

Community at Mapledurham Playing Fields

The summer fete and music festival held on 6th July on Mapledurham Playing Fields was an enjoyable afternoon and evening for the community of Caversham, Mapledurham and greater Reading.

As with previous years the Fete is designed to bring the community together for a terrific afternoon and evening for young and not so young alike. Robin Bentham, chairman of WADRA since 1999 opened the Fete for us. Robin has spent over 20 years volunteering his time to the betterment of the community, encouraging good development, working with Festival Republic to ease friction between Reading Festival and local residents and working with the rest of WADRA on fundraising activities towards the preservation of the playing fields and the restoration of the pavilion. Thanks to our generous sponsors, volunteers, entertainers, clubs and the people that attended it was exactly that. We had three sports clubs join us, several vintage and classic cars and scooters, a small car boot sale, over 50 vendors, a real ale bar, a Pimms tent and a number of different entertainers during the day. Those include the Berkshire Theatre School who provided dancing and singing, and some great music from Camilla Farrelly, as well as Terry Page and the Folky People and all this topped off with a surprise visit from Elvis!

For the evening Music Festival we started with Tom Farrelly and the Third Lung, followed by The Handsome Devils, who were with us last year and back by popular demand, and finished off by The Majestic, a reggae band that had everyone up and dancing! A great way to finish off a very successful day!

Providing entertainment for the children were the incredible Reading Rocs Quidditch team from Reading University. Lee, Nicole, Alex, and Tom kept dozens of children, and some adults, busy all day with demonstrations and playing games. Nicole, their snitch, could be seen sprinting or hiding all over the playing fields and we were even lucky enough to get to see her fly through one of the hoops! Berkshire Bouncy Castles were on hand with an extremely large bouncy slide and Wacky Wheelers provided small battery operated jeeps for the children to have a go on. We also for the first time were able to coordinate with the Caversham Croquet Club – who created a beautifully manicured pitch for the day. As with other years there were lots of games and stalls for the children, including mask making, hook a duck, a tombola, skittles, and of course face painting and tattoos.

The Dog Show, run by Ways and Means (one of our partners in running the Fete) and sponsored by Pet Barn, The Henley Veterinary Clinic and Pete's Pet Pad, in its second year, proved to be highly popular ... and competitive. With the number of dogs that consider the Playing Fields their patch, there was no

doubt that the top prize, of Best in Show was much sought after. Best in show was won by Ollie Sharma of Maplecroft, a lovely golden retriever.

As with all events of this nature, they would not be possible without the generosity of all of our volunteers. The Grosvenor Men's Football Club who run the Real Ale Bar and the evening BBQ, The Mapledurham Lawn Tennis Club who ran the Pimms Tent and manned the front entrance, Abbey Rugby Club who ran the BBQ during the day, the WADRA Committee and all of the individuals who provided their time and abilities to make it all happen.

The purpose of the first Fete held in 2012 was to be a fundraising event for the refurbishment of the Mapledurham Playing Fields Pavilion. Although the fete has not turned into a huge money spinner, the one thing that it has done is provided a great day and evening out and an opportunity for the community to get together and share a day of fun, games and entertainment. Kathryn Fell took the photographs shown here and if you want to see more, go to the Photography website <http://www.kathrynfellphotography.co.uk/> and look for the photos of the day.

To further raise funds for the pavilion refurbishment 75 volunteers will be working with WADRA to reclaim metal for recycling and camping gear from the Reading Festival grounds. The camping gear will be available for sale at WADRA's Nearly New Camping Gear Sale at the Pavilion on 31 August between 10am and 3pm.



Mapledurham Playing Fields



Berkshire Theatre School



Mapledurham Fete Stalls Tent

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NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev H R Gayle Tel: 946 3009 (contact)

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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
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TALKING POINT

by

Jenny Dowding

Cracks in the Wall

Bassam Aramin and Rami Elhanan are great friends, more like brothers. What is remarkable is that Bassam is a Palestinian who has been in prison for throwing a hand-grenade, and Rami is an Israeli, son of a Holocaust survivor, who like most Israelis, has served in the army. They have both experienced tragedy which devastated them and their families.

They were speaking in June at the Bloxham Festival of Faith and Literature, in Oxfordshire, and each explained his journey from hatred to active pursuance of reconciliation. Rami described his comfortable family life in Jerusalem being blown apart when his 14 year-old daughter, Smadar, was killed by Palestinian suicide bombers in 1997, and his resulting anger, bitterness and desire for revenge. Eventually, having realised that vengeance would not bring back his daughter, he attended a meeting of parents from both sides who had lost children. It was a life-transforming experience for him as he realised that Palestinians were human beings with the same feelings as he had. He became an active member of Parent's Circle – Family Forum, consisting of people who lost children in the conflict but nevertheless seek peace through dialogue and non-violence.

Bassam's journey of transformation happened in prison, when he was moved by watching a film about the Holocaust and started to understand the suffering of the Jewish people. After his release he co-founded in 2005 'Combatants for Peace', an organisation of former Israeli and Palestinian combatants who had believed that this was the only way to serve their people, and now work together to promote peaceful dialogue and non-violence. In 2007, his 10 year old daughter Abir was shot by an Israeli soldier outside her school and died from her injuries. Rami, with his wife, went straight to his friend. He said "It felt to me as if Smadar was dying all over again. Nurit and I went to the hospital to be with Bassam and his wife Slawa. We wanted to support them, to do whatever we could." Bassam said, "Abir's murder could have led me down the path of hatred and vengeance, but for me there was no return from dialogue and non-violence."

A film, 'Within the Eye of the Storm', has been made about the friendship of these two men, who now travel together, to tell their stories and to advocate non-violent resolution of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Rami explained, "I am a Jew, an Israeli, but first of all, I am a human being. Together we are putting cracks in the wall of hatred."

Most of us do not have to deal with the kind of traumatic experiences that Bassam and Rami have lived through. But maybe we have the opportunity to recognise the humanity of those we oppose or fear, and take steps towards understanding and dialogue, so that we might put more cracks in the walls of hatred that divide our world.

For Christians, this is not a matter of choice, for Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." (Luke 6: 27)

The Rev'd Jenny Dowding is a Minister of the Caversham Methodist Churches

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
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

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

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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

Mapledurham House 6.00pm Mass (last Sunday of the month)

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10.30am
(House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Church Street, Caversham

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

Caversham Bridge

Contributions for the September 2014 issue should be sent to the Caversham Thameside and Mapledurham parish office by **Monday 28th July**. The date for the October issue is **Monday 1st September**.

Advertising copy for the September issue should be sent to Mr A Wright, Twigmore, Upper Warren Avenue, Caversham by **Friday 25th July**. The date for the October issue is **Friday 29th August**.

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Rainbows bring a splash of colour to Caversham

1st Caversham and 2nd Caversham Rainbows bought a splash of colour to the Helen & Douglas House charity shop in Caversham during June. Helen & Douglas House ran a painting competition with local Rainbows groups and asked them to produce some artwork to decorate their shop window to help promote the Rainbow Run which took place in Prospect Park to raise money for this local hospice for children and young adults.

Prizes were presented to the winners of the painting competition by Janet Carruzzo, Helen & Douglas House Community Fund-raiser.

The Winners from 1st Caversham Rainbows were 1st Prize - Phoebe Corp, 2nd Prize - Amelia Beecroft and 3rd Prize - Sophia Haynes.

The winners from 2nd Caversham Rainbows were 1st Prize - Mair Davies, 2nd Prize - Rebecca Shepherd and 3rd Prize - Erin Gilbertson.

Ellie Perkins and Esme Hasell from 1st Caversham Rainbows also produced a wonderful handprint painting which was also displayed in the charity shop window.

Kathleen Moore, Leader of 1st Caversham Rainbows said, "1st Caversham Rainbows got involved in the Rainbow project because Helen & Douglas House is a fantastic local charity who have a shop in Caversham but the girls and their parents may not be aware of what the charity does. The name connection is really important as Girl Guiding Rainbows like

to have fun and love to draw, so it seemed a perfect opportunity to combine an activity they love doing with a great cause, as well as being a competition!"

Alex Humphreys, Leader of 2nd Caversham Rainbows, said "Girl Guiding Rainbows follow a programme with four key elements - Look, Learn, Laugh and Love, and we as leaders try to give the girls the

opportunities to experience new things in a safe and caring environment. Helen and Douglas House motto Celebrate happiness and living life to the fullest really hits home to me as this is what I hope we as Rainbow leaders offer the girls on a weekly basis. I think the Rainbow Run will be a fantastic day for everyone to have a laugh, learn something about themselves, believe that you can achieve anything if you really want to and appreciate everything you have as well as being a 'rainbow' colourful day."

Janet Carruzzo, Reading Community Fundraiser and competition judge said, "It has been wonderful working with these two local Rainbow Groups. The standard of the competition entries was very high so it was very difficult to judge. I would like to say a big thank you to the Rainbow

leaders and the children for putting so much hard work into these paintings and drawings and for creating such a spectacular window display for our shop."



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A site for the Heights Primary School

An announcement was made on 5 June 2014 that the Education Funding Agency (EFA) had secured a site at Highridge, Upper Warren Avenue for the permanent location of the school. This followed an examination of 40 potential sites. Councillors Ballsdon and Hopper arranged a public meeting on 17 June 2014 for local people to hear more about the proposal and to have their say. St Andrew's Church was full to bursting and large numbers of people, who had queued to enter, had to be turned away. The meeting was chaired by MP Rob Wilson.

In October 2012, the Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA) held an open meeting entitled, Planning More School Places. Following that meeting, a group of parents formed a group to consider setting up a Free School for Caversham Heights. Detailed work progressed through 2013 and early 2014, including open meetings and public consultations. The Department of Education determined that there was a justifiable demand for the school and instructed the EFA to find and purchase a site. Following a formal consultation with the community on whether The Heights Primary should open, the Funding Agreement was signed with the Department for Education.

The school will open in September 2014 with two Reception classes and one Year 1 class in temporary accommodation at the old Caversham Nursery, just off Gosbrook Road.

To meet the growing demand for places, two bulge classes in Caversham were created for September 2013. When application forms were received at the start of 2014, there was a shortfall of 94 places north of the river. In addition to the 50 places on the temporary site for the Heights Primary School an additional class will be available at The Hill Primary School. It is expected that two additional classes will be required for both September 2015 and 2016.

Early in the meeting, a show of hands was taken indicating clear acknowledgement of the need for a new school.

The role of the Reading Borough Council is to provide sufficient school places for local children. A range of data is used to plan ahead but exact numbers are only known when parents make their application in January. Following the Council consultation, Let's Talk Education, the Council's preferred method of meeting the increased demand was for a group to submit a bid to the Department for Education to set up a new primary school under the Free School process. Following the change in regulations in 2010, the Council is no longer able to bring forward plans for a new school so the Free School model is being adopted in Reading.

The Council put forward sites for consideration by the EFA. These included: land at BBC Caversham Park, Hills Meadow, Mapledurham Playing Fields, Highdown School, Gravel Hill, Albert Road Recreation and Caversham Court.

Many of the points raised covered the problems of

developing the Highridge, Upper Warren Avenue site for a two form entry primary school and the following views were expressed. The site is small at one acre, steeply sloped and without mains drainage. The roadway of Upper Warren Avenue is narrow for two cars, is badly lit, has no pavements and has steep gradients and no turning circle. This would be extremely difficult for both the school and local residents. It was not known what feasibility studies had been conducted by the EFA but Rob Wilson hoped to receive more information and had requested that all information without commercial sensitivity should be made public.

The possibility of using part of the Mapledurham Playing Fields for the school was raised a number of times. This had been considered and rejected by the EFA – possibly because of the long and uncertain process required. A consultation in 2006 showed overwhelming opposition to moving Caversham Primary to the playing fields and selling the Caversham Primary site for housing. A show of hands indicated a substantial number of people in favour of a school on the playing fields and a substantial number against it.

Alternative sites were discussed with major concerns about the closure of the Arthur Clark home and the Albert Road Day Centre where RBC are committed to retain that site for services for older people. The Albert Road Recreation Ground was likely to be fiercely defended by local people

and the site previously identified for a school at Bugs Bottom is on the edge of catchment and was sold and built on.

The EFA had indicated they would hold a pre-application consultation when plans were sufficiently advanced. A full planning application would follow in the normal way, which would include an assessment by RBC Highways. Councillors on the Planning Applications Committee had to be cautious of 'pre-determination' as, if they adopted a firm view before seeing the full assessment, they would be barred from participating in the debate and the vote.

Rob Wilson confirmed that he had raised a question in the House of Commons, would be meeting with the EFA on Monday 23 June and that the Secretary of State, Michael Gove, had agreed to meet a small group of key people from Caversham. He said that it was urgent that the community come together to find a workable solution to meet the needs of local children. Rob had requested that non-commercial information from the EFA be placed in the public domain and undertook to keep local people informed.

A group of concerned parents (not trustees) made contact with other interest groups to explore whether the community could come together as requested. As a result, a meeting took place between the parents, WADRA, the groups opposing the use of the Upper Warren Avenue site and CADRA which is concerned to promote calm community engagement on a difficult issue. This wider group is in regular contact with MP Rob Wilson.



A packed church



No room inside

Pictures: Reading Post

The Ambrose family in the steps of Wilfred Owen

The famous first world war poet Wilfred Owen visited many poor families in the village of Dunsden during the two years he spent there as vicar's assistant from 1911 to 1913. One family in which he took a particular interest were the Ambroses, 12 of whom shared a tiny thatched cottage on Sonning Common Road.

Their father was a farm labourer, and one son Laurence (born in 1898) was a choir boy, and at age 12 Laurence already had a job as a bird-starver – scaring them from the fields.

Recently Laurence Ambrose's three sons made a pilgrimage to their father's old home where they met the current owners, Léon and Brenda Pepall.

The Pepalls showed them a drawing their father once made of the cottage and described what it was like to live in one of what Wilfred Owen called "the crazy, evil smelling huts of the poor".

In the picture Bob (82), Clyde (80) and Ted (72) Ambrose stand where once their father stood (front row, right in a cap) in a family portrait from 1905.

All three sons went on to inherit their father's artistic abilities. Bob worked as a director for the creative agency Breville's, Ted as an assistant

art director, with several Bond films to his credit. Clyde Ambrose, who travelled all the way from Tasmania, is a retired ship's captain with a keen interest in wood carving.

The visit was made possible by the Dunsden Owen Association which is researching Wilfred Owen's local connections, prior to a series of events happening throughout this year, the first of which is Mementos and Memories Day WWI at Dunsden Village Hall. Visitors are invited to share stories and artefacts linked to WWI and Eye and Dunsden, revealing changes in village life over the past 100 years. Refreshments will be served.

The next date for the diary is a Vigil Concert on 4th August at All Saints' Church, Dunsden, commemorating the moment 100 years ago when the lights went out in Europe, featuring the Reading A440 Choir.

An exhibition, a varied series of concerts and other events are scheduled for November. Full details on dates, locations and how to attend can be found at: www.owenindunsden.org



The Ambrose family 1905



The Ambrose brothers 2014

Caversham in WWI

With the help of the Berkshire Yeomanry Museum, an exhibition in August at Caversham Library will tell the story of some of the men and women in Caversham during WWI. It will draw from material gathered during the Caversham 100 Years On project as well as new material donated and pictures and information from the museum collection. We are particularly grateful to Captain Andrew French, assistant curator, who has gone to great trouble to sift out relevant material. Although many Caversham men fought with the Berkshire Yeomanry, this wonderful picture in August 1914 shows the mustering of the Oxfordshire Yeomanry by the Griffin on Church Road.

The exhibition has been compiled by the Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA). If any schools or youth groups would like to use the material, they should email Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk.

The Berkshire in The First World War History Project, www.bww1.org is holding a writing competition for young people age 18 and under. More details are on the competition page of the website. The deadline is 20 October 2014. There are also work experience opportunities for ages 14 to 18 through to February 2015 - see details on Heritage Detectives.

The exhibition will be on the stand in Caversham Library throughout August.



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June sunshine for Summer Party in Caversham Court Gardens

The sun shone and the crowds flocked in to Caversham Court on Sunday 22 June for the Summer Party hosted by the Friends of Caversham Court Gardens, the Friends of Reading Museum and the Friends of Reading Abbey. Entertainment included music from the Pangbourne Silver Band, Caversham Primary School, Reading Accordion Group and Tapestry Choir. Redding Moryes and Progress Theatre performed to excited visitors all afternoon. For children, there was the Abbey history trail, Caversham Artists ran a very popular art workshop and Anne Latto held little ones spellbound with storytelling.

The event was opened by the Deputy Mayor of Reading, Councillor Sarah Hacker, who delighted visitors by joining in all the activities on offer – particularly the Morris dancing. On behalf of the Friends of Reading Museum, Councillor Hacker presented a cheque to museum manager Matthew Williams for £3,000 to enable the museum to provide new workshop resources to deliver school sessions on Revealing the Tudors. Great excitement greeted the announcement by the Friends of Reading Abbey that Reading Borough Council had been successful in getting initial support for its bid for Heritage Lottery Funding to help conserve the Abbey Ruins and Gateway.

Cream teas and home-made cakes were on sale at the tea kiosk, with four local charities (the Ways & Means Trust, League of Friends of the Royal Berkshire Hospital, Women's Institute and Sue Ryder) working together for the event, the third so far. Thanks to all the very generous local sponsors and the talented performers and volunteers who gave up so much of their time to ensure that the afternoon went with a swing.



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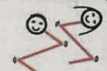
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Deputy Mayor Councillor Sarah Hacker joins in the fun

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CHURCHES

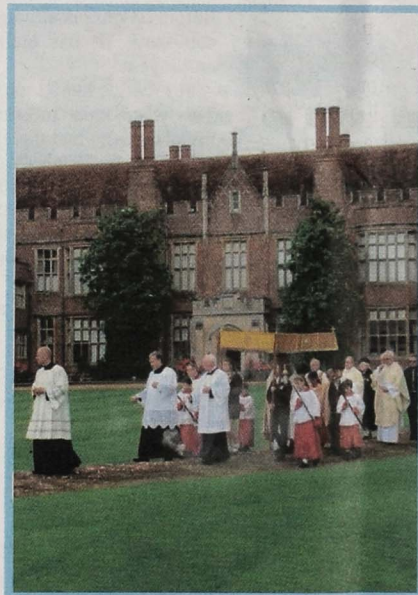
ARCHBISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM AT MAPLEDURHAM HOUSE

On the feast of Corpus Christi, His Grace Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham, came to celebrate Mass in the grounds of Mapledurham House. Father Giles came from Oscott College for the day and joined Father Paul, Parish Priest of Our Lady and St Anne's, to con-celebrate Mass with the Archbishop and to join in the procession of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction that followed. Three Papal Knights and a Papal Dame were also in attendance. Jack and Lady Anne Eyston were in the congregation and the Archbishop expressed his thanks to them for welcoming everyone to Mapledurham House.

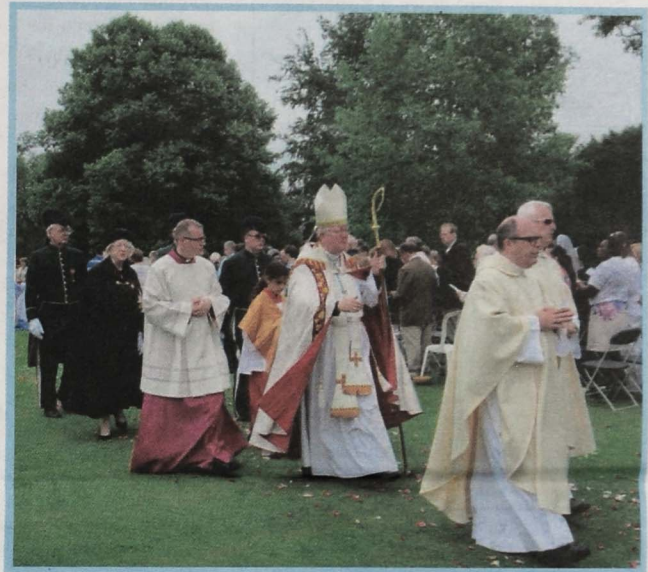
First Holy Communion children from St Anne's and St Paul's, Tilehurst, were there, the girls in their white outfits and the boys smartly dressed. A group of pupils from Blessed Hugh Faringdon School also attended, bearing their school banner, and four of them had the privilege of carrying the canopy over the Archbishop as he carried the Blessed Sacrament in the procession round the big circular lawn in front of Mapledurham House. Staff and pupils from St Anne's School provided the music.

After the ceremonies were over, Archbishop Bernard posed with Father Paul and the Papal Knights and Papal Dame, firstly, with the First Holy Communion children from St Anne's and then with those from St Paul's.

The schoolchildren, their parents and staff had picnic lunches on the grass and the children were able to run about and let off steam after sitting quietly for so long. Refreshments were available and the Archbishop stayed to enjoy lunch with many others who had attended the Mass and procession.



Procession with the Blessed Sacrament



The Archbishop and Papal Knights and Dame leaving the altar



usy Bees at St Barnabas Church

A 'Busy Bee' Monday is a happy Monday in our house. My daughter (three years old) skips off with great enthusiasm to St Barnabas Church, guessing the craft along the way; be it gluing or painting but with the hope of lots of mess and maybe using the felt tip pens Mum doesn't allow to be used at home!

My son (seven months) thoroughly enjoys the story time and happily claps along to some of the songs. The songs and stories take me back to my childhood and it is so lovely to share and pass them on, not to mention 'revise' my knowledge!

After our story and songs, my daughter is happily engaged with her craft and my son makes the most of the range of toys, it is my treat time - a cup of tea. Even better, it's made for me and a biscuit alongside is the icing on the cake (hope you like my confectionary link!!) It's over our hot beverage that parents, grandparents and church members alike have a good catch-up and these have been great for me helping with all sorts of recommendations and making friends.

After tidying up, we regroup for our farewell songs, normally filled with actions and musical instruments for accompaniment. Our thoughts turn to our next meeting and it is here that we are informed that as from September, Busy Bees will take place every week on a Monday. So from this day forward every Monday will be a happy 'Busy Bees' Monday in our house.

Come and join the buzzzz every Monday from September, at St Barnabas Church, Emmer Green from 2-3pm.

Georgina Edward

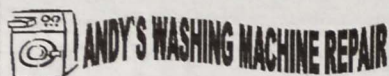
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The bishop, Rev Jeremy Tear and some of the gardeners

vegetables and a circular herb bed. It is hoped in the future to increase these to provide an area for growing fruit. A large water tank has been obtained, which will collect rainwater from the church roof, to be used for watering the garden, thus contributing to the church's green credentials.

After being introduced by the Rev Jeremy Tear, community priest based at St John's, and talking to the people involved in the project about their work, the bishop ceremonially planted a root of lemon thyme in the herb bed, before conducting a short service of blessing consisting of a reading and a prayer.

Following the ceremony, all those present were invited into the church where the Caversham Community Cafe was specially opened for the occasion. Opened in May, as reported in June Caversham Bridge, the cafe is usually open on Tuesday mornings between 9:30 am and 2pm.

St Peter's Wives



The cutting of our special birthday cake was done by Barbara Vowles, our first chairman 50 years ago, who had travelled some miles to join us at the party. She made a short speech, remembering how the group was first established as a group for young mothers new to the area and how pleased she was that it had carried on for so many years.

Sadly, this was our last meeting to be held at Church House, but the group will continue to meet informally for the foreseeable future. We have many ideas and intend to meet on the third Tuesday of every month, during the day, for lunches, boat trips, coffee mornings, cinema and museum visits.

The photograph is of members who have held the title of chairman over the past 50 years.

FLORA MUSICA, flower festival at St Peter's church



The flower festival was a joint venture between the church flower ladies and members of Caversham and Chiltern flower club and attracted many visitors over the three open days.

Over 30 floral designs, homemade cakes and live music were enjoyed by the visitors from Caversham and the surrounding area.

On Friday the local MP, Rob Wilson, supported the event and is pictured here with Frances Bale in front of her design The Trout, with Pat Williams, head of the flower arranging team at St Peter's.

The church was full on Sunday afternoon for a concert performed by the musicians and choir of St Peter's and the festival ended with a choral evensong for St Peter's day.

The event was part of the continuing fund raising for a new organ for



CHURCHES

Bishop of Reading at St John the Baptist Church Caversham

On Friday 20th June, the Right Rev Andrew Proud, Bishop of Reading, visited St John's church in Gosbrook Road to formally open and bless the new community garden which has been constructed in the churchyard. Thanks to the Church Urban Fund, St John's has been able to work with Food 4 Families to construct this garden in the south east corner of the churchyard and to employ a tutor to teach church members and those in the uniformed groups how to grow different types of fruit and vegetables. This will not only help to feed people but also to build the community in this part of the parish, and to enable people to identify positively with the church.

Five beds have been constructed, four raised beds for growing

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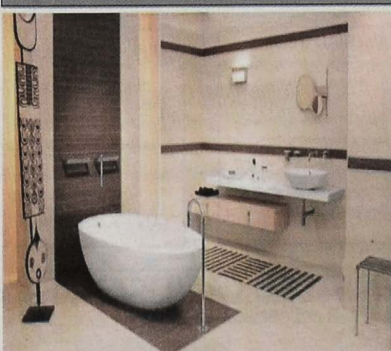
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ENVIRONMENT

IN PRAISE OF THISTLES



Cotton thistle near Dorchester-on-Thames

Some 40 years ago, I suppose, I would not have written an article
in praise of thistles. At the time, I was looking after the garden of
my in-laws in Three Mile Cross. One side of it was continually
being invaded by creeping thistles, and I fought a losing battle with
them for ten years.

And yet, I know areas of rough grassland, where I have taken
photographs and rejoiced, where I have seen large colonies of
creeping thistles in flower at this time of year, scenting the air and
attracting many butterflies.

There are many species of thistle, and they like different
conditions. Most are tall and stately, but one is squat – the notorious
“picnicker’s nightmare,” the stemless thistle. It is widespread on
chalk grassland near here, and very prickly.

Also around Caversham, besides the creeping and stemless
thistles, you can see the spear thistle and the musk thistle, the
marsh thistle and the welled thistle. The woolly thistle you have to
look for – a very handsome plant, which you can see in large
numbers in the nature reserve below Wittenham Clumps. Then here
and there, in alkaline, moist and heathy conditions, you can find
the meadow thistle. It’s a bit of a misnomer, and isn’t to be found in
meadows, as the name suggests. Its demands are more exacting, and
it is always a pleasure to see it, in the company of plants like red
rattle and marsh St. John’s wort. Even more occasional is the
spectacular scotch thistle, which you sometimes see in neglected
corners of farmyards, and sometimes in people’s gardens.

On the south coast I’ve found the spectacular milk thistle, in
Dorset – a plant which rejoices in the Latin name Silybum, and also
the slender thistle, in Kent. But in northern England, I’ve come
across the melancholy thistle. This is another misnomer – it doesn’t
droop its head, but looks up at the sun, sometimes in great numbers
in damp meadows on limestone. A classic site is the valley of the
Gordale Beck, below Gordale Scar, in the Yorkshire Dales.

The story is the same in continental Europe. Different areas have
their particular thistles. In Poland and Latvia I’ve found the cabbage
thistle, with yellow flowers, and earlier this year, in the south of
France, I found the thistle with no English name, but Galactites in
Latin, another handsome plant with purplish flowers.

For this month’s photograph, I’ve chosen what is probably the
tallest wild thistle to be found in Great Britain, the cotton thistle. It
was growing in a farm gateway beside a road near Dorchester-on-
Thames, still handsome though it had finished flowering. It’s not
very often found – but then thistle seeds, which are light and have
plumes attached so that the wind can carry them away, can travel
long distances. Thistles can turn up almost anywhere – which is for
me one of the joys of botanising.

Happy Wanderer

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CLUBS

Caversham WI

The sound of birdsong filled the hall when members saw a wonderful presentation *Birds in your Garden* with Mr Carl Feltham from the RSPB. There were tips on managing your garden for wildlife and the correct type of food to put out.

Bird related items and foods were on sale. The competition – a model or picture of a bird – produced 11 entries with Mary Neale, Claire Elliot and Doreen Newbury voted as winners.

The next day was our river trip – a most enjoyable outing at Henley with just enough sunshine! Everyone enjoyed a busy WI week.

Probus

Twice each year members are able to invite their partners and other guests to attend our normal meeting. The ladies were able to attend the June meeting, at which the speaker was Lady Marion Body, whose husband, Sir Terence Body, had been an MP. Lady Marion gave a very interesting talk on *The Codebreakers of Bletchley Park*.

Lady Marion had been at Bletchley Park since its foundation as a secret code-breaking establishment during the war, and now, at the age of 93, she was able to talk for 45 minutes without notes and without repeating herself. She was not a codebreaker herself, but was one of the ladies who carried out the essential administrative tasks concerned with processing and disseminating the information that flowed through Bletchley Park.

She described how the staff grew during the course of the war from a few hundred to several thousand, and how her work involved 12 hour shifts and could be extremely tedious, but was essential to the war effort. Indeed Bletchley Park is often credited with shortening the war by two years, because the Allies learned so much about the Germans' plans. All staff were sworn to secrecy, and were banned from talking about what they were doing outside the site.

She spoke about many of the famous people who visited during her time there, including the Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and also some of the people who worked there and became famous afterwards, such as Alan Turing.

Probus is a club for retired men, who meet once a month in the congenial company of like-minded men for a lunch followed by a talk on a variety of interesting subjects. The club meets at the Caversham Heath golf club house. If you are interested contact the secretary David Laird on 0118 9470709.

Rosehill WI

Margaret Pyle our President welcomed members and guests to our 51st birthday meeting in June. Guests included Marjorie Harrison and Jean Sheppard from the Berkshire Federation, and members from Chazey, Twyford & Ruscombe and Sonning Glebe.

Margaret informed us of the Chairman's Challenge – in which Sara Staker, the Berkshire Chairman, is asking for each of the 75 WIs in Berkshire to make a pennant that can be joined with others to make bunting for Berkshire Federation to use at events throughout the county.

Our speakers were Jacqui and Mark Bloomfield, who are professional wildlife photographers and their talk was about the wildebeest (gnu) migration in Kenya's Masai Mara with a display of photographs of wildebeest, elephant, giraffe, Thompson's gazelle, cheetah, leopard and crocodile.

The afternoon continued with tea and cakes made by members and displayed by Yvonne Wright, the bring and buy which continues to be successful and the raffle.

In May a WI group meeting was held at Caversham Heights Methodist Church. The group included Chazey who organised the raffle, Sonning Glebe who run the book stall, Caversham who were responsible for refreshments and us as hosts. It was interesting hearing the President's report from each WI, and then we were entertained by two members of Chester House Productions who put on an excellent show bringing the Canterbury Tales into the 21st Century. The evening closed with the raffle and cakes and biscuits made by the Caversham members.

We have an afternoon meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 2.00pm in St Barnabas Church Hall, Emmer Green so why not come along.

Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild

June was a very busy month for the Guild, starting with a dinner where we sampled the skills of the students of Reading Technical college.

A group of us went to Cardiff for the AGM of the Townswomen's Guilds. We combined this with a little holiday, visiting Malmesbury to see a beautiful garden run by the naked gardeners; lots of lovely flowers and one almost naked gardener. Then there was a train, an ancient house, and a cathedral to visit.

At the AGM more serious matters were discussed, on lowering the voting age to 16 [No] and FGM, an unnecessary and harmful procedure carried out on little girls. FGM has been illegal in this country since 1985, but still goes on.

After these weighty topics, we were entertained by Michael Collins, an author,

broadcaster, traveller and single dad, and the Pontarddulais Male Voice Choir,

Back in Reading it was time for our 53rd birthday party, rung in by Carol of the Bells, a solo bell ringer.

The speaker at the social studies group was P. Machin with a presentation of works by Pam Ayres.

At July's meeting Jan Bingham told us about her visit to India.

Our next meeting is on August 21st at the Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road, and will be an evening of salad and chat. Any ladies interested in joining us will be very welcome.

Caversham Horticultural Society

A reminder that this year's Autumn Show will be held at Emmer Green Primary School on Saturday 30th August starting at 2.00pm. Do come along to view the exhibits ranging from fruit and vegetables, home produce and arts, floral displays and children's categories including scarey vegetable monsters. There will also be refreshments and plant stalls.

Chazey WI

'Curious Berkshire Churches' was the title of a talk given by Catherine Sampson at our June meeting. A talk about Church architecture, we asked ourselves? Not so. With the use of slides she took us down long forgotten byways of deepest Berkshire, to the churches we might otherwise never have known about, where the surrounding hamlets are long gone and services are held on few occasions. The churches we viewed were in many ways quirky and unusual, often plain and unadorned. She told a story of country life in days gone by when the ringing of the church bell would call workers in from the fields to celebrate Mass, and where the gentry would bestow money to enable them to own pews signifying their status in local society. Of even more interest, with the introduction of Christianity to this country, many of the churches we know today were in fact built on former pagan sites because that was where local people were used to gathering.

We very much enjoyed her talk, thought provoking as it was, and Catherine was warmly thanked.

Afterwards we had coffee and biscuits before our President, Ann Knee-Robinson, gave us some information about local news and events.

Chazey WI meet on the first Tuesday of every month (except August) 7.30 for 7.45pm at Caversham Heights Methodist Church Hall, Highmoor Road. Visitors and new members are always given a warm welcome so please do come along!

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CLUBS

Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club

Happily Goring, Woodcote & District Lions Club continues to survive despite a recent drastic drop in membership. We are now a magnificent seven in number and are hopeful of adding more members soon.

Our neighbouring Lions Club of Pangbourne, Theale & District (originally called South Chiltern Lions) has unfortunately decided to fold from the end of June this year. We are pleased to announce that the organisation of our next Annual Charity 10k Road Run to be held at Woodcote on 11th January 2015 is being taken over by Pangbourne Rotary Club.

All year we gather unwanted spectacles for recycling through designated local village collection points. These specs are sent to a central unit run by Lions to be cleaned, graded and then distributed free via trained operatives to people with impaired vision in developing countries in Asia and Africa.

We distribute free through local health centres the Message in a Bottle. This is a small plastic bottle designed to hold details of the user's medical data, placed inside their fridge at home, where paramedics know they can access it in an emergency.

We continue to be able to raise money for charity by recycling computer printer inkjet cartridges and mobile phones.

With the help of Henley Lions Club on the 5th August 2014 we shall be hosting a group of young Ukrainian Children from Chernobyl by taking them on a fun day out at Rushall Farm in Bradfield, and providing them with a picnic lunch.

The Lions Annual Conker competition, helping to keep an old fun tradition going and to raise funds for charity, will again take place at the Crosslanes Fruit Farm "Apple Day" Open Day near Mapledurham on Sunday 12th October.

Just before Christmas we Lions will be out and about with Santa Claus on his sleigh - a very enjoyable activity to which we all look forward. However, it always depends heavily on volunteers being willing to turn out and help us. We hope some of our "friends" will be able to support us with this and at some of our other events through the year.

We remain a registered charitable trust. We always ensure every penny we collect does go directly to charity with no administration charges taken out.

As a club we meet informally once a month in Goring Social Club to discuss and agree club activities.

To join or help us (without commitment) we would be happy to talk, meet with you and perhaps your partner or other friends.

Just telephone; 01491 872857 for Derek Robinson, Community Service Chairman
0845 833 9837 for Alan Wright, Secretary or 0118 947 1970 for Jon Solman, PRO

Bible Friends

Beautiful Esther

King Xerxes needed a new wife. He brought all the most beautiful girls in the country to his palace. One of them was Esther. She was a Jew, one of God's special people.

All the girls were well looked after. They had special treatment to make them more beautiful. Then the king chose one to be his wife. It was Esther.

She did not tell the king she was a Jew.

One day, Esther's cousin Mordecai told her that all the Jews were in danger. Their enemy Haman was trying to get rid of them all. Mordecai told her, "The king believed Haman's lies. All the Jews will be killed."

Esther was upset. She knew that she had to help. "Although I am the queen," she said, "I cannot go to the king just when I like. But I will go and see if I can change his mind. Tell all the Jews to pray for me."

Esther 1-4
(continued next month)



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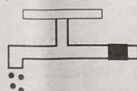
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