

TROUBLED WATERS STRESS NEED FOR THIRD BRIDGE

Travel chaos caused by floods last month once again raised the thorny question: Does the Reading area need a third bridge across the Thames? Several events coincided in the first week in January to create gridlock in Caversham and Reading during the morning rush hour. Queues of traffic stretched back several miles along the main routes from the north, such as the A4074 and the Peppard Road, and there were reports of drivers taking an hour or more to get from their homes in Caversham or Emmer Green to Reading bridge. Others on the school run were unable to get out of housing estates or residential roads due to traffic queuing on the main routes.

All this was caused by the closure of Sonning bridge when the Thames burst its banks following weeks of storms and torrential rain. It happened on the same day as the children went back to school at the start of the new term. The toll bridge at Whitchurch was already closed due to major repair work and won't open again until the summer at the earliest. Also the bridge at Goring and Streatley was inaccessible due to flooding.

This meant that the only routes available to drivers wanting to cross the river between Henley and Wallingford – a stretch of some 20 miles -- were the two bridges at Reading. So traffic funnelled towards them from all directions. Henley also experienced similar problems as extra traffic headed for the bridge there.

The same situation occurred during the evening rush hour and on following days although the problem eased as drivers staggered their journeys or found other options.

Of course traffic problems fade into insignificance compared to the horrors experienced by people whose homes or businesses were flooded, such as at Purley, Wargrave and Twyford. But if you asked those drivers stuck in jams for hours if they would support a third bridge, the answer would be a resounding Yes. Neither do the residents of Caversham and Emmer Green enjoy having their streets clogged with stationary traffic. This supports some of the opinions voiced at the recent Sharing Our Streets meeting as reported on page 4 of this issue.

A new bridge would cost many millions, perhaps even more than the current Reading station redevelopment, but would benefit local people as well as those passing through

the area. Sonning bridge stayed closed for two weeks.

The problem of where the traffic would go once it crossed into Oxfordshire would also have to be resolved. But extreme weather episodes seem to be becoming more frequent and traffic on our roads increases every year.

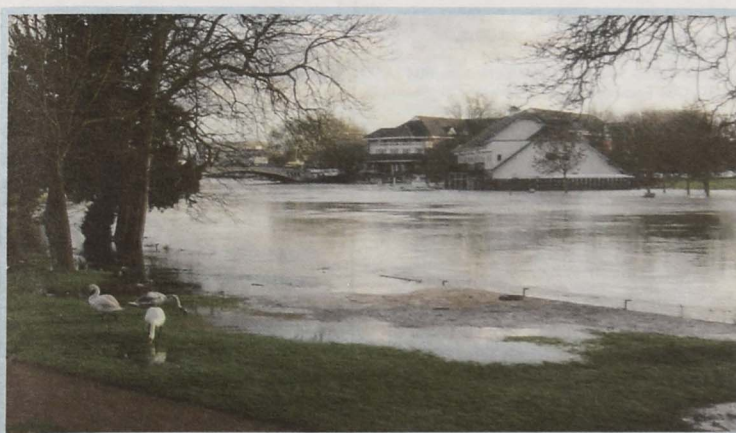
So perhaps now is the time that the whole issue of a third Reading bridge should be dusted off and looked at again. There is an online petition campaigning for a new bridge.



Looking downstream from the weir by Caversham lock.



Caversham lock full to the brim



The Crown Plaza seems to be almost afloat seen from Caversham Court

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Tel: 947 2223

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beckybowden@btinternet.com

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Revd Rob Beardsley.
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email rob.beardsley@sky.com

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2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 947 1787.
Deacon: Mike Walker, Hugh Anscombe

Fr Paul Rowan

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

The newspaper produced by the members of the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Free Churches of Caversham and Mappedurham for the local community.

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The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board.

The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

Published by Caversham Christian News Ltd, Church Street, Caversham, Reading RG4 8AX Tel: 0118 947 1703.

Typeset by Caversham Print & Design, 2a Randolph Road, Reading RG1 8EB Tel: 0118 939 1981 Fax: 0118 959 8090 E-mail: splat@cavershamprint.co.uk

Printed by Newbury Weekly News (Printers) Ltd, Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2DW.

TALKING POINT

by

Becky Lovatt

God of surprises

I guess most of your readers will know that my husband and I have a two-year-old son called Theo, and if you didn't already know, you do now. Well, during the run up to Christmas I was constantly reminded, through the comments made by Theo, that God is a god of surprises.

It began when Theo announced one day on the way home from nursery school, that "When it is Jesus' birthday Farmer Christmas comes, and Farmer Christmas comes on a train." It was not so much what he said, but the way in which he said it -- so matter of fact, as if to think anything else was clearly wrong.

The next surprise was when he came back from church on Sunday 22nd, singing, "Bethlehem, Bethlehem, Bethlehem, on Christmas day in the morning." He had heard the song in the service and to my amazement had come home singing it -- well something like it anyway. What an amazing God we have!

However, the biggest surprise happened at the toddlers' group pram service. All the children were sitting on the floor in front of the golden box, full of nativity characters that they could not see, and I asked them what they thought might be inside the box. All was quiet and suddenly Theo said, "Treasure, mummy". How right he was, as the gift of Christ at Christmas is the greatest treasure we have.

Yet, now Christmas is over for another year, the lights have come down, the tree has been boxed, and the diet has begun. But God has not stopped surprising us. If we wait on him and are open to all possibilities, surprises will happen because with God anything is possible.

In the summer my family and I will leave Reading to take up a new appointment. In my time here, God, through his people in this place, has loved me, cherished me and cared for me, in good, bad and indifferent times. I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you and say goodbye, and I pray that God will continue to surprise you and me as we journey together with Him throughout the coming year.

Deacon Becky Lovatt is a member of the Caversham Methodist team ministry

SUNDAY SERVICES

ANGLICAN

St Peter's, St Peter's Hill

8.00am Holy Communion
9.45am Parish Communion
6.30pm Evensong

St John's, Gosbrook Road

8.30am Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)
10.00am Parish Communion (except 2nd Sunday)
10.00am All Age Worship (2nd Sunday)

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am The Eucharist
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)
First Sunday, Family Eucharist
11.30am The Eucharist first and third Sundays only, first Sunday BCP
6.30pm Evening Prayer (as announced)

St Barnabas, Grove Road, Emmer Green

8.00am Holy Communion
9.30am Family Communion (apart from 2nd Sunday)
9.30am Family Service (2nd Sunday only)

St Margaret's, Mappedurham

11.00am Parish Communion

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP Meeting at Caversham Park School

11.00am Holy Communion (1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays)
Morning Worship (2nd and 4th Sundays)
All Age Worship (at Festival Times)

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7.00pm Powerhouse Service - 2nd Saturday each month
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11.00am Divine Worship
6.00pm Evening Service

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the **March 2014** issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mappedurham parish office by **Monday 3rd February**. The date for the April 2014 issue is **Monday 3rd March**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the **March issue** should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham, by **Friday 31st January**. The date for the April issue is **Friday 28th February**.

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Activity in the stable yard during the sale

Tree sale helps heathland

The annual ECONET Christmas tree sale took place at Caversham Court stable yard in December for the fourth year running. It has become quite a social occasion with people returning each year.

The trees are taken from a heathland restoration site nearby, with permission. Volunteers cut the Scots pine, which are invading the heathland, thus allowing the habitat to recover. We are losing this heathland habitat due to neglect and lack of grazing. The trees of varying size and shape make attractive Christmas trees and the needles do not drop. Other environmentally friendly products on offer included the RSPB providing bird necessities, BBOWT making wreaths and local willow worker Christine Brewster making attractive decorations.

For further information visit the ECONET website on www.econetreading.org.uk

Pub back in business

The Pack Saddle pub restaurant on the A4074 at Mapledurham, which was badly damaged by fire in February 2012, has been reopened under new management.

The newly refurbished pub now boasts a modern British menu in its 40-cover restaurant and a new catering team. It offers a relaxed atmosphere, serious food, fine wines and real ales. The bar menu offers some classic dishes, such as homemade fish pie, and the freshly baked bread is made using flour from the Mapledurham estate's watermill on the Thames.

The new owner, Sean Valentine, comments: "The Pack Saddle will be a place where visitors can relax and enjoy a sumptuous meal from an innovative British menu, enjoy the ambience and absorb some great hospitality. Our large paddock area is being developed for special events. We will be actively developing our own events calendar, with a whole range of exciting activities such as summer barbecues, wine dinners and a beer and food festival. I want to create something exceptional that people will remember and look forward to returning to."

Another local pub restaurant, the popular Griffin in Caversham, was closed by a fire on Christmas Eve and lost all its Christmas and New Year business. At the time of going to press it was being renovated and the owners, Chef and Brewer, said it would be closed until further notice.

Letter to the Editor

I would like to thank Colin Ferguson for his Talking Point article in the Caversham Bridge in January.

I also studied criminology and worked in the criminal justice system from the mid-sixties and can trace a similar descending spiral of credibility in the criminal justice system. I find the policies of recent years, including both main political parties, irrational in that they are not based on clear evidence, costly both financially and in terms of their devastating effect on family life, and ineffective because they largely fail to rehabilitate offenders.

There was a time in the 80s when we were beginning to see, from experience in some parts of this country and others abroad, alternative ways of responding to criminality which were much more effective in reducing recidivism and involving victims. In Berkshire we were beginning to find joined up ways of preventing and responding to juvenile crime, which had early promise. Sadly many of these initiatives lost their way with the many changes wrought by politicians on local and central government organisation and on social policy.

I am not a practising Christian but I was brought up as one and I find the present social policies affecting the poorer and less privileged sections of our community profoundly un-Christian. What can be done about this? In Caversham we live in a privileged community, where the politics are apparently overwhelmingly to the right. There was a time in Berkshire when the County Council was decidedly Conservative but their policies were at least benign. As Colin says, we need to find our compassion and we need to counter populist notions of criminality and how to respond to it with rational arguments and unbiased presentation of the statistical evidence.

Richard Heyes

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
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From the Lookout Post

The new free primary school for Caversham Heights is moving closer to confirming its opening in September this year. A new head teacher has now been appointed. Karen Edwards, currently head of the Sacred Heart Primary School in Henley, will take up her post on 1st April but is already increasingly involved behind the scenes preparing the ground. On 15th January, the application process for reception places in September closed. Parents had to decide by that date, which schools to list and what preferences to express.

The process for opening new free schools is very rapid with a series of key dates in the process. A consultation closing on 26th January asked, 'Do you agree that the Heights Primary School should open in September 2014, which would involve The Heights Primary School Trust entering into a funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education?' This agreement should be formalised in March. The National Offer Day informing parents of places allocated is on 16th April.

The question foremost in everyone's mind is where the school will be located and at the time of writing, no decision has been announced. The Education Funding Agency (EFA), part of the Department for Education, is responsible for identifying and securing the school's premises. From a surprisingly long list, they are now focusing on a few shortlisted options for both permanent and temporary accommodation. Again surprisingly, it is not uncommon for there to be continuing uncertainty at this stage and many free schools have started with temporary accommodation not being in place until July or August.

On Tuesday 7th January, a consultation evening was held at Mapledurham Pavilion. The hall was packed, with people standing all round the hall and in the entrance lobby. Prospective parents were keen to know more about plans for opening and what kind of education would be available for their children. Local residents were particularly concerned about possible locations and there were many questions about potential use of Mapledurham Playing Fields. This land is held in trust and, if it were to be selected as a site for the school, a lengthy process would follow which could not be bypassed by the EFA. Whichever site is selected by the EFA and confirmed by the Minister for Schools, an application will have to be made for planning permission.

Whatever the outcome, there is no doubt that Caversham urgently needs more school places and there is a projected shortfall of 50 reception places for September. One thing very much on our side is the highly committed team of parents who have worked incredibly hard to bring progress to this stage. For more information and any subsequent announcements see www.theheightsprimary.co.uk/

Sharing Our Streets

On 12 November 2013, CADRA and the Caversham Traders Association held a joint meeting to consider if a vision for traffic measures in the centre of Caversham is needed. The meeting was open to everyone and more than 100 people attended, including five local councillors. A report of the evening featured in the last edition of Caversham Bridge and is available at www.cadra.org.uk.



The banner promoting the new school



Prospective parents packed the hall for the consultation evening

Following the meeting, 83 people took the time to set out their views on the problems facing Caversham centre and potential solutions to those problems. Their views have been gathered together and a summary produced. This is available in full at www.cadra.org.uk but the main points are set out here.

Firstly, everyone who responded to the questionnaire would like improvements to the centre of Caversham.

The problems most commonly identified were:

1. Poor pedestrian facilities;
2. The street scene and how the roads are used;
3. Traffic levels through the centre;
4. Poor provision for cyclists and cycling on pavements
5. Heavy goods vehicles passing through.

Among the wider solutions set out, the dominant theme was for a more village like appearance with a better balance between motorists and pedestrians. This might include reduced or improved street furniture, raised tables, speed humps and shared areas. Many people would like to see control on speeding or aggressive driving and better cycle facilities.

Foremost among the issues where local people could potentially achieve change are:

- Improved pedestrian crossing facilities;
- Improved street appearance and junction layout;
- 20mph speed limit possibly enforced by raised crossings or speed humps;
- Improved cycle facilities.

The on-line questionnaire remains open at www.cadra.org.uk and both CADRA and the Caversham Traders Association are keen to hear your views as they embark on discussions with local councillors and council officers.

NEWS

Local man launches crime book



David Burnell (left) and Les Williams at the launch.

A local man, David Burnell, has launched his first novel, a crime story called *Doom Watch*. The launch took place in November before an appreciative audience of about 30 local people at the Grosvenor pub in Kidmore Road. With the story set in north Cornwall, he hopes the book will be the first of a series under the umbrella title of 'Cornish Conundrums'.

Les Williams, also a local man and chairman of the Writers' Circle that meets in Tilehurst, opened the meeting by asking David a number of questions.

What started him writing novels, why did he want to focus on crime fiction, why did he set his books in Cornwall, why did he decide to self-publish, and were any of his characters based on real-life figures?

David replied that he had long thought about writing but that his work with Thames Water left him with little energy to write, especially as he had been working on a PhD thesis before retirement. But after retiring, he and his wife bought a holiday cottage in north Cornwall. Soon after that, inspired by the rugged Cornish coastline and its

picturesque villages, he began writing his first novel, though this was not *Doom Watch*. That would need a substantial revamp but might one day be number three in the series. He was currently working on number two.

Being a mathematician David felt that crime writing was similar in so far as it involved recognising patterns and solving problems. Crime writing needs logic as well as intuition and may be the easiest way for a new author to begin. The biggest difficulty was to think of a Cornish-based plot and then work out how to expand this into an intriguing story. None of his characters was based on any specific person. Self-publishing was hard work but faster than the laborious procedure of trying to find a publisher. JK Rowling was rejected by at least 15 publishers before she hit the jackpot.

David's wife, Marion, then read a chapter from *Doom Watch*. Following a lively stag party a dead torso is found in an old quarry pool. To find out why the book is called *Doom Watch*, how the body got there and who committed the crime, readers will just have to buy the book. But be warned: there are several sub-plots to the story. This correspondent found it an intriguing read which he was unable to put down until the final page. It is well worth the read and can be bought as a book for £6.90 or as a Kindle e-book (£2.05) from Amazon.

CHRISTMAS FAIR

The Christmas fair at Our Lady and St Anne's church took place at the end of November. The usual stalls were manned by the usual stalwarts. They included the

tombola of bottles, the cake stall with a good selection of home-made cakes, the toy stall full of soft toys, a white elephant stall with some pieces of porcelain among other pretty items, the plant stall with beautifully made Christmas arrangements and the Friends of the Holy Land stall with olive wood items all made in the Holy Land.

There was a grand draw and a raffle for a decorated cake.

Mr Toad came along tooting his car horn and Father Christmas, accompanied by Mrs Christmas, brightened things up when he

arrived in his new outfit.

Refreshments were available in the Cenacle and hot dogs were on sale outside in the car park.

Brisk business on the toy stall.



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Mothers' Union: Vital asset in an uncertain world

The Mothers' Union branch at St Andrew's, Caversham, is a vital part of the parish, playing an active role in both worship and the social life of the church. The equivalent branch at St Peter's church has recently been disbanded and some of its members have joined the St Andrew's group.

The varying fortunes of these two groups prompts the question: What is the relevance of the Mothers' Union, an institution which dates back to 1876, in the troubled world of the 21st Century?

The answer is a great deal, despite its sometimes cosy image of tea, sympathy and home-made cakes. The statistics relating to the MU are staggering. It has four million

God's love is shown through loving, respectable and flourishing relationships. We seek to nurture individuals, families and whole communities through our work.

"We campaign for social justice for those on the margins and for greater recognition of the value of stable family life. The seeds we sow are seeds of hope, support and opportunity."

The playschool and Tiddlers group at St Andrew's were originally started by the MU many years ago.

Some members have been to Christchurch Cathedral in Oxford to carry out welcoming duties for visitors. Others call on people in the parish, at home or in hospital, who need a visitor for a variety of reasons.

One of the most successful projects has been the supply of emergency toiletry bags for the children's ward at the Royal Berkshire Hospital. These are invaluable to mums and dads if they have to stay overnight unexpectedly with their child.

Looking to the wider world, the group supports the Away from It All scheme run by the MU for families in need of a holiday. It also supported the Buy Bye campaign launched in 2010 to raise awareness of increasing levels of marketing and sexual imagery aimed at and accessible to children. This generated an amazing response from the general public and led to a Government review led by the MU chief executive Reg Bailey. In turn this resulted in significant changes including improvements to online safety for children.

Internationally the MU is a global fellowship, linking women around the world. It works with some of the most marginalised and neglected people in the developing world.

Incidentally you don't have to be a mother to belong – and even men can join. It has a voice at the United Nations and exercises its consultative power every year at the Commission on the Status of Women held in New York.

The MU makes a difference to the health and poverty levels of communities in countries where women's access to economic resources is very limited. It works to eradicate illiteracy and promote numeracy in countries where poor access to education is the norm.

It funds training in self help, leadership skills, agriculture, health issues, nutrition and HIV awareness. It empowers women as economic decision makers in Africa, Asia and the Far East.

As you can see the list of what the Mothers' Union does for others is almost endless.

Mothers' UNION

Christian care for families

members and is active in 83 countries throughout the world. Within the UK and Ireland it has 93,000 members. It is the largest mission organisation within the Anglican Communion.

Lorna Lovett, leader of the group at St Andrew's, says: "Our branch has been established and thriving for almost 70 years. Last year the Oxford diocese celebrated 125 years since the first branch was started."

The group meets on the first Tuesday of each month in the church hall, or someone's home, and comes together for fellowship, prayer and usually a speaker or discussion. This covers a wide range of topics.

She adds: "Our vision is of a world where



Hannah Taylor, MU regional development officer for Asia, on a visit to a branch in Korea last year

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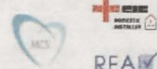
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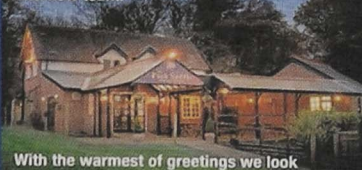
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Adult schools in Caversham

It came as something of a surprise when a friend of mine, a great collector of old postcards of the Reading area, sent me a scan of this picture of the Caversham Adult Schools. I had known that they existed, but wasn't sure where.

A quick look in the old Reading street directories shows them to have been at No 9 Westfield Road. In fact, the directories have two entries for No. 9 – one for the house at the front, and one for the Adult Schools at the back. The large-scale Ordnance Survey plans show the house at the front, and a passageway between Nos 7 and 9, leading to the schools built over the garden of No 9.

A visit to the site confirmed what I thought. No 9 is unlike the other terraced houses on either side of it. You can see where the passageway would have been at the side of it. At the back is the service road for the houses in Westfield Road and Cromwell Road. Not surprisingly, the wooden buildings which housed the schools are no longer there, having been replaced by garages.

The Caversham Adult Schools were one of the four adult schools in Reading. The National Union of Adult Schools was supported by The Society of Friends – the Quakers. The movement dates back to the mid-nineteenth century, before universal compulsory elementary education, so it is not surprising that the Quakers, with their high ideals, took it on themselves to help working people to learn to read, write, and calculate. From the 1870s onwards, the need began to disappear, but the adult schools continued, maintaining the high ideals, helping people who had missed out on elementary education, and helping everyone make the most of their scant leisure time and their lives.

I have read that the first of these schools in Caversham was in Bridge Street, but it doesn't seem to appear in the directories. The schools as seen here appear first in the 1911 directory. From the delightful ladies' hats, it would seem that the photograph was taken about 1930. I hope that they make you smile, as they did me. Surprisingly, the schools continue to appear in directories until 1971. If they functioned until then, there must be many people who remember them, and what they did.

Quite why the word schools is plural is not clear, but it may be because there were separate classes for men and women. In 1913, the men had their classes at Westfield Road, and the women at the house called Fir Lodge, once reached from a drive off Gosbrook Road, next to the present-day recreation ground. The men's class was at 9am on a Sunday morning, and the women met at 3pm on Sunday afternoons. This was presumably so that they could attend morning worship at their own churches.

The directory entries always have the word unsectarian, to emphasise that the classes were open to everyone, even if they were supported by the Quakers. Besides the Caversham schools, there was one in Norris Road in east Reading, another in Gloucester Road in west Reading, and one near the Quaker Meeting House in Church Street, between London Street and Southampton Street in the town centre. This seems rather impressive.

The mention of the social club on the sign in the picture is intriguing. I wonder what they did. I expect there were flower and produce shows, lantern lectures, and home-made entertainments. Perhaps some Caversham Bridge readers will enlighten us!

Happy Wanderer



The Caversham schools in their old wooden buildings

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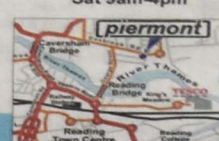
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CHURCHES

Children get the message



The children start turning Father Paul into a snowman ...



... the process is complete

Angie Hassan of the parish of Our Lady and St Anne's writes: Our needs are few, our wants are many; however is this a concept that can have any relevance to any child? When my children were younger, I had to remind them to eat their greens, finish their food, always be polite and no swearing. Just to name a few red hot bricks that will penalise them and not get them the presents they want from Santa. If that was bribery, then I am guilty as charged!

At our St Anne's' children's Christmas party, Father Paul reminded the children that this was one party that his predecessor, Father Giles, enjoyed most and long awaited throughout the year and

those who were there can understand why. The pure joy and innocence of the children when they arrived at the party was a sight to behold!

Their expectations were simple: to be fed, have their loved ones with them, meet Santa and to turn their parish priest into a snowman! They were not inhibited at all and when Santa asked them if they have been good, all replied in the affirmative! They were happy with the gifts they received and the joy on each face will remain with me for a long time!

For a moment in time I wished I could be a child again. The purity, the innocence and the gratefulness that so little can bring! May the children as they grow older be aware of the meaning of Advent and Christmas and may they all be little candles burning their light for our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!



The party in full swing

Pictures: Angie Hassan

ECUMENICAL CONFIRMATION

Plans were made over the summer for an Ecumenical Confirmation to be hosted by the Caversham Park ecumenical church as the Caversham group's confirmation.

In the event, Caversham Park had only one candidate, but Bishop Andrew graciously allowed this to go ahead, as we were already to be joined by two candidates from St. Michael's, Tilehurst, and eventually another four from St. Peter's, Earley.

Was the school hall where we meet for worship going to be big enough to accommodate all the possible guests? Actually, only two candidates brought more than the 10 suggested, so we all fitted in comfortably.

To reflect the ecumenical nature of the service, Anglican Common Worship with Baptism was used, with additions from the 1992 Joint Liturgical Groups agreement for Confirmation and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Faith. The Revd David Shaw, Methodist circuit superintendent minister, confirmed our candidate with Bishop Andrew and she was welcomed by the Revd Robert Barthram, a URC minister from Reading, while the Anglican candidates were welcomed as full members of their congregations by their own priests. Two of the Anglican candidates were also baptised as part of the service.

It was a really joyful occasion and the church at Caversham Park was spiritually affirmed by the service.

The buzz of friendly chatter over refreshments which followed showed how many were caught up by the service.

Many thanks to the Ministers and churches who were enthusiastic to take part and families and friends who supported, to Louise Cole for requesting the participation from the Methodist and URC ministers and to our Baptist moderator, John Tuck, for his attendance.

Margaret

Dimmick

Christmas at St Peter's

Two weeks before Christmas, during the usual morning service, the congregation presented toys to be distributed to children throughout the borough. Cubs and Beavers took part in the service..

On Monday 16th December, the Carols in Caversham Court event was moved to St Peter's church owing to the bad weather, and although the attendance was less than last year, the church was full for this popular annual event. The carols were led by St Peter's choir and accompanied by the Salvation Army Band. Mulled wine and mince pies were sold, raising a considerable sum in aid of local charities.

On the Sunday before Christmas, the church was again filled to capacity for the carol service, which followed the traditional nine lessons and carols format. On Christmas Eve, two Christingle services were held, and the church was again full for both of these. A choir member, dressed as a large Christingle, led the children around the church to collect their individual Christingles, after which the candles were lit.

The church was again full for the traditional Christmas Eve midnight mass service.

The attendance at these special Christmas services totalled well over 1000 people, and it was good to see the church full.



The candidates and Bishop Andrew after the service

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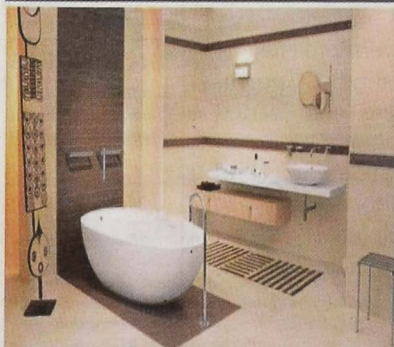
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You are invited to the annual general meeting of the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens on Wednesday 5 March, 7pm for 7.30. A brief business meeting will be followed by an illustrated talk on *The Rise, Decline and Reincarnation of the Walled Kitchen Garden*

The speaker will be Susan Campbell, a founder member of The Walled Kitchen Garden Network and author of *A History of Kitchen Gardening*. Members and non-members are welcome at the meeting, which will be held in Reading Canoe Club, The Warren, Caversham RG4 7TH.

Refreshments will be provided, sponsored by Farmer and Dyer, Estate Agents, Caversham.

READING GARDENERS

On February 12th in Caversham Primary School hall the club welcomes Chris Beardshaw, the internationally renowned award-winning garden designer and TV presenter, who will talk on 100 Plants that (almost) changed the world.

Make sure you buy your ticket in advance, £7 for members, £10 for non-members, by sending a cheque made payable to Reading Gardeners and a stamped addressed envelope to Gill Betts, 38 Priest Hill, Caversham, Reading RG4 7RY

This is a special meeting as part of the club's 125th anniversary celebration. A drink and canapés are included in the price. The meeting starts at 7pm and the talk is at 7.45pm

On 26th February Helen Picton of Old Court Nurseries and the Picton Garden will give a talk on asters. This is at 7.30pm at Caversham Primary School.

Please visit the website: readinggardenersclub.org.uk

JOIN THE DAY

Women's World Day of Prayer will be held on 7th March at 8am at the New Testament Church of God, Church Street, Caversham. The speaker will be Mrs Morva Gayle. All are welcome – men, women and children.

Click Here!

Computer advice by Francs Brown. This month he discusses the retirement of Microsoft XP

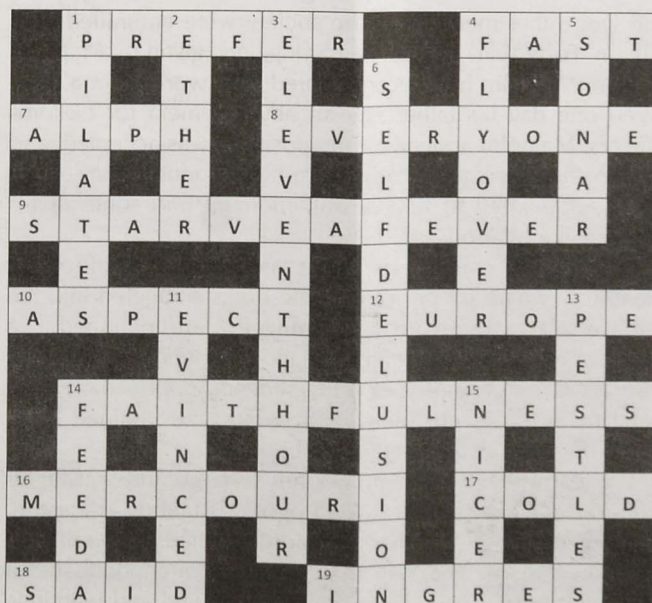
The last Microsoft security update to XP will be on 8th April this year. This is good news for fraudsters. I liked XP. It did a good job, but it is not really up to coping with the current security threats. Three layers of protection are needed: up to date software, an up to date security suite and common sense. On their own, security suites are just not good enough. They are good but not perfect.

Fraudsters are waiting in the knowledge that parts of XP are used in the later products: Vista, Windows 7 and 8. These more recent products will continue to be updated, typically late on the second Tuesday of every month. For the technically minded, a detailed analysis of each newly discovered issue and its associated fix is available. Some of these issues will definitely be present in XP, but they will not be fixed after April. Of course, fraudsters will exploit this situation.

There could be more than 1000 XP PCs in Caversham. If you know someone who might be using XP, please let him or her know, that XP is being retired and will no longer be supported by Microsoft. See www.fbrown.org for more details.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Here is the solution to the crossword which appeared in last month's issue. We hope we enjoyed it.

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Rosehill WI

In December president Margaret Pyle welcomed members and visitors. She pointed out that the resolutions form is in the current issue of WI Life and if anyone wished to complete and hand it in at the January meeting it would be forwarded to National. Margaret Pyle also reported that she had received an e-mail from Esme Ellingham's son to thank members who had visited his mother.

After a short report from secretary Margaret Seal about correspondence, treasurer Doris Goddard said she had sent a further 60 emergency packs to RBH – well done Doris. She also reported that the November bring and buy stall had made £59.15 – a big thank you to Brenda and Pat for running the stall and to all members who generously brought and bought!!

There was a pleasant session with Carol Wheeler talking about and ringing hand bells. She played several tunes including Edelweiss and The Lonely Goatherd which she played with mallets hitting the bells instead of ringing them, also Amazing Grace which she played at two different tempos.

After that a cup of tea and mince pies or shortbread were served – with thanks to those members who made them. After the raffle the president wished everyone a happy Christmas.

Rosehill WI meets on the first Wednesday of the month at St Barnabas Church Hall at 2.00 pm and visitors are welcome.

Caversham WI

Members held a joint Christmas and birthday party at their December meeting. Guests from other local institutes were welcomed and were well entertained by the choir of St John's Church. A good appetite was worked up with some festive carols and then a bring and share supper was enjoyed. This ended with a piece of cake, a Christmas raffle and a gift from Santa's sack.

Law and order was the topic of the talk at the November meeting. Frank Lovett, a magistrate, explained the magistrates' role in court proceedings and Helen Morris, a probation officer, gave details of how her service worked. A hypothetical crime was presented and members could vote on the outcome. It was a topic of wide interest and many questions were asked.

After refreshments details of Christmas celebrations were finalised.

Caversham Heights Society

In December members of the society were enthralled by a talk on 'Forty Years of Catching Smugglers' given by Malcolm Nelson. Malcolm had become bored with working in a bank when one day his father saw an advertisement for customs officers. Malcolm applied for the position, was accepted, and his life changed dramatically. From his account to the society he never seemed to have a dull moment and some of his stories were hilarious.

Most of his career was spent as a customs officer at Heathrow where 85 per cent of the drugs smuggled into the UK are seized. The majority of smugglers are identified as a result of either tip-offs from colleagues around the world or from profiling certain types of passengers. Approximately 30 per cent of drugs are sniffed out by specially trained dogs. Some dogs are also trained to sniff out money.

We learnt that certain airlines are suspect, and that flights from key cities – Bangkok, Bogota, Istanbul, Kingston, Jamaica, and Lagos – arriving at particular times of the day are also key targets. The way that suspects, often oddballs or showing unusual body language, are followed and identified

was particularly interesting and the places used for hiding drugs were sometimes unbelievable. Judging by the laughter and the questions asked this was a truly memorable evening.

The last meeting of 2013, later in December, was an organ recital by Jonathan Holl, ARCO, interspersed with traditional Christmas carols. This was followed by a spread of Christmas fare in the Methodist Church hall. The New Year's programme began with a talk on the Mission Aviation Fellowship on 15th January.

Further details about the society and its activities are available at www.cav-hts-soc.fsnet.co.uk or by telephoning 959 5307.

Chazey WI

The Christmas party, one of the highlights of the year, was enjoyed at the beginning of December. The president, Ann Knee-Robinson, made the usual introductions followed by a demonstration by local florist Emma Sampson. She brought along a colourful array of winter flowers, garden greenery, pine cones and dried fruit. With practised ease she then created a spectacular Christmas wreath followed by a table arrangement that would grace even the finest of homes. It was inspiring to watch and gave members the enthusiasm to try making their own.

When the demonstration was over, finger foods and warming cordials were served. Finally, the wreath and table

arrangement were raffled and two lucky winners had a special memento to take home.

Chazey WI meet on the first Tuesday of every month, 7.45pm, at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. There is a varied programme of speakers and visitors are welcome.

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REMEMBRANCE PARADE BIGGEST EVER

The Remembrance service and parade in Caversham in November was the biggest ever in the village centre. It was estimated that almost 1400 people, no doubt encouraged by the fine weather, were either in the parade or accompanying it. It was definitely well over 1000 as that number of orders of service were provided and people had to share!

The service, held at the war memorial in Christchurch Meadow, was conducted by the Revd Derek Chandler, vicar of St. Barnabas, and the hymns were played by Lower Early Salvation Army Band.

The president of Caversham Royal British Legion, Ron Jewitt, welcomed all present and said how pleasing it was to see so many of the younger generation attending and understanding the meaning of the day

Unlike previous years, the parade was dismissed in Christchurch Meadow after the service and did not go back to Westfield Road park. This was due to the large number of young children in the parade and, after a meeting with leaders from various organisations, it was decided that this would be safer.

This led to an unexpected but really moving time afterwards. Thirty wreaths were laid on the memorial, in itself a record, but many people laid their personal tributes. The children laid poppies and crosses, some even their order of service, on the steps of the war memorial.

Thanks are due to the Salvation Army band for the music, to Reading University Boat Club for allowing the public address system to be connected to their power supply, and to Jim Day for setting it up. Thanks also go to Drummonds Letting Agency for printing the orders of service free of charge, to the police and all those who gave up their time to attend.

Bible Friends**A message for the wise men**

A long way from Bethlehem, there were some wise men. They were looking at the stars.

"Look at that big, bright star up there," one said.

"It's telling us a king has been born," said another. "How exciting! Let's go and find him."

The wise men chose some special presents to give the baby king. They began a long journey. They followed the star to King Herod's palace. "We've come to see the special baby," they told him.

"What baby?" he asked.

"The new king," the wise men answered.

"But I'm the only king here," said Herod, angrily.

"You will probably find the baby you are looking for in Bethlehem," the king's advisers said.

And they were right. The wise men knelt down.

They knew Jesus was very special.

They gave him the expensive presents they had brought

— gold and rich perfumes.

Matthew 2:1-12



Signs of spring at Clayfield Copse

The Friends of Clayfield Copse at Emmer Green were busy in January clearing brambles from the bluebell patch in Blackhouse Wood and widening the path a little, hoping walkers will keep to the path rather than cutting across the bluebells.

Conditions were very muddy there for walkers at this time of year but, although it looked bleak, there were already signs that spring was not so far away. The bluebell shoots were just beginning to show and a woodpecker – the larger black and white kind -- was shouting to any other woodpeckers around to keep off his patch!

This month's task for the Friends will be coppicing the hazel along the Ride. For details see www.econetreading.org.uk



Storm damage to oaks on the edge of the football field. Children move in!

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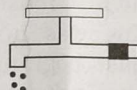
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