

New face for an old friend

You may have noticed, as you walk or drive down Prospect Street, an attractive building in a prominent position facing on to the roundabout, and bearing the legend "CHURCH HOUSE". This has recently been refurbished, and here Nigel Smith, who is chairman of the Church House Leadership team, describes the refurbishment, and outlines the history of the building.

In 1943 two sisters, Miss Annie Cooper Haslam and Miss Jessie Haslam, gifted the property now known as Church House (nos. 57 and 59 Church Street) to the Church of England. The bequest specified that it be used for the advancement of

the Christian message among the people of Caversham. Since then it has proved a useful amenity in the heart of Caversham. It stands at the eastern end of Church Street facing up Prospect Street and over the years it has been a gathering place for many community organisations, who have found the hall, with its central location, an ideal place to meet.

As well as the upstairs hall, Church House provides an office for Caverham Good Neighbours and

comfort – to provide easy step-free access from the downstairs lobby to the first floor landing. The decision to instal the lift was not taken on financial grounds (it would never pay for itself) but on the grounds that the hall should be accessible to everyone who wishes to use it, in keeping with the terms of the original Haslam bequest. Plans are currently being drawn up and estimates requested for this work, so watch this space.

The parish is fortunate that Church House is in a position to fund this work internally. Revenue comes from rents received from a private flat upstairs and from the barber shop and the community police office, which occupy most of the ground floor. (At about the time you read this article, the police will be returning to Church House after a major refurbishment of their offices.) Church House funds are also used to finance a number of initiatives to promote the Christian message throughout the parish.



PRESENT The newly restored face of no. 59



FUTURE The tin shed – site for a new meeting room?

for the parish itself, and is the registered office for this newspaper. It also houses the local office of the Thames Valley Police.

Over the last three years the building has undergone a major refurbishment which has seen new windows and lighting fitted, a new front door, new internal doors throughout and redecoration of all the public areas. The hall has been fitted with a new kitchen, carpets and cupboards.

The most noticeable change to the exterior is the recent fitting of a new front window to the police office, which replaced the old shop window, a legacy of the tailor's shop which some readers might remember. This returned the frontage of this attractive building to its original Victorian style.

There are further improvements afoot... The biggest problem with the hall is that it is upstairs, and the only internal access to it is up a rather steep and narrow staircase. This has proved an obstacle for some of our hall users, particularly the elderly and less mobile. This summer we hope to address this issue by installing an internal platform lift – big enough for a wheelchair and a carer to travel in

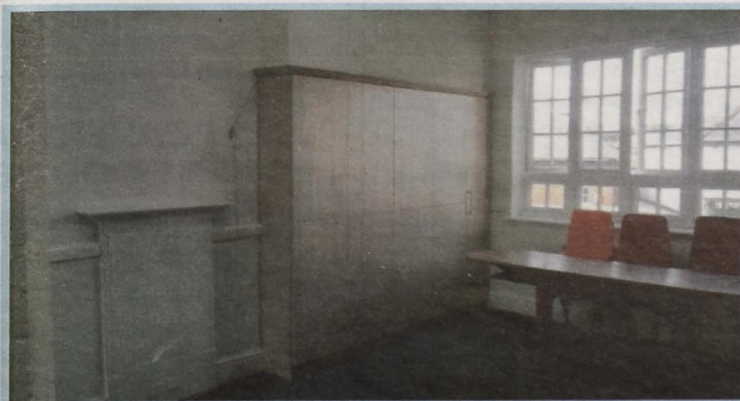
The lift development is not the end of the story. Its installation will mean the loss of a small meeting room on the ground floor. In the next phase of development we would like to replace this room by using the space at the back of the building, currently occupied by a rather unsightly tin shed, to build a brand new airy and easily accessible small meeting room. As part of this development we would also replace the current ground floor accessible toilet with new facilities.

At the moment there are no firm plans for this work, but we believe it can be done and that it would be an appropriate use of the building so generously donated by the Misses Haslam.

*Nigel Smith, Chairman, Church House Leadership Team
(Parish of Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham)*



PAST Church House frontage – before the new window



PRESENT New cupboards and window in the hall

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01628 585213

Caversham Clergy

ANGLICAN

St Barnabas

Rev'd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road.
Tel: 947 8239.
www.saintbarnabas.org.uk

St Andrews

Rev'd Nigel Jones, St Andrews Vicarage,
Harrogate Road. Tel: 947 2788
www.standrewscaversham.org

St Peter, St Margaret, St John

Rev'd Jeremy Tear
St John's Vicarage, St John's Road,
Caversham RG4 5AN Tel: 946 2884

Rev'd Marion Pyke

26 Priest Hill, Caversham RG4 7RZ
Tel: 947 5834

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PARTNERSHIP

Rev'd Margaret Dimmick, 12 Lowfield Road,
Caversham Park. Tel: 947 0258

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY

Rev Jenny Dowding, 72 Highmoor Road.
Tel: 947 2223

Deacon Becky Lovatt, 1 Forge Close, Caversham
RG4 8BG. Tel: 948 2530

email: beckybwawden@hotmail.co.uk or
beckybwawden@btinternet.com

BAPTIST

Rev'd Rob Beardsley.

Tel: 07515 260019

email rob.beardsley@sky.com

GRACE CHURCH

(formerly Caversham Hill Chapel)

Colin Gault. Tel: 948 4151

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Fr Paul Martin, The Presbytery,
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
Mapledurham 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.

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TALKING POINT

by

Colin Bass

Where are YOU going?

Exam question: If God is good, why is there so much evil in the world?

Schoolboy answer: Without evil in the world, there would be nothing to watch on television.

But have you noticed that if there is ever anything at all light-hearted on the television news, they always place it last? I think that is because the programme makers believe that people don't want good news, but that if they place it last, viewers won't switch channels for fear of missing the weather forecast, which can usually be relied upon to restore the balance.

And have you noticed that when people are praying out loud in church, or saying the Creed, when they get to the bit about "the life eternal" they lower their voices? I think that is not because the life eternal requires more reverence, but because the speaker isn't sure. Why ever not? The Bible is absolutely sure. Everybody was absolutely sure until liberal thinkers in the 18th century convinced some people that human minds could know everything if only they would give the matter some thought. But in my lifetime (no credit to me) science has made such progress that the possibility of understanding everything no longer seems so obvious.

The Gospel writers were clear that Jesus' BODY was raised from the dead. His grave clothes remained in the tomb, but of his body, not a whisker remained. Certainly he had been dead when he was put there. Within a few minutes of his death on the Cross, before his body ever reached the tomb, his brain and other delicate organs would have decayed beyond repair. So it used to be thought that the resurrection of the body was a miracle too far. But since then scientists have discovered about DNA and about stem cells. Things which once seemed impossible can now be done. I don't mean that scientists can resurrect bodies, or ever will be able to. Resurrection is still a miracle but perhaps it no longer seems a miracle too far-fetched to be true.

The Bible prophesies that when God judges the time is right, he will resurrect not just bodies but the whole Earth, restoring it to his original intentions. He will live on Earth himself, so then the New Heaven will be on the New Earth. You and I can be part of it [Revelation 21.1-7]. Living a good life won't achieve that for us. Only one human life has been good enough. Jesus promised that all those who see the Son and believe in Him, will have eternal life, and He will raise them up at the last day [John 6.40]. Anyone can believe if they choose. It's up to you. Where are YOU going?

Rev Colin Bass is a Franciscan tertiary who has recently been assisting with the ministry in Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham

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, Mapledurham

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)

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH South Street

10.30am Morning Worship each Sunday
7.00pm Powerhouse Service - 2nd Saturday each month
3.45pm Messy Church - for all the family Last Sunday of the month

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10.30am Worship and Ministry, Children's Church
6.30pm Prayer Meeting

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6.30pm (second and fourth Sundays)

Gosbrook Road

10.30am

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

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Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm

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Church Street, Caversham

9.30am Sunday School
11.00am Divine Worship
6.00pm Evening Service

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the April 2014 issue should be sent to Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham Parish Office by **Monday 3rd March**. The date for the May 2014 issue is **Monday 31st March**. Email address is secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

Advertising copy for the April issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twiggmoor, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham by **Friday 28th February**. The date for the May 2014 issue is **Friday 28th March**

PARISH OFFICES

PARISH OF CAVERSHAM THAMESIDE AND MAPLEDURHAM

St Peter, St Margaret, St John
Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham RG4 8AX
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ST. BARNABAS

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Bible Friends

Daniel prays to God

Every day, Daniel went to his room and asked God for help.

"Let's get rid of Daniel," said some men.

"He's the king's favourite. It's not fair," they grumbled.

They waited for Daniel to do something wrong, but he didn't. But the men saw that Daniel always prayed to God. They thought of a trick.

They said to the king, "Why don't you make a new rule? For thirty days, no one must ask for help from anyone but you."

"That's good," said the king. "If anyone breaks it, I'll put them in with the lions."

Daniel heard about the new rule, but he still went to his room and asked God for help.

The men who hated him told the king, and Daniel was put in with the lions.

Next morning, the king went to see what had happened. Daniel was safe! "God stopped the lions from hurting me," he told the king. "God is so great!"

Daniel 6



From Matt Rodda (by email):

I'm a regular reader of the Caversham Bridge newspaper and I am also a borough councillor.

I thought you discussed the need for a third bridge in a very fair and balanced way in your latest edition. I wondered if you wanted an update from my colleague Tony Page, who is chairman of the council's transport committee?

I know Tony is working with Wokingham Borough who are now in favour of a third bridge and he has had a number of meetings with Oxfordshire.

From Tony Page (by email):

Further to Matt Rodda's email please find attached [below] a copy of the resolution moved by me and passed by Reading BC last Tuesday [28th Jan].

FINAL AGREED TEXT ON THIRD BRIDGE

Resolved:

This Council:

Notes the considerable dislocation, disruption and inconvenience to residents and businesses caused by the recent closure of Sonning Bridge, and notes that the widespread flooding responsible for this is likely to be a regular feature with the impact of climate change.

Recognises that thousands of people from South Oxfordshire who travel to Reading for employment, leisure and shopping on a daily basis were equally inconvenienced.

Reaffirms its long standing support for a Third Thames Bridge, to the immediate east of Reading, which offers the potential to deliver reduced traffic, improved air quality and road safety through the centres of Caversham and Reading, and has consistently been defined as an all vehicles

highway link (with possible bus lanes) in successive RBC local transport plans and, most recently, in the Transport Innovation Fund bid submitted in 2009 by Reading, Wokingham, and West Berkshire Councils.

Recognises the legitimate environmental concerns of Oxfordshire County Council, South Oxfordshire District Council and relevant parishes about the possible impact of a new bridge and therefore calls on authorities north of the river to work with Reading Borough Council and Wokingham District Council in designing a scheme that safeguards local communities either side of a new bridge whilst delivering considerable relief and improvements to traffic in the Reading area.

Calls on Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise partnership to strengthen its draft Strategic Economic Plan and support a Third Thames Bridge and to commit to persuading the Oxfordshire LEP to recognise the economic benefits to Oxfordshire from a Third Thames Bridge.

Calls for the reviving of the Cross Thames Travel Group to consider the strategic issue of cross-river travel, its impact on the local communities, and potential options to alleviate existing bottle necks.

Recognises that a credible bid for financial support for any Third Thames Bridge can only be made once all the relevant authorities have reached a consensus.

The editors welcome correspondence on this or any other Caversham related topic.

Letters should be sent to The Editors, Caversham Bridge, Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX. Emails to secretary@ctmparish.org.uk

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CHURCHES

Do you need a holiday?

Last July, we reported on a new event for Caversham Heights Methodist Church, the Holiday at Home, which was enjoyed by everyone who attended, and their parting comments were 'Roll on next year - Please can you do the same again?'

So we are. This year, we are very much looking forward to a four-day holiday from 27th May to 30th May. Morning activities will begin at 10.00am with a warm welcome and coffee, followed by a variety of craft activities and entertainment. The entertainment continues after lunch before the day concludes with a thought for the day at 3.30.

We are hoping to increase the number of guests this year, inviting older members of the local community and church family who would appreciate a holiday, with the knowledge they can enjoy the comfort of their own bed. As places are limited we will reserve places on a 'first come, first served' basis, but if you would like further information we would be pleased to hear from you (email holiday@cavhmc.org.uk).

It's good to have something to look forward to and as we are making plans and finalising an interesting and inspiring programme, we are looking forward to a week of fun, friendship and renewal.



The Ugly Sisters.



Pantomime at Caversham Heights Cinderella

Nights of happy faces, with audience participation in singing, booing, hissing and plenty of laughter, this is the world of pantomime and this year's production of Cinderella by the Caversham Methodists, was no exception.

It was the culmination of weeks of hard work together, ably led by Myra Emerson and Derek Richings. More than 60 people were involved, on-stage and behind the scenes. Everyone had a special part to play, but Lucy Dawson (11), as Cinderella, was outstanding, with Mollie Vaughan (12) as her handsome prince, Kathy Munns as her friend, Buttons, and nine children as the helpful meerkats. It was fun to see our minister, the Revd Jenny Dowding as Fairy Le Quid; Sheila Allen (co-writer) as Fairy Nuff; and the two sisters played, very comically, by Robin Gowers and Symon Turner.

On the following Sunday, the Revd Jenny Dowding and Deacon Becky Lovatt (producer) led the morning service on a pantomime theme, with the cast in costume. We were reminded that, as in pantomime, the coming of the Christian faith turned the world upside down - love your enemies; the poor shall become rich.

Over £2500 was raised and a large donation will be going to DrugFAM, a charity which has six support groups working with the families and friends of those struggling with substance abuse issues. The local group meets at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church every Wednesday evening from 7 - 9 pm. Further information is available from office@drugfam.co.uk or 01494 442777.

Thank you to all who took part in any way, including the members of the audience. Will there be another pantomime? - "Oh no there won't....." "Oh yes there will.....!"

Janet L. Bull

A member of Gosbrook Road church, Beryl Jelliman (one of the villagers) writes:

Well! What a good time we all had. Rehearsals were very tiring but it all came out right on the night.

A very big thank you to Becky for all her support and help. Also the most enjoyable performance from our Minister, Jenny. Not forgetting all the cast and crew and others behind the scenes for making it such a wonderful time.



The glass slipper fits.

CHURCHES

Retirement of Kath Turner as Priests' Housekeeper

Kath Turner has been housekeeper at the presbytery of Our Lady and St Anne's parish for seventeen years, but she finally decided towards the end of last year that it was time to retire.

During those years she has looked after three parish priests – Fr Tony Jones, Fr Giles Goward and finally, for a short time, Fr Paul Martin. Over the years there have been many visitors who enjoyed her loving care from archbishops of Birmingham (including Vincent Nichols who has just become a cardinal), bishops and supply priests to students from Oscott college working in the parish as part of their training.

In December, her efforts were recognized at a presentation after Sunday morning mass when Father Paul spoke about her devotion to duty over and above requirements and how lucky he was, like the other priests, to have such a wonderful person looking after him. He cited the milk and the packet of Welsh cakes in the fridge when he returned from holiday as an example of her thoughtfulness. Kath in her turn declared that it had been a pleasure, never a chore, and, in return, what wonderful people she had been privileged to serve.

She was then presented with a gift which had been very carefully chosen, a photograph of her favourite celebrity, George Clooney. There was no doubt about her pleasure at receiving this gift and she declared she knew exactly where she would hang it.

After many photographs were taken, drinks and nibbles were available in the Cenacle for all who were able to stay to personally speak to Kath and to wish her well for her future.



A smiling Kath shows her picture to the congregation



Kath shows the picture to Fr Paul



Fr Paul praises Kath's service



Damian presents the gift



Calling all astronauts!

Caversham children are set for three days of fun and games with the Churches Together in Caversham's 'Space Academy' holiday club! The holiday club will be full of games, crafts, drama, music, video presentations and Bible stories as children learn about how one man, Daniel, chose to do the right thing and showed his love for God.

The holiday club runs from 10am-3pm on Tuesday 8th April – Thursday 10th April at Caversham Baptist Church and is open to all people aged 5-11 years.

Leader of the holiday club, Megan Temple is excited about the event. 'We have run a number of holiday clubs and each time they get more exciting. A holiday club set in space sounds thrilling and I am really looking forward to it.'

Furniture sale at St Barnabas

There will be a furniture, workshop and homewares sale on Saturday 22nd March from 12.00 noon till 2pm at St Barnabas Church Hall, Grove Road, Emmer Green. Entry is free. Furniture can be delivered for a small charge. Proceeds will go to the St Barnabas Organ Fund. For further details please phone Richard Gash on 947 5744 or Wendy Howell on 946 1365.

Women's World Day of Prayer

The Women's World Day of Prayer service will this year be held on 7th March at 8pm at the New Testament Church of God, Church Street, Caversham. The theme of the service will be 'Streams in the Desert' and the service has been prepared by the women of Egypt. The speaker will be Mrs Morva Gayle. All are welcome -- men, women and children.



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FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Reading Youth Orchestra

Young people from Caversham, Reading and the wider Reading area are joining in celebrating 70 years of Reading Youth Orchestra this year. As the second oldest youth orchestra in the country, it has provided enjoyment and enrichment to the many musicians involved with it over these years; some of these have gone on to become professionals in the music world. Caversham has played its part in encouraging teenage musicians to enjoy orchestral repertoire, and continues to do so - though we currently have opportunities for more members to join.

With its roots in the Youth and Community Service, this orchestra not only meets for music making, but has a vibrant social scene. It is well supported by The Friends of RYO. The orchestra meets at 7.30 - 9.30pm on Friday evenings in term time at Reading University, London Road site. Paul Cox is the current music director, bringing a wealth of experience with youth orchestras, as well as with local amateur and professional orchestras.

Rehearsals are well on the way for the first concert of this special year on Saturday 8th March, 7.30 pm at Greyfriars Church, Friar Street, Reading, RG1 1EH. This will be an all Beethoven programme: Overture 'The Creatures of Prometheus' Op.43, *Romance in F major for violin and orchestra* (soloist: Rachel Newman), and *Symphony No.1 in C major* Op.21.

Tickets will be available on the door, at £6 adults, £4 concessions, £2 children, or £14 for a family ticket. For further information contact 07714 226723 or visit www.readingyouthorchestra.co.uk

Henley Choral Society

After a sell-out Christmas concert, dynamic young music director Benjamin Goodson presents the Henley Choral Society and a superb cast of musicians to perform the *Faure Requiem* and *Poulenc Gloria*, two of the best-loved pieces of the French choral repertoire, at 7.30pm on Saturday March 29th at St Mary the Virgin, Henley-on-Thames.

Performing with the society are:

Elizabeth Cragg, described as 'a marvel' by the Sunday Times and 'sensational' by The Guardian, is a soprano with an international reputation whose future engagements include performances at Garsington and Covent Garden;

Lawrence White, an in-demand young bass whose credits include operatic roles and oratoria across the UK as well as recordings of music for films including *The Hobbit*, *The Da Vinci Code* and *Prometheus*;

the Brandenburg Sinfonia, which is held in high regard both in the UK and internationally, with a recent highlight being an international opera gala conducted by Richard Bonyngne in the presence of HRH Prince Charles.

This promises to be a glorious evening of music. Don't miss out! Purchase your tickets as soon as possible, as this concert is bound to be very popular.

Tickets at £16.00 (under 18s £10.00) are available from Jan French on 01491 572795 or Corvett & Stone, 21 Duke street, Henley

For more information see www.henleychoralsociety.org.uk

Concert at St Barnabas Church

As part of the fund-raising effort for the restoration of the organ at St Barnabas, an exciting concert will be held on Saturday 8th March when Reading Central Band of the Salvation Army and the internationally acclaimed Oompah Brass combine to present "Contrasts in Brass". The programme will showcase both traditional brass band music and lively, modern arrangements for brass quintet, so there should be something to appeal to every brass enthusiast.

The concert commences at 7.00 pm. Tickets, which include interval refreshments, cost £12 (concessions £10) and are available from Richard Cash 9475744 or Alison Wood 9462517.

Combined choir concert

On Saturday 5th April at 7.30pm in Reading Concert Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading Festival Chorus, South Chiltern Choral Society, Thames Chamber Choir and Reading A440 Choir will combine to present 'The Armed Man: A Mass for Peace' by Karl Jenkins. The massed choir of 200 voices will be conducted by Gwyn Arch and accompanied by Ascot Brass.

This concert is presented in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I. Tickets are available from Nicola Woodman on 0118 989 1606 or via www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk.

Reading Festival Chorus

A concert entitled "Bleu, Blanc, Rouge" will be given by Reading Festival Chorus at Greyfriars Church, Friar Street Reading at 7.30pm on Saturday 29th March. The programme will consist of "Requiem" by Durufle, "Te Deum" by Berlioz and "Gloria" by Poulenc. The conductor will be Edward-Rhys Harry.

Tickets cost £14 adults, £10 concessions, £2 under 16s, and are available from www.readingfestivalchorus.org.uk or contact Alison Mackay on 0118 983 4523 or at tickets@readingfestivalchorus.org.uk.

Concerts in Caversham

A spring concert, presented by the Caversham Ensemble, will be held on Saturday 15th March 2014 at 7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7PL.

The concert is entitled 'Mostly Mozart', and the programme comprises some of Mozart's most famous chamber-music for strings, piano and oboe, including the sublime oboe quartet in C major and the joyful piano quartet in Eb major. Concerts in Caversham are delighted to welcome Peter Fisher, a noted violinist who has worked extensively as a soloist and orchestral musician with most of the country's finest ensembles. He will be joined by Morgan Goff (viola), Naomi Watts (cello), Timothy Watts (oboe and cor anglais) and Adrienne Black (piano).

Tickets cost £13/£15 in advance, or £15/£17 at the door. Under 16s free.

Tickets include refreshments after the concert (except wine which is £1.50 per glass), and are available from Waltons the Jewellers, Prospect St, Caversham (cash only, closed on Mondays), or phone 0118 9484112. For more details, visit the web-site: www.concertsincaversham.co.uk

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Good Neighbours 'in Good Heart'

Caversham Good Neighbours held its AGM in January with Chairman Peter Vallance telling the well-attended meeting that the organisation is going from strength to strength. The voluntary organisation, based in Church House, mainly provides lifts to enable elderly people who cannot manage with buses and taxis to get to their medical appointments in the Reading area.

"I'm pleased to report that we are in good heart," Peter said. "Last year the number of journeys we undertook increased by 43%, and our financial position is sound." The Chairman went on to report on a number of exciting developments over the year, including a move to a computerised booking system, and the transfer of the organisation's home visiting activities to the Reading-wide Engage Befriending scheme. Some accompanied outings to local places of interest have also taken place, and this is another activity which the group hopes to expand in 2014.

Its volunteer drivers made some 808 journeys in 2013, up from 565 in 2012, and the organisation is hoping to recruit more drivers to help meet the rising demand. The group also provides home visits, which are very much appreciated by those who may be housebound or just need a friendly face to chat to, and the operation is run from its office in Church House.

If you have an hour or two to spare each week, you may be able to give something back to your community as a driver, home visitor, or by helping to staff the office on a volunteer basis. There is no fixed commitment, you are free to give as much or as little time as you wish, and drivers can claim a mileage allowance.

To find out more, just ring the Good Neighbours office on 0118 948 3466 from Monday to Friday between 9.30 and 11.30 am, or visit the website at <http://www.cavershamgoodneighbours.org.uk>.

This could be your opportunity to do something very rewarding which makes a real difference to the elderly members of our community who need a helping hand.

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Old Father Thames

The river has been in a far from benign mood when it flooded recently and walking near it could be dangerous. But here our occasional contributor, using the pen name 'Peg Leg', tells how it can be enjoyed in quieter times.

From the Cotswolds to the Chilterns;

From the Chilterns to the plain,

Roll on you mighty river . . .!

So sang my school singing class with great gusto! Spending the early half of my life in the London area, the River Thames has always been with me, and now in Caversham it is very close. Sometimes it can be too close as the last issue's front page illustrates.

The Thames is always thought of as one of the world's great rivers, even if it is not as mighty as the Nile or the Amazon! From the river's birth in the Cotswolds you will meet the first trickle of water near Kemble in the Cirencester area. It is joined by tiny tributaries, and by the time it reaches Lechlade in 23 miles, it is navigable.

At the river's latter end, 180 miles away to the east, you can see the same water surging through the great barrier in London, then out into the estuary, which broadens to greet the sea. What a lot there is in between, including castles and colleges, churches and royal palaces!

We must not forget humbler and quieter places, including fields and villages. Some of these upper reaches could be thought of as tedious for walkers of the Thames Path National Trail, but a coffee table picture book has changed all this for me. It contains photographs taken by suspending a camera beneath a tethered barrage balloon. From the air, the eyes are opened to the beauty of the shapes of the fields and the colours of the trees. No longer is it just an unending path in a sodden landscape!

Many of us living locally feel we know our Caversham part of the river quite well, and we often go down with family to feed the birds and to watch the rowers.

It pays to do some more research, and to travel back in time to the Neolithic people who inhabited the river bank, perhaps 6,000 years ago. We can find out how we were separated from Reading by marshy ground on the southern side. This made the Thames our river and not Reading's. The history of Caversham bridge and its important link with Southampton, Oxford and Bristol is a fascinating study. The Civil War, barges and bargemen, boat building and eel fishing, rowing and pleasure boats, apart from post-Second World War changes, are some of the subjects we could learn about in our area.

A favourite memory of mine comes from January 1997, when the river was frozen at Caversham Bridge. The swans and other bird life would have been in despair, but for the distribution of bird food from the bridge. "Bird telegraph" got round, and all sorts of winged wildlife descended on the area! I saw mandarin ducks, which had come down from the Child Beale Wildlife Trust near Stratley.

If you are able to put one foot in front of another, there is nothing more pleasant than to walk the whole of the Thames Path. Unlike other National Trails, there are no hills on the tow-path. It can be done in a fortnight, and would make a lovely holiday. Copies of the route guide are obtainable from WordPlay, in Prospect Street.

Peg Leg



The Thames at Caversham in winter.

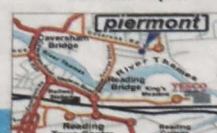
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The story of Mother's Day and Mothering Sunday

This year, Mothering Sunday is 30th March. It falls on the fourth Sunday in Lent, later than usual because Easter is very late.

Mothering Sunday in this country probably began in the medieval period, when people would return to their mother church on the fourth Sunday in Lent, a day when the Lenten fast was relaxed. Gradually this relaxation led to young people in service being allowed a day to visit their mothers, and to attend the church of their childhood. Many picked wild spring flowers to give to their mothers or to take to church. Sometimes girls would bring a fruit cake with two layers of marzipan called a simnel cake which they had baked. As the 19th century progressed and England became more urbanised and industrialised, many of these old rural customs lapsed and were gradually forgotten.

In the United States, Ann Reeves Jarvis from Philadelphia founded mothers' friendship clubs after the Civil War (1861 - 65) to teach sanitation and basic nursing skills to other women. She also wanted to bring reconciliation to neighbours who had fought each other during the war. Her actions inspired another American, Julia Ward Howe, to promote an annual Mothers' Day for Peace. Mrs Howe despaired that many mothers had lost sons in the Civil War and also in the Franco-Prussian War in Europe (1870 - 71). She is probably best remembered today as the author of the words of 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic'.



Julia Ward Howe

Ann Reeves Jarvis had a daughter named Anna, who remained unmarried to look after her mother during a long terminal illness. After Ann died in May 1905, Anna determined to honour her mother's memory and began a campaign to have one day each year set aside so everyone could honour their own mother. She called it Mother's Day. Carnations had been Ann's favourite flowers and so Anna began to take them to her church on the second Sunday of May. She elicited the help and financial assistance of a successful Philadelphia department store owner, John Wanamaker. On Sunday 8th May 1908, at her local Methodist church in Grafton, West Virginia, the first Mother's Day was celebrated. John Wanamaker held a similar celebration in Bethany Temple Presbyterian Church.

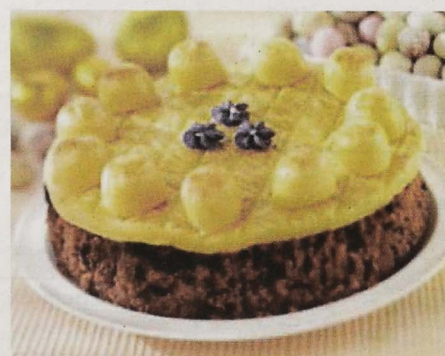
This success spurred Anna to campaign to have Mother's Day celebrated throughout the United States and beyond. She attracted the attention of President Woodrow Wilson; in 1914 he signed a declaration making the second Sunday in May the official Mother's Day. Anna's vision was that the day should be a quiet celebration between a mother and her family, when they could wear white carnations in recognition of the anniversary. Alas, this was not to be and the day soon become corrupted.

The anniversary was taken up by florists, greetings card manufacturers, candy store owners and restaurants. Anna attempted to discourage people from buying commercial gifts but failed. The term Mother's Day, which she had patented, was abused by everyone who cashed in on the idea and she spent much of the rest of her life and her money on lawyers' fees to try to stop them. When she died in 1948 she was a disillusioned woman. Today in the USA, the second Sunday in May is one of the busiest days in the year for consumer spending on flowers, confectionery, restaurants and telephone calls.

In 1913, Constance Smith, daughter of the rector of All Saints' Church, Coddington in Nottinghamshire, read an article in a local paper about Anna Jarvis and her attempt to found Mother's Day in the United States. Constance was a High Church Anglican. Here was an opportunity, she thought, to link the celebration of motherhood with the liturgy of the fourth Sunday in Lent. She felt new life could be instilled in the church in England by drawing on long forgotten customs and practices.

With her friend Ellen Porter, Constance began the Mothering Sunday movement in England. She produced plays and wrote poems and books in which she explained the medieval origins and meaning of Mothering Sunday. She researched old customs and unusual local church traditions and

recipes such as the ones for simnel cakes and wafer cakes. She gained the support of many organisations connected with young people and with family life. By 1938, Mothering Sunday was widely observed in England and throughout the British Empire.



Simmel cake

By 1943 the United States had

entered World War II. Many thousands of American servicemen arrived in England to prepare for the D-Day landings and to maintain the bombing offensive against the Axis powers. Many realised that they might never see their mothers again and wanted to celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday in May in 1944, to remind them of their families.

Today we have a kind of Anglo-American compromise. I would suggest it is a pleasant one, especially this year when we remember with gratitude the part played on D-Day, 70 years ago, by all those Americans. We celebrate Mother's Day here, not on the second Sunday of May as in America, but on Mothering Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent. Some go to church; others do not. But most of us buy Mother's Day cards and flowers and visit mothers and grandmothers. Some have just memories of our own mothers, but how many will wear a carnation, as Anna Jarvis did in memory of her own mother?

Ian Lowry

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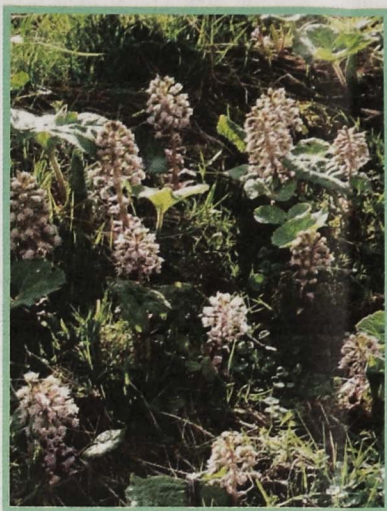
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ENVIRONMENT**BUTTERBUR**

When I was four years old, I was sent away from home for six weeks, to stay with an aunt, because my brother was about to be born. That seems to have been a fairly common practice in 1950. There were no explanations, or mentions of a new baby brother or sister. So I was driven in the back seat of a car, along the A6 road, through the gorge of the Derbyshire Wye, and on either hand, for what seemed miles

on end, grew these enormous leaves, which I was told were rhubarb. Minutes later, the car was involved in a collision, but that's another story! This was my earliest acquaintance with butterbur.

The "butter" part of the name comes from the practice of using the leaves to wrap butter, in times when paper was expensive, and tinfoil and plastic were unknown. I wonder what they used in the winter and early spring when the leaves weren't available?

The "bur" part is presumably on account of the rounded shape of the flower-heads when they push through the soil in the early spring. There's nothing about the plant that would make it catch in clothes or hair. This rounded top, and the fact that the flowers come up before the leaves, has given rise to one of the old country names for the plant, 'early mushroom'.

Other old names for it include bog rhubarb, poison rhubarb, gypsy's rhubarb, turkey rhubarb, butter dock, kettle dock, and umbrella plant. The sheer size of the leaves makes them suitable as improvised sunshades or umbrellas. Indeed, they have greyish water-repellent hairs on the underside.

In herbal medicine, the dried and powdered roots were used as a cure for fevers and the plague, in this country and across Europe. And Roy Vickery, in his *Dictionary of Plant Lore*, mentions someone in the 1990s remembering being treated as a child with a cream made from the plant, which was applied to spots and sores.

Regular readers will know of my interest in the distribution of wild plants, and whether they found their own way back after the last Ice Age, or whether they were helped by humans. The case of butterbur is intriguing. Some reckon that the plant isn't native in southern England, or that it isn't native at all. The male and female flowers grow on separate plants. In Great Britain, male and female plants grow together in northern England and southern Scotland, but in the south, male plants only are found. It has been reckoned that male plants were purposely planted here to provide early nectar for bees. Presumably, in continental Europe, male and female plants are found in equal proportions everywhere.

Butterbur grows in places which are always damp: in times of normal weather I would just have written 'damp places', but with the Thames in flood as I write, this does not seem appropriate! By the time this article is published, hopefully the water-levels will have gone down, and you will be able to see the plant in flower. It is not conventionally attractive. Unlike its close relative, the winter heliotrope, it has no pleasant scent, and its strange flesh colour makes it almost repulsive – but strange and curious it certainly is.

Happy Wanderer

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Rosehill WI

We met in St Barnabas church Hall on the 8th January with president Margaret Pyle welcoming everyone. We then had a short report from treasurer Doris Goddard explaining how our subscription money is divided between Rosehill WI, BFWI and National. She also reported that £34.10 had been collected during the December meeting to enable her to provide a further 150 emergency packs to RBH. Thanks to Doris for organising this.

A walks planning meeting is due to take place in the near future. Let's hope the weather improves so that the walks can take place.

A talk entitled 'Four Cheeks to the Wind' was given by Mary Bryant. Mary (approaching retirement) and her then partner – now husband – did a two year cycle ride through 15 countries and three continents. The talk today was about the first leg, from Calais to Istanbul, and was very interesting. Mary recounted how the bicycles were specially built for them and how they managed to carry all their supplies with them. They spent some nights in B&Bs or small hotels, but also camped. At one camp site in Frances she came face to face with a naked man in the shower and was even more embarrassed when she found out he was English! Everyone enjoyed Mary's talk and would be very pleased to hear about the rest of her journey.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month at St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green, at 2.00 pm and would welcome any visitors.

Reading Gardeners

There are two meetings in March before the AGM on April 2nd.

On Wednesday 12th March we welcome the ever-popular Ray Broughton who will give a talk on *Companion Planting*.

On 26th March Davina Wynne Jones, daughter of the renowned gardener Rosemary Verey, will talk on *Herbs for Healing*.

All meetings are held in Caversham Primary School at 7.30pm. For more information visit the website: readinggardenersclub.org.uk

Caversham Heights Society

For logistical reasons there was only one meeting for members of the society during January, and it turned out to be both fascinating and challenging. John Ledger, the area representative for the Mission Aviation Fellowship [MAF], talked about how MAF came into being after the Second World War, how it has expanded, and what its main purposes are.

At the end of the war, a group of pilots wanted to help people living in the poorer and more remote parts of Africa. In 1948 three former RAF pilots acquired a second hand aircraft and flew from London to Nairobi. This first flight took 28 days! There then followed a series of aerial surveys of Central Africa to ascertain whether their plane could land on remote grass strips. Their reconnaissance came to an abrupt halt after a crash landing in Burundi. Undeterred, in 1950 these pilots acquired a much stronger De Havilland Dragon Rapide aircraft that was capable of carrying both freight and passengers.

MAF developed from these small beginnings and now operates in 25 countries world-wide with 125 aircraft. It is in partnership with over 1000 different organisations and serves over 300 mission organisations. It acts as an air taxi service, offering scheduled services as well as chartered flights, and MAF flights take off or land every three minutes somewhere in the developing world.

In addition to transporting passengers, MAF aircraft act as air ambulances and small freight carriers of medical equipment to hospitals. It also carries emergency relief supplies to disaster areas such as those affected by the tsunami in Indonesia and the earthquake in Haiti. MAF is also involved in development projects, 'church planting' and Bible translation though its medical and relief work make no distinction between ethnic groups or religious affiliations. From some of the photographs that were shown it became apparent that MAF could reach some of the most remote places in the world with emergency relief aid that the larger international aid agencies simply could not reach on the same scale or with the same speed.

New members to the society are always welcome. Further details can be found at www.cav-hts-soc.fsnet.co.uk or by telephoning 959 5307.

Chazey WI

"Excuses and Lies" is a title bound to intrigue. Chazey members certainly thought so and our January meeting was a popular beginning to the New Year.

Our Speaker, Malcolm Nelson, spent some 40 years as a Customs Officer. During that time he came across the famous and the infamous, many of whom were caught red-handed. Cigarettes, jewellery and drugs were just

a few examples of the contraband smuggled illicitly, and for those who didn't own up, the interview techniques usually found them out! It was a fascinating talk, and a lively question and answer session afterwards.

Fittingly, a pirate's hat was the theme of our competition which Malcolm later judged.

The evening was a great success and we look forward to the many other interesting speakers due to come during the course of this year.

Chazey WI welcome new members. If you would like to visit, we meet on the first Tuesday of every month, 7.30 for 7.45pm, at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, corner of Highmoor Road and Woodcote Road. We are a friendly group, so come along!

St Peter's Wives Group

At our first meeting of the year, Ann Larkin of Home-Start Reading spoke about the work of this family support charity. It works in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations locally to help parents build better lives for their children by offering them supportive weekly visits on a one-to-one basis. Needs vary widely, but volunteers visit families and offer an extra pair of hands where there is at least one child under the age of five. They focus on the family as a whole, are non-judgmental and aim to build trust in order to help parents grow in confidence. They offer direct support to children, including playing, listening and having fun and also offer practical help to parents, such as budgeting, meal planning, cooking and making the home safe. Group meetings are also arranged locally, so that young families can meet and benefit from the support network.

Ann has herself helped at least 50 families and has found that volunteering keeps her young at heart.

Our next meeting will be at Church House on Tuesday, 18 March at 7.30pm. Our speaker will be Mrs Mary Bryant, who will be talking to us about her Australian cycling trip.

We shall be holding our 50th Anniversary Party on 17th June this year, after which the group will close. This is mainly due to declining membership but, for those members still wishing to maintain contact with others, informal meetings can be arranged, with lunches out and perhaps an outing or two during the summer.

We should like to invite to the party any past members who would like to attend and renew old acquaintance. Please contact either Jean Pugh on 0118 947 2949 or Kathleen Hardy on 0118 947 4365 if you are interested in coming.

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Caversham Heights Townswomens Guild

We started the New Year making sense of the weather. We were shown, by means of slides of cloud formations, how to predict the weather coming our way. Ian Currie's amusing presentation also included historical local weather disasters, and the truth, or otherwise, of old weather sayings.

The next day our ambling group set forth with dire warnings of torrential rainfall ringing in their ears. In the event we had a lovely walk and the sun shone all day.

Social studies group enjoyed Eric Apsden's talk on Richmond and Kew Gardens. This was the last of his talks as he will be leaving Caversham. We wish him all the best for the future.

There was no main meeting in February but Social Studies continued with M Gilsom's *History of Old Windsor*.

Our AGM and cheese and wine evening on March 24th marks the end of an era. After 53 years at St Andrews Hall, we will be moving to the Methodist church Hall in Highmoor Road (but not until April).

Any Ladies wishing to join our group will be very welcome. We meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 7.30pm at the Methodist church hall from April.

Caversham Allotment Association

The next meeting of Caversham Allotment Association will be on Tuesday 11th March at Church House, Caversham when the speaker will be Gareth Manning, who will be talking about the development and maintenance of the beautiful West Green Gardens in Hampshire, so do come along to what will be a very interesting evening. It is open to all, starts at 7.30pm and there will be refreshments and a raffle. Free admission. Details from Carol Wheeler, 0118 9475802

Reading Beekeepers

Reading and District Beekeepers Association will be holding an open day at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road on Saturday 22nd March, 10am-4pm. All are welcome. Bring the family! Free entry.

There will be illustrated talks by prominent beekeepers, displays and demonstrations, and honey tasting. Refreshments will be available.

Come and find out how you can become a beekeeper, keep honey bees in your own beehive, become a part of the vital work to help improve pollination, sustain our food chain and our environment, and have some pure natural honey for your family.

Talks will include:

Rob Nicklass - Introduction to Beekeeping - a talk for people considering taking up the craft of beekeeping.

Tom Salter - Managing the Swarming Impulse. Bees swarm when half the colony

Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club

The Lions 30th annual 10K charity road run on Sunday 5th January took place in a dry window of weather, with 87 registering on the day and over 250 runners in total. Quite a large number who had registered in advance failed to take part.

Race winner Jake Shelley finished over two minutes ahead of runner-up Charlie Pearson, who was also second last year. Sheena Keates was the first lady to finish.

Photos of all runners are available to download from website www.denischapman.co.uk

Sponsorship money is still being received, but the event is thought to have raised over £2000 for the Alzheimer's Society. Lion president Alan Lovegrove said "generally it went well. Numbers were a bit disappointing, but that was partly due to the weather. A few runners cancelled at the last minute."

Volunteers from several other organisations helped to steward the event, including scouts and guides, Rotary and 41 Clubs of Goring and Caversham. A team from St John Ambulance provided first aid cover.

For more details visit the website www.lions-gwd.org.uk



follow the old queen to a new site, leaving the new queen at their old home with the remainder. Swarms are a major source of honey bee colonies for beekeepers but need careful management.

Clare Waring - Honey Hunting in Nepal, Belize and Africa. Clare, who is an editor of the beekeeper's most influential monthly magazine 'Bee Craft', has some amazing pictures to accompany her talk of exotic bees & beekeeping in full tropical colour.

The Open Day starts at 10.00am. Come for a few hours or stay all day.

For more information see the Reading Beekeepers web site www.rbka.org.uk



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