked red kidney beans (or two tins)
- salt and black pepper
- 50 ml of chilli and chocolate paste

Method for chilli and chocolate paste

- Gently fry the onion and garlic until soft
- Add the spices and cook for two minutes
- Add everything else, with water to cover. Simmer for 20 minutes, adding water as necessary to prevent it from sticking or drying out, but don't add too much. It is going to be a paste, rather than a sauce
- When the time is up, let it cool for 20 minutes, then blend it in a liquidiser
- This recipe makes approximately 250 ml, enough for five meals, so split into small plastic containers and freeze four of them

Method for Chilli

- Heat the oil then gently fry the onion, pepper, carrots and celery for five minutes. Add the garlic, paprika, tomatoes and spice paste, then turn the heat down. If you are using tinned kidney beans, add them at this stage with the water from the tins
- Simmer for at least twenty minutes, but make sure it does not stick (add water if necessary). If you are using freshly cooked kidney beans, add them now
- Add seasoning and heat through

Serve with long grain white rice

Recipe provided by **Tayma Cannon** from the **True Food Coop**



You Wrote



Let's get to the bottom of this . . .

I WENT into town on a mission – to find a bottle brush that would get to the bottom of my thermos flask. But I had no luck. Why didn't I think of Caversham Homecrafts, our local 'have-it-all' shop on Church Street (opposite Waitrose)? I popped in for some furniture polish and there it was, the bottle brush with the important bulbous end which would do the trick.

Moral of my 'story'? Save a journey into town, or the faff of searching online for an item which you can probably find on your doorstep!

Ruth Wright

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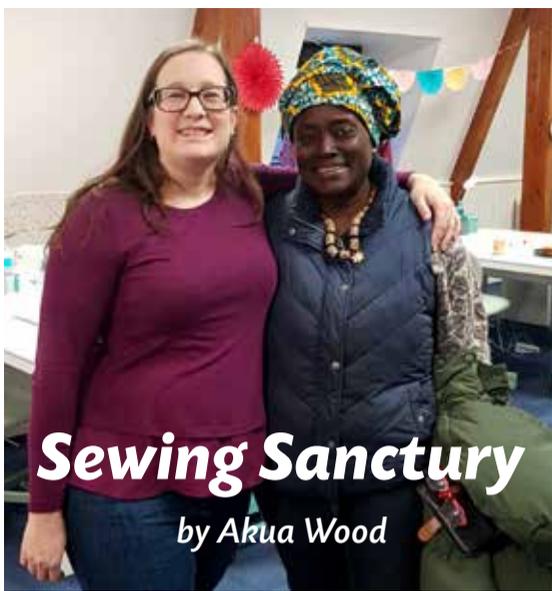
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Sewing Sanctuary by Akua Wood

Mara and Akua at the opening photo P Chatfield

The Reading Sewing Bee, advertised below, was launched 13 February. Mara Campbell, who has been part of the Weller Centre Craft Group for some time, has overcome many challenges to develop this new facility. Akua Wood of Shebutter Cottage reports.

IMAGINE A bustling sanctuary for sewing enthusiasts, nestled in the heart of Reading! Welcome to Reading Sewing Bee, the newest addition to the town's creative landscape. Located in The Maltings (Fobney Street), this generous space beckons you to indulge in your passion for stitching.

No longer will your dining table be hijacked by sewing paraphernalia!

With access available for 4 hours a day, it's a haven where threads intertwine and community spirit flourishes. You can also relax and crochet. Take a seat, thread your imagination, and weave memories with like-minded artisans.

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See the website readingsewingbee.co.uk to find out more.



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Easter Services in our Churches

In addition to services at the normal times, which are outlined on page 19, the following additional services and events are planned for Palm Sunday 24 March, Holy Week and Easter Sunday 31 March.

Please check individual church websites for the most up to date information.

Churches Together

Palm Sunday: 16:00-18:00 Messy Church, Weller Centre
Good Friday: 11:15 - Open Air Worship in St Martin's
Precinct Shopping Centre followed by a Walk of Witness to Caversham Court

St Peter

Palm Sunday: 9:30 Holy Communion with procession of Palms
Wednesday 27: 19:30 Stations of the Cross
Maundy Thursday: 19:30 Holy Communion, **Good Friday:** 12:00 Good Friday Service
Sunday 31: 6:00 A New Fire for Easter service in churchyard
Easter Day celebration: 9:30

St John

Palm Sunday: 9:30 Holy Communion, **Maundy Thursday:** 19:00 Supper
Sunday 31: 9:30 All Age Communion

St Margaret

Palm Sunday: 11:00 Holy Communion
Maundy Thursday: 19:00 for 19:30 Agape meal, Trench Green Village Hall
Good Friday: 11:00 Stations of the Cross (in churchyard)
Sunday 31: 11:15 Easter Day service

St Andrew

Palm Sunday: 9:30 Procession with donkey leaves Copperfields, 10:00 All-Age Service
Maundy Thursday: 19:30 Eucharist, **Good Friday:** 14:00 Hour of the Cross
Saturday 30: 19:00 The Easter Liturgy, **Sunday 31:** 8:00 and 10:00 Easter Day Services

St Barnabas

Palm Sunday: 9:30 Parish Communion, 11:30 Family Communion
Tuesday 26: 19:00 Evening Prayer, **Wednesday 27:** 19:00 Stations of the Cross
Mundy Thursday: 19:00 Holy Communion with foot washing
Good Friday: 14:00 Hour of the Cross, **Sunday 31:** 6:00 Sunrise Service, 9:30 Festival Holy Communion, 11:30 Festival Family Communion

Methodist Church

Maundy Thursday: 19:30 Holy Communion Service at Gosbrook Road
Sunday 31: 10:30 Shared Worship at Caversham Heights

Caversham Baptist Church

Palm Sunday: 10:30 Palm Sunday service
Good Friday: 10:30 Good Friday service with other Caversham Churches
Easter Sunday: 10:30 Easter Sunday Service

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

Future editions:

Contributions for the April issue should be submitted by 1 March and for the May edition by 1 April. These should be e-mailed to: editors@cavershambridge.org
Dates for advertising copy are 1 March for the April issue and 1 April for the May issue. These should be e-mailed to: advertising@cavershambridge.org

Grace Church

Good Friday: 10:30 Service,
Easter Sunday: 10:30 Service

New Testament Church of God

Good Friday: 11:00 to 13:00 A water baptism service.
Good opportunity for those who haven't experienced baptism by immersion before to come along and see.
Easter Sunday: 11:00 Resurrection Sunday Experience, where our Creative Arts team will bring to life the story of the ultimate comeback by Jesus. This one will be exciting!!

Our Lady & St Anne's Catholic Church

Palm Sunday: 10:00
Maundy Thursday: 19:30 Mass of the Last Supper
23:45 Night Prayer
Good Friday: 10:00 Children's Liturgy
12:00 Stations of the Cross
15:00 Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
Saturday 30: 20:00 Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday: 10:00 Mass

Mothering Sunday Tea

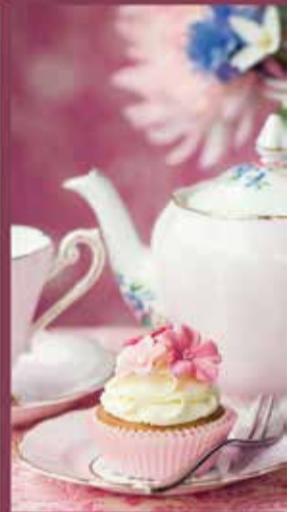
Sunday 10th March, 3-4pm
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Wellbeing with Ami Roy

Brain Breaks

PRACTICE MAKES perfect! To become ambidextrous in basketball, dribble with your left hand, switch to your right, and repeat the process again and again. Likewise, to solve differential equations in maths, pile them up and work your way through them diligently.

Scientists studying the impact of taking breaks during tasks have used magnetoencephalography, a highly sensitive brain-scanning technique, to observe the neural activity of young adults as they learned how to type with their nondominant hand. After a practice session, the study participants were given a short break and then continued practising for a total of 35 sessions.

When analysing the data, the team made an intriguing discovery: they observed a spike in brain activity, mimicking the neural pattern seen during the practice session, but compressed twentyfold. Rather than being idle, the brain

was replaying the practice session over and over at an astonishingly high rate. It turns out that stepping away is not stepping away from the activity at all.

The findings echo the groundbreaking discovery that, after successfully running through a maze, rats replayed those memories repeatedly during REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep, with the same spatial circuitry flickering to life as they slept.

When we learn a new skill, we need to connect it to previous memories, a process called 'binding'. For example, when learning how to play piano, our brains need to link a simple action – pressing a piano key – with a larger, more complex skill, such as playing a song.

Scientists have now discovered that, after learning new information, our brains continue to whirl, using cognitive downtime as a virtual staging ground to process, organise, and integrate learned information. The key, they believe, lies in neural replay; after practising a skill, our brains rapidly cycle through the experience, compressing and imprinting the material to optimise storage and recall.

We greatly underestimate the value of breaks when

learning, commonly opting for the view that active practice is the only way to advance. But this is a mistake, because incorporating breaks into learning plays just as important a role as practice in learning a new skill. It appears to be the period when our brains compress and consolidate memories of what we have just practised.

This has implications for how we structure our study time, the workday, and also our leisure times.

Breaks, it appears, recharge students' cognitive energy, leading to better test scores. They offer all of us an opportunity to recharge and enhance the skills and tasks we are learning to master.

And, in my view, it is a kinder environment that allows us to pause and restart, rather than forcing us to be on the go at all times.



Local Clergy and Church Services

ANGLICAN

Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Ministry

St Margaret, St Peter, 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
penny@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Rachel Ross Smith Tel: 07884 371688
rachel@ctmparish.org.uk

Rev'd Dr Catherine Radcliffe Tel: 07740 475697
catherine@ctmparish.org.uk

Contact: admin@ctmparish.org.uk or 0118 996 8836
Correspondence address: Church House,
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: 9.30 All Age Service of the Word, with music group and choir
18.30 Holy Communion with prayers for healing, with choir
2nd and 4th Sundays: 8.00 said BCP Holy Communion
9.30 Holy Communion with choir and activities for young people, primary and secondary age
3rd Sunday: 9.30 All Age Holy Communion in a shorter format, with choir – 18.30 Choral Evensong
Wednesday: 9.30 said Holy Communion
All services live streamed on Zoom. For Zoom details go to www.ctmparish.org.uk/services/online/

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

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 and Caversham Park

Rev'd Kevin Lovell, 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
Full details at www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/whats-on

METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church Caversham

Rev'd Jeongsook Kim Tel: 0118 947 2223
Rev'd David Jenkins Tel: 0118 327 1592
www.cavershammethodist.org.uk

Current services

Caversham Heights Methodist Church

Highmoor Road
Sunday – 10.30 – Also available on YouTube.

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church

Current services: Sunday – 10:30

New Testament Church of God

Rev'd Dr Garrick Wilson
Tel: 0118 946 3009

UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

United Reformed Church, Caversham Park

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>

BAPTIST CHURCH

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
See their web site for details:
www.gracechurchcaversham.org.uk

Riverside Church (Reading)

www.riversidechurchreading.co.uk

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



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