



EASTER AT TAIZÉ

by John Madeley

It began on Easter Day 1949 when 6 Christians from Reformed and Lutheran churches made a commitment to live a community life in a tiny French village. Their aim was to show that it is possible for people of different churches to reconcile their differences and belong to the same community.

Today the hillside village of Taizé in southern Burgundy has become an internationally renowned community dedicated to reconciliation. Every week, from Easter to early November, around 5,000 mostly young people from all over the world travel to Taizé to camp in tents or sleep in dormitories and share in the community's life.

On Easter Day this year I made my Easter Communion at Taizé in a service that was full of joy and surprises. The first surprise was arriving for the service half an hour "early" and finding the church virtually full! We managed to squat down in a side area – almost everyone sits on the floor – among, quite literally, a gathering of around 5,000, all of us holding a candle in our hands.

Around 90 brothers from protestant and Catholic churches now make up the community; they sit 2 abreast on the central aisle of the vast church, stretching back more than half the way along its length. Although the church is vast, no one is far away from this centre where the worship is led by the brothers in around 12 different languages.

But language hardly matters. The service began by two of the brothers touring the church with an enormous Easter candle, lighting each individual candle. So the service started with 5,000 lights and with Roger Schutz, the community's founder, surrounded by children from different countries.

The first 45 minutes or so was taken up by praising God in simple words, mostly

alleluias, without even delving into the Taizé hymnbook. These simple Easter alleluias seemed just perfect to celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. The surprise was where the time went! The next surprise was the admission of a new brother into the community, just 45 years to the day after it began.

"Brother what do you ask" he was asked. He replied "the mercy of God and the community of my brothers".

"Brother remember it is Christ who calls you and it is to him you are now going to respond". The new brother was then asked 6 questions, beginning with "will you for the love of Christ consecrate yourself to him with all your being?" "I will" he replied.

At the end of this moving admission ceremony, he went up the aisle to be embraced by each brother in turn. A prayer was said in several languages and a hymn of praise was sung. The communion part of the worship then started. There were few words in English – or any other language – but this way they seemed all the more powerful. Chants were sung from the Taizé hymnbook which contains about 100 chants, again with few words.

As the time approached to receive communion my feelings were of expectancy and excitement. To receive the body of Christ in that place and among Christians from across the world was a real joy. The bread was consecrated and the brothers moved to different parts of the church with their plates, preceded by a child carrying a lighted candle.

As the consecrated bread was distributed the chant "Surrexit Christus" (Christ is Risen) was sung over and over. Christ is Risen. The worship that morning had been a glorious celebration of the Risen Lord.

As we filed out of the church, the words of the admission ceremony went through my mind. "Will you for the love of Christ consecrate yourself to him with all your being?" "I will" the new brother had replied.

Few of us are called to live in a community such as Taizé. But the service brought home to me that all Christians have to answer "I will" to the question – "will you for the love of Christ consecrate yourself to him with all your being?"

All Christians have a commitment to make which is every bit as binding as the commitment made that Easter morning.

For the Taizé brothers, that commitment has led to them welcoming the growing numbers of people who come to their village, and it has also taken them far beyond Burgundy. From the early days, small numbers went to live in poor communities in different parts of the world. In Kenya's Mathare valley, for example, one of the worst slums in Africa, several of the brothers lived and shared the lives of people for seven years. Today Taizé brothers are living with the poor in northeast Brazil, in Bangladesh, Senegal, South Korea and in a downtown area of New York.

The Taizé community accepts no gifts for itself, not even bequests, and holds no capital in reserve. Visitors pay a modest sum for their stay, and other funds come from the sale of products such as pottery made by the brothers.

"Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians", pleads Roger Schutz. Taizé in 1994 points the way to reconciliation, commitment and service.

A Taizé newsletter is available, price 40 French francs a year (payment can be made by cash or credit card) from "Letter from Taizé, 712500 Taizé-Communaé, France.

GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME

Wednesday 15th June

7 p.m. – 9 p.m.

MAPLEDURHAM PAVILION

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TUESDAY, 28TH JUNE 1994

at 7.45 p.m.

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST FREE CHURCH

Special Speaker: The Ven. Michael Hill,
Archdeacon of Berkshire and Thames Valley
Alive Associate Missioner for Caversham

TALKING POINT

by

the Rev. Bill Carpenter
Vicar of St. Andrew's



JUSTICE

*For the Lord loves justice:
he will not forsake his faithful ones.*

(Ps 37:28)

One morning, not so long ago, I was looking dispassionately in the bathroom mirror whilst squeezing half an inch of shaving cream on my toothbrush when I heard some lovely harmony singing floating up the stairs. My son was snatching a bacon butty before going to work, and he had the TV Breakfast News switched on.

The music turned out to be a specially rehearsed choir singing the new South African National Anthem.

It was election time in South Africa. For the first time every man and woman regardless of race, colour and creed was allowed to vote. When I finally came to, and my day had started, I began to think a bit more about this. Up to then I had been using the "off" button whenever South Africa had come on the small screen. I had become impatient because it seemed to be that there was always some pressure group or other which was determined to put sand in the bearings, I could do nothing, and, frankly, I thought a viable solution was out of reach.

When it came, it was clearly cause for celebration, it brought a lump to my throat when I saw the pictures of blacks and whites dancing in the street drinking champagne. I remembered also that it was only eighty years ago that half the population of Britain was disenfranchised because only men were allowed to vote.

We have seen amazing things happen over the past few years, which some of our "elders" would never have believed possible. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the opening of Russian frontiers are but two examples. We rejoice, we say hooray for unity, and democracy, we say three cheers for freedom.

And yet... Is there any reduction of violence, greed and selfishness? Injustice is rife even though there is a worldwide spread of democracy. We have all seen the good which can be done when it is the general will. A short while ago we even thought that the sheer power of popular revulsion of I.R.A. tactics was going to bring a peace to Ireland which eludes the politicians. Clearly, without the active

support of ninety-nine percent of people of goodwill, the longed-for peace cannot be achieved. For the present at least, our hopes and prayers appear to have been dashed.

Democracy is a tool and a very blunt one at that. If it is not used with skill and in caring hands it can cause as much damage as it can do good. As someone once said (and I cannot remember who, but it sounds very Oscar Wilde-ish) "The ultimate in democracy is anarchy, with everyone casting his own vote".

Paradise is a state which only God can deliver, though peace and justice can occur through human endeavour providing everyone who wants it is prepared to work for it, I think I shall be sick if I hear any more people say "The government ought to do something about..." without the slightest intention of doing anything constructive about it themselves.

Personal responsibility is what it is all about. The smallest action or word by someone, however insignificant, has a knock-on effect, not only on that person but on others. If what we have done was wrong we need to rectify our mistake, and seek forgiveness from those we may have hurt. The future of democracy depends on us all changing from that which we consider to be our right, and resisting the temptation to walk away from the trail of devastation we leave behind us in terms of broken marriages, dead and mutilated bodies and broken hearts, and seeking forgiveness and genuine reconciliation.

We need to remind ourselves continually that we have a God who does not err, yet he accepted the responsibility for all our actions and words, good and bad. He proved it by suffering a criminal's death for us. He showed that even death itself can be overcome if it is for the good of all. He now reigns supreme over all as our risen, ascended, and glorified Lord.

If we live our lives convinced of this, democracy and freedom will become a fact. This is the "Good News" we can proclaim from the rooftops as we reach the halfway mark in our Thames Valley Alive initiative.

POSTBAG

CHARITY SHOP?

Dear Bridge Readers,
It was sad to see the young lady at the Tingling Tastebuds disappear so soon without the success she had hoped and worked for. It is also sad to see the shop empty yet again.

Perhaps there is a need for another charity shop in the village and as someone involved with Friends of Guiding and Christian Relief work, I have been toying with the idea of a joint Charities shop. Could we somehow draw helpers from many charities and share the profit thus avoiding the many jumble sales and yet sharing our resources?

I would love to hear your thoughts,

Lis Rout

65 Priest Hill
Caversham

IMAGES!

Dear Sir,
I have been a subscriber to "The Caversham Bridge" for many years and like its format whereby it keeps one in tune with the local news that affects so many of us within the Caversham area.

Therefore I would like to air my disgust at Waitrose's recent change of image to that of a "Tesco look-alike". I have always like the Waitrose approach to business by maintaining a good range of quality products coupled

ed with friendly staff throughout the store. In my opinion they are failing to get too many "Brownie points" by adding such a range of products that are so far removed from foodstuffs that the majority seem to require. I have aired my views to the current manager and to their head office together with the increased difficulty in getting around the store due to many of the previous walk throughs being closed to accommodate additional display stands.

However I believe that the effect on some of the small established shops already selling the latest Waitrose ranges may mean the difference of survival or closure. Most of us want the small shops and the village atmosphere prevailing in Caversham and the way forward should be received with some concern for all the regular users of the facilities around the Prospect Street area. We should look closely at what is happening to the centre of Henley and the concern being voiced at the imminent arrival of the new "Tesco" superstore on the town's border.

I truly believe that as in nature the sharks must cohabit with the minnows in order to survive, a lesson that Waitrose and the other giants will be well advised to heed.

Are you listening Katy?
Yours etc.
A. Williams
22 Yarnston Close
Emmer Green

WOODLEY SQUADRON

Dear Editors,
I was very pleased to read Peter Littlewood's article in the Caversham Bridge, May 1994, but what he failed to mention is the new 1116 Squadron HQ of the Air Training Corps which is next to the Museum of the Berkshire Aviation. Being the Woodley Squadron which had been formally opened by Lady Bader a few years ago and dedicated in memory of her late husband, Group Captain Douglas Bader, who was knighted for his exploits during the Battle of Britain, the girl and boy cadets and staff of the Woodley Squadron are proud of their links with Woodley, and its historical connections with aviation.

Their ages range from thirteen years when they can join, upwards, and activities include gliding and sports. Any person who is interested in any further information please ring 0734 442459 Tuesdays and Fridays between 7.15 and 10pm.

Yours etc.
E. A. Rowland
22 Greystoke Road
Caversham

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£361.55 was collected in the parish of St Margaret's, Mapledurham. Thankyou to all the collectors and those who gave so generously.

Betty Smith
(Organiser)

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

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DISTRIBUTION MANAGER: Mr M. Staunton, 23 Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7AN. Tel: 472389.

COMPANY SECRETARY: Mr H. Pilgrim, 64 Highmoor Road, Caversham, RG4 7BG. Tel: 474017.

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All contributions for July issue should be sent to Church House, by noon on Wednesday 1 June.

All advertising copy should be sent to Mrs E. Maule, 18 Albert Road, Caversham by 31 May.

The dates for August will be Monday 4 July and Wednesday 6 July.

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

Published by Caversham Christian News Ltd, Church Street, Caversham, Reading. Tel: Reading 471703.

Typeset by Right Image Graphics Co. Ltd., Unit 1, 151-155 Cardiff Road, Reading, Tel. 393032.

Printed by Chiltern Offset, Amersham, Bucks.

EVANGELISM WITHOUT THE CRINGES

by John Madeley

When Baptist Minister Steve Chalke worked in a factory for 18 months he resolved he would never start a conversation about Christianity. He kept his resolution. But by the time he left, all the 150 employees knew he was a Christian, some had been to his church, he talked with people every day about pastoral issues – without ever starting a conversation.

This is cringe-free evangelism, effective evangelism. "We have all suffered at the hands of 'cringe-worthy' evangelism" says Steve Chalke. Many years ago someone announced to me at a party, "I'm saved. Tommy's saved", he pointed to someone I vaguely knew, "so we wondered if you'd like to join in the conversation".

I cringed. I made noises as polite as I could and escaped as soon as I could. That happened in the 1950s, and evangelism has moved on. *Effective evangelism in the 1990s has nothing to do with ramming Christianity down people's throats.*

Effective evangelism today is loving, caring and serving – it does not make people cringe. "Don't pump Christianity at people, it doesn't work" urges Steve Chalke, "build friendships, and let people see that your life is different."

People in the factory that Steve worked in sensed that something about him was different – he did not swear, he did not gamble, he was interested in others, he did not insist on his own rights. When our neighbours and our friends see that something about us is different, they will be more likely to come to us with something that's troubling them.

Wait for opportunities of service, he advises. "If you see your neighbour fixing his car, go over and offer to lend a hand. Spend time with him, show your concern". Our neighbours are not dying for us to knock at the doors and ask them if they are saved – or even to invite them to something special at church. They are unlikely to accept our invitation, warns Steve, unless we have built a friendship

with them first. "If you invest in people's lives, when you invite them to something they will come because they know you care about them".

"God has placed you in a group, or in a number of groups", he points out. In addition to our immediate neighbours, we may be members of a squash club, a youth group, a women's institute, or in a group at work. People in different interest groups speak in a particular way to each other, says Steve, in much the same way that Christians do!

"We must stay in our groups, keep our networks, and not neglect them for church meetings and committees" says Steve. It is important therefore that we are members of different groups and can communicate with others who share the same non-Church interests, and be ready to respond to need when necessary.

"We have to be involved in the life of the community", says Nottingham-based evangelist, J. John, "to be seen doing things for the community, so that when someone needs help they will contact you". He calls this "present evangelism" – being present where people are.

"Work out the issues that you can be involved in", J. John advises, "is there committee for housing, a committee for the deprived in your area? If so, why not be on them? If your MP speaks locally, do you go? Be present in your neighbourhood. The way that each of us lives and behaves is important in God's plan".

We may be unaware of it, but people around us are influenced by the way we live. "Some people outside the Church will have been impressed by the quality of the lifestyle of their Christian friends... (and) begun to turn their thoughts in a direction that they might have thought impossible in the past", write Alister McGrath and Michael Green in their book "Springboard for Faith" (Hodder and Stoughton, price £4.99). "Each person has a personal road which leads to faith in Christ", they point out, "there is a God-shaped gap within us – a gap which really exists and which nothing except the living God himself can fill".

In short, friendly, cringe-free evangelism today is being alert, being involved, being ready for the unexpected, ready to pick up the opportunities that come, to respond when you see or sense that someone is in need. Many readers will be doing this anyway but there are some opportunities for service which perhaps pass us by, they have no need to. Although for many of us this may need some thought about our faith and how, if the time comes, we can express it in a simple, cringe-free, way to others.

A tape "Cringe-free evangelism" by Steve Chalke, and a tape "Balanced Evangelism" by J. John, are available from Spring Harvest Ministries and Anchor Recordings respectively.



ST. PETER'S SUMMER PLANS

The congregation of St Peter's is planning to give an extra welcome to casual visitors, tourists and, of course, local people, during the next few months. On Sunday afternoons, from June 12th, teas will be served in the church from 3.30pm, but besides refreshment for the body there will be a 'church trail' for children, information about local church events, and perhaps the most important, space to be quiet and refresh the spirit.

We hope to see many friends from Caversham during the summer and make many new ones.

ST. PETER'S HARVEST FLOWER FESTIVAL

'The Church Alive' will again be highlighted during Harvest Thanksgiving with a four day flower festival, 22nd to 25th September.

St. Peter's church will be garlanded throughout with flowers and harvest produce, refreshments will be available and displays provided. An evening concert for Friday 23rd is planned and we hope to organise an event for Saturday evening too.

The Church IS alive in Caversham with care in the community, youth activities and social functions, as well as worship.

We need to acquaint more residents with these opportunities and the festival is the ideal way to achieve this.

Please mark your calendars and diaries NOW, Thursday 22nd to Sunday 25th September and be alert to forthcoming requests for your expertise and support!

Any offers of help or facilities to maximise the publicity will be gratefully welcomed by Alan Longstaffe (471754) and Peter Scott (479179).

TVA EVENTS IN CAVERSHAM

7th June, 2pm at St. Andrew's. Church Women Together in Caversham, Bring a Friend Event. This will take the form of a talk entitled "The Tramp, The Archdeacon and The Policeman". The speaker will be Miss Kate Harris.

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KATY IN CAVERSHAM

OUCH! Christine Baker, that comment hurt. Of course Katy reads the 'Bridge' tho' not, I'll admit, all the adverts in detail. But at least her letter will have drawn the attention of readers to the existence of Church House. But she does seem to have missed the point of my item which was mainly to set right the idea that one has to be a member of any Church to enter Church House. No, I shan't be taking up the suggestion of meeting the Secretary to discuss this. I was a frequent visitor to Church House at one time; now I'll draw the attention of our editors to the matter and trust they will find somebody to write a full-length resume of the many activities which take place there.

Mind you, I said that remark hurt and I rather resented it. But I didn't resent the request to put right something I very definitely did get wrong. Contrary to what I said, there is somewhere in Caversham which provides a full range of haberdashery items - 'Stitchin' Time' which is in Church Road, another place I visited quite a lot at one time. I will certainly remember it in future - it's not all that far away and unless it has changed one certainly gets a friendly and helpful reception there.

My sincere apologies to all concerned. And, of course, we always want to hear of anything which needs putting right in our columns.

Dear Lucky

Over the last year I'm afraid my 'obituary notices' have been almost entirely concerned with our feline friends. Alas, now we have lost Lucky. Perhaps you never knew him, but at least the people in this neighbourhood are going to be sad to hear that Lucky is no more - he seemed to regard every house in the road as his by right and, particularly in his younger days, an open door presented, to his way of thinking, an invitation to call in.

Funny how we came by him many years ago when our neighbours, bearing Christmas gifts as usual, brought Lucky with them to meet our own cat and give her a present. You didn't know cats fell in love, did you? Well Lucky certainly fell in love with Sheba, so much so that he decided to take up residence here. After a fortnight of returning him across the road every evening, we bowed to the inevitable and he moved in. Those cats were a source of great fun but, alas, Sheba, a very adventurous animal who packed more into her short life than most of us pack into very many years, met her doom on the Henley Road. Lucky was bewildered, so eventually we had to get him another companion. She too disappeared so yet another, Katie (who is still with us) followed and they were joined later by two who just wandered in. By then we had got interested in our friends and their activities and were convinced that Lucky and Katie would wander down the road saying to any unsuspecting animal: "Pst! There's a good billet up here". We did get a lot of fun, and some worries about all this. Lucky survived many accidents even before we had him, but even so he lived to be somewhere around 12 before he was quite suddenly overtaken by an illness the outcome of which was inevitable. But how we miss him; he was just about the most loved cat that ever was.

Our new Vets

Which brings me to something any animal owner in the district should know. Now that Mrs. Chambers, a much valued member of our community, has found satisfying work nearby, I can let myself go a bit and say that I feel our new surgery is an excellent one. Lucky, for instance, was taken in care between her odd fits - it seemed to suit her and the surgery. She couldn't have had better care I'm sure: everything that could be tested was tested and in Deborah Stanley one has the feeling that she really does care and will do anything she can, as do her new staff. Suzanne Callis, the head nurse, who started in Wokingham five years ago, is very helpful and she has now been joined by Sue Burden and Anna Schumann. Both of whom are doing veterinary training. Anna is due to sit her final exams shortly. All of them seem to be genuinely interested in their charges and very helpful to their owners. I can't speak too highly of the way they treated Lucky. His death, when it became inevitable, was so quick and easy. But oh, we do miss him so much.

Expenses

But I am still concerned about the problem of vets bills, which can be very discouraging to, for instance, an elderly person perhaps on income support, who simply cannot afford them - though I should say that the bills I had recently seemed to be extremely reasonable when compared with similar ones from other vets in the past. But from time to time one reads articles about how therapeutic an animal can be particularly to a house-bound person. Cats, for instance, don't even have to be taken walks and on the whole repay their keep a hundred times over. But even cats should have regular vaccinations if they are to be kept healthy - food is not the main problem and our local pet shop have a good supply of everything they need.

But nosing around - as is my wont - I do find that even the most reluctant of animal welfare people sometimes confess to being able to offer help in the form of cash or vouchers for those really in need. I intend to try and pin this down a bit better in future and will publish any information I have. It's a problem which besets a lot of people and while it obviously wouldn't be suitable to advertise widely what is on offer, there is definitely a need to let people know that help could be on hand if they are really troubled with this matter. I'll try to let you know what happens.

And Now to Dogs

One of our backroom girls has asked us to let you know what happened to her when, through the RSPCA, she adopted Holly, who is 3-4 years old. Her owners were emigrating and didn't want her to be fostered, so our friend fetched her from her home in Tilehurst. Normally, she says, a dog of her age would have been at the RSPCA home in Chobham. It seems the RSPCA now have a scheme for rehoming older dogs, and this may well apply

for older people who find they can no longer keep their pets. So they are asking for foster homes, also permanent new homes and they want volunteers to check new homes and to help raise funds in various ways. As our friend says, all new homes are well vetted and checked after a week to see that both dog and new owner are quite happy. All bitches have to be spayed but the RSPCA will advise on all these matters. I have been given an assortment of telephone numbers but here I will quote just one - contact Mrs. Norma Babbington on 0491 578567.

Nice Work, Mrs. Vincent

I've seen in the press recently mention of a lady who apparently lives in Caversham who has just received an award for all her work on behalf of the Lifeboat Association. I'm sorry I didn't keep a note of her name, but was glad to hear about her. And I do think the time has come to mention another good lady, Mrs. Vincent of Cromwell Road, who is known

to everyone around for her ceaseless efforts on behalf of various causes, in particular the Lifeboat Association. I mentioned this to several ladies manning the Association's stall at Highdown Fete recently and they literally chorused "YES, PLEASE DO. We couldn't do without Mrs. Vincent". I wonder how many more unsung heroes are living in Caversham - don't forget we love to hear about them.

"The Rector's Wife"

I wonder how many readers followed this series on a book by Joanna Trollope recently on TV. I am reminded of this by a letter I recently received from Francis Seward (nee Sainsbury) who used to live in Surley Row, went to school here and was a member of St. Peter's congregation where she attended whenever she visited her family here. She says her life is, thankfully, quite unlike that portrayed in this series, though she is very happy as a vicar's wife in Bridgend, having married Jolyon whom she met at Cardiff University. I'm sure some people will remember this very charming lass and would like to know that she herself is doing supply teaching - no supermarket shelf-filling for her - and is now the mother of two girls at school. It would be nice to have more news of anyone who has lived here in the past.

NEWS OF BIM

It is strange how you mention that you have not seen someone for ages and then you come across them. I was talking about Bim, our much loved milkman who had to give up his round on Caversham Heights a few years ago, and saying that I had never come across him after he left us. Then suddenly a week or so ago I was crossing a side road in the Broad Street area of Reading when a voice hailed me and there was Bim in his milk float waiting for the lights to change. We just had time for a quick word and I learnt he was keeping well. He looked fine, the same as ever, his cheery self. I am sure all those to whom he was such a good friend for so many years will be delighted to have good news of him.

M.K.

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WERE YOU THERE? . . . WOW!

"WOW" . . . First said on television by a newly ordained woman in Bristol celebrating a Eucharist for the first time and repeated several times by Mrs Anne Faulkner, Parish Development Officer for Buckinghamshire, and friend to Stephen and Christine Rowe, preaching at Christine's first celebration at St John's at 5pm. Anne made very sure that Hannah and Lucy remembered their mother's most important day when together with all the other children in church she had them all shouting "WOW!" (The adults had a turn too). Together with ten others Christine saw her vocational calling fulfilled when she was ordained by the Bishop of Reading in St Mary's Church in the morning. A totally emotional service with so many parts to pick out and share, - the Gradual Hymn, "Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?", - Will you

let me answer prayer in you and you in me? - Let me turn and follow you and never be the same," - a sermon by the Reverend Canon W. Whiffen, a long time supporter of women being ordained, expanding the cares and skills and talents of women, the completion of God's team with the women able to complete their calling and an appeal for compassion for the opponents. The acoustics of St Mary's are not great but the overwhelming response to "Is it your will that they be ordained? and Will you uphold them in their Ministry?" had the rafters vibrating with the excitement. The ordination was followed by perhaps the most poignant moment of all when the eleven male priests supporting the women, whether their old bosses, new bosses and some also, their husbands, changed the position of the women's stoles from the sash to the position around their necks appropriate to their

new office. The congregation had been asked not to cause "Holy Chaos" at the peace but to stay in their places but it was evident that feelings were still being exchanged during the communion procession if that afforded getting near one of the new priests and all St John's guests were able to reach Christine Allsopp, even if we did have to wait until after the service to congratulate our Christine Rowe.

The day continued with an indoor picnic and bouncy castle back in Caversham with many friends and relations and culminated in Christine's first celebration of the Eucharist with a packed church in support - another party in the hall during which Christine was presented with a bone china tea set to mark her ordination.

All went home tired and happy - was it that bounce on the castle that Hannah had everybody she



— A. Deane
The Revd. Christine Rowe after her ordination by the Bishop of Reading.



— R. Rutherford
The Rev. Christine Allsopp on the same occasion, being congratulated by her husband Dennis.

could joining in or was it that emotional euphoria: the excitement and the privilege of being allowed to share in a little piece of history in the making.

"CIRDIC" made clear

Mrs Margaret Hill was the speaker at the March meeting of St Peter's Wives Group. She spoke about "CIRDIC", the Churches in Reading Drop in Centre. This had been established in 1989 as a result of the increasing concern felt by Reading churches for the homeless. At that time there were over 600 homeless who were not the responsibility of any official organisation. St Saviour's Hall in Berkeley Avenue was taken on a short term lease to provide some daytime shelter and food, and "clients" very quickly came in great numbers. The very dirty hall, with few facilities has been transformed, with much financial assistance from charities. There is now hot water, a shower, central heating and a mezzanine floor to provide an upstairs. Some of the work was done by the clients themselves. A large number of tiles were given which have been used to great effect in bathroom and kitchen. A generous donation of proper catering equipment, including stainless steel sinks and counters, has enabled the provision of a large kitchen. Food is donated by individuals, and one well known store donates its leftover food at the end of the day.

The Centre is open from 9.30-5.30 on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays. When open, there is a permanent supply of tea, coffee and sandwiches. Up to one hundred good three course lunches are provided each day. This is, of course, due to the dedicated service of volunteer helpers, who include a qualified cordon bleu cookery teacher and an ex forces catering manager! A recent, successful experiment has been Saturday evening opening, when soup and sandwiches are provided. Statistics of 30 large loaves per day, 6-8lbs of margarine and sugar and 30-40 pints of milk were quoted! No alcohol is allowed on the premises!

However, Margaret emphasised that as well as the food etc. provided, the social contact is very important and there is a short, non-compulsory, time for prayer. Already advice and some counselling is given. Future plans include the provision of a medical room which will be staffed a couple of times per month. The recent gift from a retiring dentist of all his equipment has allowed plans for its use. Already some dentists have agreed to supply emergency treatment.

Most of the clients are men, though there are a few women, but babies and children are not allowed as they are well catered for elsewhere.

There is a clothes store of men's clothes and donations are always gratefully received. Also gifts of food etc. sandwich fillings and puddings were particularly mentioned. Margaret, herself a regular helper, said how very rewarding she found her time spent at the Centre. New volunteers were very welcome, and anyone wanting to pop in just to visit would also be welcome. Already there is a small library and games, and a collection is being built up.

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

CALLED TO BE ONE MESSAGE FOR BERKSHIRE CHURCHES

Attention was focused on the ecumenical scene in Berkshire at the end of April when all the local Churches Together and Local Ecumenical Projects throughout the County staged exhibits of their activities in the Piggott School in Wargrave on the occasion of the Annual Assembly of Churches Together in Berkshire. Prominent among those was an excellent one from Churches Together in Caversham put together by Mrs Gill Powell of Caversham Baptist Free Church. Time was too short to absorb all that was on offer but one was left with the impression that throughout Berkshire there is a tremendous range of ecumenical activity and enterprise. The churches are learning to do many more things together than previously they did separately.

The theme of the day was 'Called to be One', a process recently initiated by Churches Together in England. In the formal sessions Church Leaders reflected on their ecumenical pilgrimage and gave us details of the 'Called to be One' process and raised our sights for the future. The Revd Gordon Thomas, the Berkshire Baptist Leader who will retire in September after 15 years in the area, appropriately delved into his ecumenical experiences in Berkshire. He talked about the perseverance, the prayer and the passion of those keen on ecumenism, who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, felt a call from God to pursue it. He illustrated how Jesus' prayer that they might be one was being worked out and spoke of the real attempt of Christians to share together their concern for the world, a world often without God and without hope. He also indicated how the Churches were learning from one another, with fresh insights and initiatives. He reminded us that we had one Gospel – the good news of salvation and forgiveness of sin which was open to all men. He urged us to pray and try to be more Christlike so that, through what we are, we may win back men and women to a living faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

The Process

The vision of 'Called to be One' was dealt with by the Rt. Revd Leo McCarty, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton, who is responsible for that part of Berkshire which was previously in Buckinghamshire and who is also a member of the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England. He referred to the Church as the Body of Christ which had been hurt, persecuted from outside, affected by conflict from within and by rejection, and which now needed to be made whole and healed, a process which was slow, not without pain, and subject to relapses. Usually there was a need for calmness and rest. We needed to savour the unity which we already had and we must not always be worrying about the future; we needed to be large hearted, not broad minded. He saw the way forward through local initiatives and outlined the importance of the 'Called to be One' process introduced by Churches Together in England and in which all the member churches would participate. As fellow pilgrims we were now endeavouring to find visible unity, which is a gift from God, and not uniformity.

Each church was being asked basic questions, for example the Roman Catholics have been asked to look at Eucharist, the Baptists baptism, the Church of England ministry and the URC authority. It is a process which has to be taken seriously and be supported by prayer. Already there had been much healing, large ecumenical strides had been taken and there were new beginnings.

The Future

The Churches Together in England Field Officer for the South, The Revd Roger Nunn, talked about how the vision would be carried forward in togetherness. Much had to be done to get the message across to those in the pews. He was looking for the time when church members would have a twin identity: a local church member with a certain tradition and one who belonged to the wider church. From the outside we still appear to be in competition with one another. What is our vision for the next decade and century? The church was now one in mission. The next step was one table, but we still had the paradox of the interchurch families that shared family life but were still unable to share the communion table. He suggested that England was leading the whole of Christianity in its great variety of Local Ecumenical Projects, of which there had been a large increase. We needed to look at the local scene and he drew attention to the recent LEP Consultation at Swanwick attended by three from Berkshire, including the Revd Phil Abrey from Caversham Park LEP. A vision statement from this Consultation would be going forward to the Enabling Group of Churches Together in England. The LEPs are at the grass roots where the issues are being teased out. They are the grit from which the pearls of ecumenism would emerge.

In an Open Forum, much of the time was spent in examining why it is still impossible to have an open table. Bishop Leo painstakingly pointed out the Roman Catholic position whereby communion is regarded as a sign of unity already achieved. Several spoke of pain of concelebration which was felt to be a mark of disunity. Although this part of the day did not bring agreement it did bring considerable understanding of the views of our fellow pilgrims on the road to His Kingdom.

The day began and ended with prayers led by the Shared Church of St Andrews, Cippenham, and at mid-day the Bishop of Reading, immediate past Chairman, also led the Assembly in prayer. The success of this day, which is another milestone in the ecumenical pilgrimage, is largely due to the initiative, efforts and enthusiasm of the County Ecumenical Officer, Sister Janet Wilcox, SFP.



Our picture shows: Church Leaders and others at the Assembly. From right to left: The Revd Roger Nunn (Churches Together in England Field Officer), the Revd Gordon Thomas (Berkshire Baptist Leader), the Rt. Revd Leo McCarty (Roman Catholic Bishop of Northampton), the Rt Revd John Bone (Anglican Bishop of Reading), Sister Janet Wilcox (Churches Together in Berkshire County Ecumenical Officer) and Dr Owen Jewiss (Vice-Chairman of Churches Together in Berkshire).

ST BARNABAS IN THE MIDST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

On Whitsunday at the end of the St. Barnabas Alive week a new altar frontal panel specially designed for St. Barnabas, Emmer Green, by Jacquie Binns, the well known church embroiderer, was used for the first time. The design was inspired by the passage in the Acts of the Apostles 'Barnabas was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith' (Acts 11. 24.) and embodies the colours, contents and themes of the stained glass windows. Named 'St. Barnabas in the midst of the Holy Spirit', the frontal shows the standing figure of St. Barnabas holding a gold cross in his right hand. Above his head in a mysterious white cloud is a dove, representing the Holy Spirit. The east and west windows at St. Barnabas show patriarchs, saints and angels linked by the life giving vine, Jesus. In the frontal the vine is depicted to the right of St. Barnabas; it also suggests the wine of Holy Communion. The bread is suggested by some wheat plants around St. Barnabas's feet. To the left of St. Barnabas is a symbolic plant to remind us of the tree of life and the Jesse tree, the family tree of Jesus; this also links with the figures in the west window. Finally the symbol of St. Barnabas, a Tudor Rose, appears on the front of St. Barnabas's robe; the same symbol also appears on the red vestment used at St. Barnabas Church.

The frontal is intended for use during the period from Whitsunday through to Advent. There is much to contemplate in this excellent piece of machine embroidery and the stained glass windows with which it is associated. Many early Christians were drawn to faith through St. Barnabas, who was himself full of faith and the Holy Spirit. The frontal should be an aid to followers of Christ at St. Barnabas to grow in faith surrounded by the Holy Spirit.



The new altar frontal at St. Barnabas by Jacquie Binns entitled 'St. Barnabas in the midst of the Holy Spirit'.

Its first use on Whitsunday at the end of the week of renewal, known as St. Barnabas Alive, was also highly symbolic.

The new altar frontal will be dedicated in the presence of the designer, Jacquie Binns, during the Family Communion Service at 9.30am on Sunday, 26 June, the nearest Sunday to the 65th anniversary of the dedication of the Church. Associated with this will be a display of embroidery and graphic designs by Jacquie Binns and others in St. Barnabas Hall between 11am and 12 noon and 3.00-5.30pm on the same day.

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From Theophilus to the readers of the Caversham Bridge, Greetings

and, I fear, apologies, for the editors have run out of space and the winning names and entries won't be in 'til next month. Keep looking!

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH

SPECIAL SERVICES IN JUNE

Only three weeks before he becomes President of the Methodist Conference for 1994-95, the Rev. Dr. Leslie Griffiths will preach at the 6.30pm service at Caversham Heights Methodist Church (where he had been the minister from 1974-1977).

Dr. Griffiths is well-known for his BBC broadcasts on Thought for the Day and Ten to Ten and as an authority on Haiti where he was a missionary for eight years.

During coffee after the service on 5th June, a presentation will be made to Dr. Griffiths in accordance with the tradition that each of his previous churches provides the incoming President with a gift to help him in his/her year of office. Some members will travel North from Caversham Heights on Saturday, 25th June for Dr. Griffiths' inauguration as 1994/5 President at the Methodist Conference in Leeds Town Hall (this year's venue).

12th June

The Church Anniversary at Caversham Heights Methodist Church will be celebrated on Sunday, 12th June with the Rev. Terry Harris (minister there from 1969-1974) preaching at 11am and 6.30pm. Rev. Harris is at present the minister of Ridgeway Methodist Church, Plympton, Plymouth, where his church has grown to such an extent (over 400 young people on its premises in a typical week) that a new church is being built at a cost of £150,000. This will allow it to extend its week-day activities in the community (already impressive) and so fulfil its motto "Serving Christ in the Community".

26th June

The Sunday Starters at Caversham Heights Methodist Church celebrate their Anniversary on 26th June. The preacher at the service at 11am will be Mr. David Munns, when he and the children will present a devotion for 'children' of 1 to 101! After the service it is planned to have a church family picnic and barbecue (weather permitting) to which all are welcome.



— Courtesy Methodist Church Press Office
Leslie Griffiths

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ANGLICAN

Canon Richard Kingsbury, Caversham Rectory, Church Road. Tel: 479130.

(Parish Office: Monday-Thursday 9.30-12.30 Tel: 471703)

The Rev Bill Carpenter, St Andrews House, Harrogate Rd. Tel: 472788.

(The Rev. Andrew Tyler, Hon. Asst Priest)
The Rev Nigel Hardcastle, 20 St. Barnabas Road. Tel: 478239.

The Revs Stephen & Christine Rowe,
The Vicarage, St John's Road. Tel: 471814.

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT

The Rev. Philip Abrey, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village. Tel: 475152.

METHODIST

The Rev David Moody, 72 Highmoor Road. Tel: 472223.
The Rev John Boakes, 9 Woodlands Grove, Caversham. Tel: 482530.

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The Rev David Clark, 41 Highmoor Road. Tel: 471909.

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The Rev Thomas Meagher, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue. Tel: 471787.
(For Caversham Park Village)

The Rev J. Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common. Tel: 723418.

TRADE TAX CHALLENGE

"Who makes the money when we buy something from the Third World?" That is the question put to Caversham Heights Methodist Church (and all other Methodist Churches) this year in the Trade Tax Challenge from the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs' (MAYC's) World Action Team with the help of Christian Aid. The Heights Squash Youth Club asked church members to list the number of times each day for a week that they used Third World products like chocolate, coffee, tea, sugar, bananas, nuts, clothes and fabrics, electrical goods, etc. and at the end of the week to give a tariff for each time an item is listed.

The proceeds were taken by the 20 MAYC members who went from the Heights to London Weekend (MAYC's annual National event) on 13-15 May. On the Sunday morning they worshipped with over 10,000 young Methodists from all over the country, filling the Albert Hall twice! Maryanne Coates and Andy Morse helped plan that worship, thinking of the theme "Burning Issues" (which includes the Trade Tax Challenge).

(Caversham Heights Methodist Church is already involved in helping to tip the balance of trade back in favour of the world's poor through fair trade by having fair trade goods on sale after morning worship on the fourth Sunday of each month).

More News from St. John's

It's hard to put all the other happenings into perspective and many thanks to other people who have written about our activities that we have been honoured to host, but St. John's continues to be active and is at the moment undertaking a parish audit hopefully to determine which way to step along next. It's proving very interesting to those doing it; so far we have patterns to show where our Baptisms, marriages Confirmations and funerals live, and also where our Electoral Roll members live. We have also done work on the work and recreation facilities and also the age range, not to mention where the buses run and do not run!

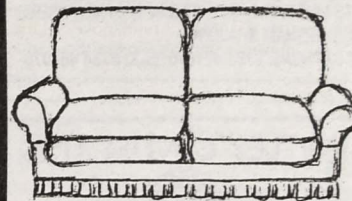
We would like to give a final word to the Lent workshops that were held in St John's and to say thank you to the children and families from St Anne's and the Baptist church that came and shared their experiences with our children and had a happy time.

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we use in our monthly meetings. Some people can manage to read this with the use of a magnifying glass, others have to rely on their memory and on the reminder of verses being read out before we sing them.

Our monthly Torch Fellowship meetings are for such people, but often they cannot attend without the help of sighted friends and drivers to bring them. Imagine, too, the difficulty of not knowing what is in the sandwich which is put on your plate, or being told you have a cup of tea in front of you, but not knowing quite where it is, or where to find the sugar bowl. Is the person you were talking to still there, or have they moved away!

The meetings are held usually on the third Saturday of the month in the Caversham Baptist Free Church at the bottom of Prospect St., from 3.00 p.m. until about 5.00 p.m. If you can help in any way — as a driver, at the tea-table, making sandwiches or cakes, or just to be friendly, Jeanne Smith would like to hear from you — Tel. 484153. If you know of a visually impaired person who would like to join us, please let Jeanne know, or better still, bring them along to our next meeting on 18th June.

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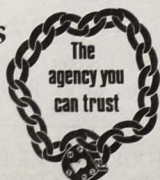
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RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT

By Watchdog

A SUITABLE CASE FOR INQUIRY

Just why the Borough Planning Committee should so easily have assumed that they would have lost at appeal if they had refused planning permission for Gravel Hill to be hacked up to provide access for seven houses remains a mystery, as does their assumption that they would have been forced to pay compensation.

For the eyes of any reasonable person there were plenty of grounds, as explained in last month's column, for refusing this application, and even in the labyrinth of planning law, it must have been a border line case, which is the very kind that should be dealt with at appeal.

Anger reached boiling point when it was discovered that the firm making this so called 'new' application was in fact no other than Higgs and Hill themselves, disguised under the name of S & G Homes and Construction, a subsidiary of one of their subsidiaries. What clearer indication could there be that Higgs and Hill were aware of the weakness of their case so made the application under another name.

The Planning Committee should have referred the whole business to the Department of the Environment to have it sorted out, instead of making an irreversible decision that is going to damage an irreplaceable asset.

Emmer Green Residents' Association have led the widespread opposition to this decision and together with Caversham Residents' Association have written to the Secretary of State to see if anything

can be done to resolve this sorry situation. Sir Gerard Vaughan has agreed to bring it to John Gummer's attention. Whether it is too late is another matter. If planning law can allow this kind of thing to happen, it is high time changes were made.

Nobody in their right minds could call this a separate and new planning application, except perhaps Humpty Dumpty when he said "When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean - neither more nor less". So if Higgs and Hill had said in the first place that they didn't like the conditions attached to their consent so were putting in another application to have them removed would it have been regarded as a new and separate application and if not, why not?

GOLF COURSE GETS GO-AHEAD

South Oxfordshire District Council were bolder than Reading Borough Council when it came to dealing with a controversial planning application. They refused it, it went to appeal, they lost but claims for compensation against them were not allowed, they thought the decision unsound and took it to the High Court. The case I refer to is the thirty-six hole Mapledurham golf course.

The High Court did not agree with them and the golf course can now go ahead. This was never a clear cut case, as both sides had good arguments, and it is right that it was pursued through all the available channels. If it had not been, the losers, whichever side that may have been, would have been left with a permanent state of resentment. Now the venture can be realised with both sides working together to ensure that it is as worthy of its position as it can be.

SWAN LIFELINE

The orange spheres stretched high above Caversham Bridge are not exactly picturesque but they will be far more enduring than the bunting which became damaged in the high winds and ended as more of a hazard than a safety for swans flying upstream over the bridge. Safeway, the grocery retail chain,

financed the operation in conjunction with Berkshire County Council. Here they were the heroes of the hour, though in another part of Caversham they are the villains of the piece.

BACK TO NORMAL

For most people it was a welcome return to a two way system when British Gas finished its work in Prospect Street and the traffic flow reverted to normal. The alternatives suggested had their merits, for there can be few who would not prefer traffic free streets, but until it is clear that it would not mean pushing the problem somewhere else, they had a few backers. It is certainly time that the same kind of money should be spent on making life better for residents and pedestrians as is spent on cutting a few minutes off a motorist's journey.

CAVERSHAM COURT

The top lawn at Caversham Court, that is the one below the rockery, has been raised and re-turfed. It lies above the foundations of the old house that stood there from pre-Reformation times until the thirties of this century, so the grass never grew really well there. It would be pleasing if a small plaque could be placed there commemorating this fact.

There is some concern that the thoughtless might see this wide expanse of fresh green grass as an ideal place for a game of football or riding bikes. New bye-laws are to be introduced which should afford a measure of protection to Caversham Court and Forbury Gardens where skateboarding is a particularly damaging activity.

The park rangers, who are based at Caversham Court, are a hard working lot whose enthusiasm goes well beyond the call of duty. The news that their numbers were to be reduced from four to two was greeted with dismay. The reason is financial, of course and another example of starving local government of the money it needs to carry out its functions properly. Good responsible local government is an essential which affects the daily lives of everyone and there are sufficient watchdogs

around now to see that no local authority can get away for long with spend-thrift irresponsible behaviour that may have characterised some in pre-public participation days.

The park rangers organise all kinds of events in the parks and elsewhere. On Wednesday 15th June from 7pm to 9pm at the Mapledurham Pavilion there is to be a Gardeners' Question Time (see announcement elsewhere). Questions should be submitted in advance to the park rangers at Caversham Court. My garden alone could provide enough problems to keep the panel going all the evening.

CUT THROAT COMPETITION

Waitrose is a popular shop with friendly staff, spotlessly clean and stocked with most of the things that anyone could possibly require. Recently they have refurbished themselves inside, all magically done like the Tailor of Gloucester's experience, overnight, possibly with an eye to retaining customers who might be tempted by the offerings of Safeway if they get permission to build on Queen Anne's playing

fields. One of the concerns about these proposals is the effect it would have on existing shops in Caversham which have served people well over the years.

It seemed an unfriendly move, to say the least, when Waitrose started selling newspapers and magazines. After all, these are a lifeline to some of the smaller shops, whilst their absence for Waitrose would only have a marginal effect on their profits. Now they have introduced a cut and potted flower section. There are some good flower shops in Caversham but they can't provide a way of getting rich quickly, and they could have done without this competition. It is of course the head office of Waitrose and not the local branch which decides what to sell, but surely it should have been possible to exempt shops in neighbourhood localities with established shopping outlets. This smacks of unfair competition which is a blot on Waitrose's otherwise good reputation.

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1st CAVERSHAM PARK POND DIP

Back in 1992 when the WOW challenge was issued 1st Caversham Park Guides decided on a simple straight forward pond dip. Little did they realise how their afternoon activity would snow-ball into a whole year's plus environment award!

The pond they had decided to dip into is right in the middle of their 'village', quite a built up area really, but next to their meeting place. The pond had been in existence for many years but had been badly neglected, the dip produced very little signs of life. The girls decided they would like to do their Conservation Badge, and help sort out the pond. They contacted the local Park Rangers and put forward their ideas. The Park Rangers had had similar ideas, so with their backing and help the work started. At about the same time their plans were mentioned to the Division Commissioner, who suggested they entered the Colonel Sanders Environmental Awards, so the appropriate people were contacted, the rules read and it was decided to go for it!

Firstly, a litter pick. This was done every month as part of the Guide meetings. Then patches were dug around the pond and three hundred daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops were planted. Wild flowers were grown from seeds and then the plants were planted. The girls built bat boxes and bird nesting boxes which the Park Rangers put up for them. In all they spent twelve months helping to look after their pond, and kept a photographic record for the environment award, which was judged in November 1993.

Just before Christmas the girls were delighted to receive a Certificate of Merit for their work, as well as gaining their conservation badges. They really have gone green in Caversham Park!



1st Caversham Park Guides Pond Dipping!

BADEN POWELL AWARDS

1994 might only be four months old, but for 1st Caversham Park Guides it has been a great start. We have had two girls gain their Baden Powell Award - this is the highest award the girls can achieve as a Guide.

Sarah Elvin was presented with her award on 18th January and Emma Baxter was presented with her award doing a variety of challenges including service to the community, camping, world Guiding, craft items, as well as leading their patrols in various activities.

They are both going on to the Young Leaders, Sarah with Guides and Emma with Brownies.

Well done to both of them.



Sarah and Emma

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Scooby's Chiffchaff

A newly arrived Chiffchaff sang from the top of a sapling. My King Charles Cavalier, Scooby, looked up and wagged his tail, as the Chiffchaff looked down, apparently singing to him, so I held him in my arms for a better view.

After a few moments, I spoke to the Chiffchaff which showed no sign of agitation, but reflecting that his song may well have been 'territorial', we withdrew.

Two days later we returned, and after calling 'Chiffy', his 'adopted' name from our previous visit, he appeared from nearby woodland, flew to his usual perch and resumed singing.

Scooby again looked up at Chiffy from beneath the tree and vigorously wagged his tail. I stood well away, feeling 'surplus to requirements' at this unlikely rapport which was taking place. So interested were they in each other that I had visions of Chiffy alighting on Scooby's back to sing in his ear! However, we did not 'outstay our welcome.'

We re-visited fairly regularly and on 'blank' days when Chiffy was presumably 'unavailable', Scooby always lowered his tail in dejection and waited near his tree.

Several weeks later we were delighted when Chiffy presented us with his 'wife and two children', yet still flew to the top of his sapling to sing a more subdued song to Scooby as his family looked on from a convenient elder-bush.

This time, as on our first meeting, I held Scooby in my arms. After a while, he suddenly gave a slight shiver and stopped wagging his tail, but continued to watch Chiffy very intently.

A few moments later, the whole family flew off in a southerly direction. I said a quiet prayer for them where we stood - they needed it! For several days we returned, calling Chiffy's name without response, whilst Scooby seemed very distraught.

Each spring we kept our vigil beneath Chiffy's sapling, always calling for him, but his corner remained silent and aloof without his sweet little presence.

That was five long years ago, and strangely, his sapling does not seem to have grown very much, as if awaiting his return. Sometimes we have heard other Chiffchaffs afar off - but know that none is our own dear friend who would have come back to Scooby if it had been possible.

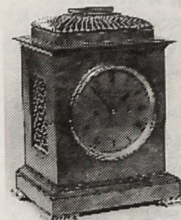
We miss you so much dear Chiffy - you will forever be with us.
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Rosehill Emmer Green W.I.

Mrs. J. Stockhill presided over the last two meetings of the Institute. The AGM in March saw, after some persuasion, a Committee for 1994/5 being formed.

In April a police dog handler brought his beautiful German Shepherd to show how the dogs are selected and trained.

The 'scrabblers' have broken up for their summer holiday but hope to resume in October. Why not come and join them?

A successful rummage sale was held in April and the receipts were divided between various charities which the Institute supports.

Caversham W.I.

Many talents were on display at April's meeting. A show of members' crafts included knitting, embroidery and collage. The speaker was one of the members, Mrs Norah Coates, who told of her life and her involvement with dressmaking and needlework, starting at Thameside School at the age of four and a half. Many fine examples of her work were on

display and included a later interest in painting and drawing and making beautiful family samplers.

The vote of thanks was given by Mrs Sue Taylor.

St Andrew's Fellowship

St Andrew's Fellowship met in April for an interesting talk about Reading's buses. Everybody agreed that they were good value for money, especially for pensioners who ride free! The speaker mentioned various alterations and improvements to the service which were in the pipeline, including steps into the bus which are capable of being lowered. He also talked about the advent of competition in the shape of other bus companies coming to the town.

Caversham Community Association

At the first meeting after Easter the club welcomed a representative from Reading Borough Council who explained some proposed changes in the way local government is organised. The rest of the evening was led by the Osbornes, Alan inviting people to try their musical skills with his electronic organ and Dorothy demonstrating some speedy microwave cakes.

The next week was the occasion of the club's birthday party. A delicious meal of beef and salads was followed by gateaux, trifle and cream. The entertainment was given by committee members with chorus songs, a juggling display by Tony Latham, solo songs, piano pieces and an amusing sketch. Members went home happy after birthday cake and the raffle draw.

The month ended with the AGM which resulted in some changes in the officers and committee. The Chairman is Mrs Maida Feast, vice-

chairman Mrs Sheila Harries, Secretary Mrs Beryl Latham, Treasurer Mr Alan Osborne. Members received the financial report from the retiring treasurer, Mrs Ivy Masterman who was thanked for all her work on behalf of the club.

Members look forward to another happy year and welcome new members every Monday at 7.30pm at the Arthur Legge Centre.

Caversham Heights TG

Flower Festivals and Travels

Those present at the April meeting of Caversham Heights Townswomen's Guild enjoyed an unusual programme about flower festivals, churches, cathedrals and bulbs in Holland. Mr P. Harms' slides showed for instance flower floats, and the arboretum at Westonbirt with wonderful autumn colours, together with a musical accompaniment.

One was reminded of Sir John Betjeman, who so mourned a then general indifference to the look of things, and what he called a lack of love. In "First and Last Loves" he tells how a church at Port Isaac in Cornwall was hung with lobster pots and dressed with crabs and seaweed, a harvest festival of the sea. The talk finished with a tour of the Canadian Rockies from Vancouver to Jasper last autumn. Helen Neil interestingly described a small group's visit to the police training college, where dogs are also trained, at Sulhamstead. Her bring and buy sale was in aid of guild funds; Barbara Tyler for the Blind Association was offering wine and coffee on 20th May.

At social studies even those with no head for dates found themselves in sympathy with Martyn Allies' enthusiasm for Christopher Columbus, born in Genoa in 1451. Much was learnt about how his expeditions came about and where he travelled. A first modest celebration of his voyages was undertaken in America in 1792, after the conclusion of the war of independence.

Caversham Afternoon Townswomen's Guild

Fired with enthusiasm, the Guild Committee

comprising new and longstanding members began their new term of office with the April meeting. The Guild are invited to participate in the Flower Festival at St John's Church Caversham on 24th - 27th June by displaying an arrangement of flowers and to include examples of members' creative skills.

Plans were proposed by Mrs Gale for a further visit by members to the Berkshire Museum of Aviation at Woodley. The museum is currently mounting a "D Day" exhibition featuring a national and Berkshire hero, Douglas Bader.

A suggested 'Social' afternoon on the last Thursday each month will bring members together to chat over their arts and crafts, to play Scrabble (always popular) or simply to discuss current issues and interests.

The speaker this month was Mr Chandler who transported members by means of sound recordings and his fascinating slides to "Bugs Bottom Wild Life". Members were delighted to see the many close-up views of nocturnal creatures as well as those to be seen in daylight - some seemingly almost posing for the camera. Mr Chandler's knowledge of the local area was much appreciated, many members being unaware of the extent and variety of wild life within the

Bugs Bottom scene. It would seem, thankfully, that a fair amount of woods and land occupied by wild life will be left untouched when the current building programme is complete. Mr Chandler's programme received much applause.

The rambling group are planning their next outing to the Bugs Bottom area. The monthly competition was for a paper weight (a popular one this!), two members coming tied with most votes.

Meetings of the Guild take place every third Thursday in the month at Church House; new members and visitors most welcome.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The Guild met on Tuesday evening in St Barnabas' Hall on a very wet and cold evening but, as usual, the meeting of the members was warm and friendly. The Chairman read a charming letter received from the returning officer from last month's AGM. It mentioned what a lively busy Guild it was.

ARTS & CRAFTS - Barbara Jepson who has been organising this very popular side of the Guild for two years is standing down and was thanked heartily for all

turn to page 11

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SAVE THE CHILDREN CRAFT FAIR

More than 200 people attended the Craft Fair on 30th April to celebrate 75 years of Save the Children.

The demonstrations and exhibits in the Church Hall were varied and interesting. Demonstrations included Painted Pottery, Pillow Lace, Cross Stitch, Crochet, Corn Dollies and Wood Turning, Dried Flowers, Tatting, Embroidery, Painting on Glass, Chinese Silk-Painting - to name a few. A cake stall was the usual firm favourite, as were the Ploughman's Lunches which sold out before 1.30 p.m.

The Exhibition in the Church demonstrated the many talents of those who brought along items for display. These ranged from Quilting, Water-Colour and Oil-Painting, Photography, Tapestry, Cross-Stitch and many other forms of embroidery. A beautifully-made Wedding Dress and Bridesmaid's Dress, with head dress and basket of flowers completed the picture and were complemented by a Cross-Stitch Sampler, embroidered by the Bride's Grandmother, which depicted the wedding scene.

Visitors were delighted with a display of Dolls Houses - all hand-made with every possible piece of furniture included to delight a child's heart. Some Olde Worlde shops were also on display.

A photographic exhibition and slide show of a visit to Poland completed the picture. (no pun intended!)

Visitors were also able to visit the stall selling items from the Save the Children Catalogue and to pick up some good bargains on the second-hand toys and books stall.

As I write the total raised is £708 and rising. It is hoped that the final total will be £750 to celebrate 75 years of Save the Children.

My thanks go to all who contributed in any way - from the demonstrators and exhibitors, to the stewards, kitchen helpers, ticket sellers and, probably most important, those who helped to clear up afterwards to leave the Church clean for the Sunday Service next day. I cannot thank you all enough.

Janet Offord - Chairman, Caversham Group

the CLUBS

from page 10

her work during those years. In the future it has been suggested that perhaps the ARTS & CRAFTS could be organised on a month to month basis with a different person holding the session each month.

WORDS & MUSIC - Next meeting will be based on "A Good Read". Modern books only.

RAMBLERS - have had two walks since the last meeting, one along the Thames in Caversham with a "Coffee Stop" and then walking into Reading to visit Reading Technical College for lunch. The second walk was to Elven-don Priory to see the daffodils. It was extremely wet under foot still and very much "Welly walking" but everyone enjoyed it.

Plans for the Emmer Green Jumble Sale on Saturday May 14th to be held in St Barnabas Hall in the afternoon were being organised.

The talk for the evening was by Mr D. Merryweather on "Turner and Constable". Mr Merryweather explained how very different Turner and Constable were from one another. Turner was a confirmed bachelor and a young genius whose career took off very early in his life. Turner knew a lot about the sea and his paintings of the sea were very accurate. Many of Turner's paintings are of the sunrise or sunset.

Constable had a seven year engagement before he finally married; then they had eight children and his wife died at a very early age. Constable painted the seasons over and over again and he painted mainly during the midday. He was considered a natural painter and liked to paint Wordsworth country giving great detail to the skies.

Both Constable and Turner were plain 'Mr

and neither was knighted. Both were forerunners of the impressionists. Both men would work on paintings for months, mainly having to prepare their own materials unlike the artists of today with all the gadgets available to help.

The May meeting was spent on "Programme Planning" with a Sales Table of plants.

Caversham Ladies Club

It was the Easter Party meeting and very gay the tables were beginning to look with plates of goodies being put out. Unfortunately the ex-Chairman, Mrs Harwood, was again unable to attend, having had another spell in hospital, but she was brought home that day at lunchtime and immediately phoned to wish all members a happy afternoon at their party.

It was now time for the party to begin and as usual at Club parties, the Committee did the waiting on members. The top table had a lovely cake in the centre and as the custom is at Easter, it was covered and decorated with marzipan. Mrs Queenie Strong was the kind lady to do the honours of cake etc.

Time was catching up for closing the meeting. Members were given an egg and told the next meeting was a video of Red Cross activities and work, so with lots of chatter and thanks for all the help members had given in clearing up, the meeting closed on another enjoyable occasion.

University of the Third Age, Reading Branch

April Activities

The Open Meeting at the

Kenet Room had for its speaker Peter Ford. He is one of the chief fund raisers for Feed the Children. This charity started nearly four years ago and has already distributed £12 million in aid. Reading is the only base. It now concentrates on Bosnia but much help has been given to Albania and Romania. Volunteers were asked for at its collecting depot and also as collectors for the Charity.

The group had an interesting and informative Study Day at Church House. They had lectures and films on Butterflies, Bats and Badgers - all given by enthusiasts of wildlife in the Thames area. The month ended by a visit to Basingstoke Theatre to see 'The Lion in Winter'. The newly refurbished Haymarket is very comfortable and Brian Blessed was magnificent in the main part of Henry II.

The Playreaders made a big change from Shakespeare to read Miller's 'Death of a Salesman'. The Books group remain with Thomas Hardy. The Local History group heard the results of research into the Sutton family.

New members are always welcome. Please contact the Membership Secretary, Mrs Grace McGregor Tel. 866037.

Chazey W.I.

The May Meeting was an evening of serious discussion. The resolutions to be placed before the Triennial General Meeting of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in June were considered. Before the open discussion, Mrs Margaret Jones, Voluntary County Organiser, explained the background or legal position of the three resolutions.

The first, to urge the Government to consider presumed consent and required request to facilitate the donation of organs for transplant, was the most difficult. Whilst it was easy to see that the plight of those awaiting organs could be eased and that doctors would be spared the awful job of requesting the newly bereaved to

give their consent, it was also easy to imagine the horror of those who had never heard of presumed consent. There are over one thousand kidney patients awaiting transplants and of heart patients, one in four is likely to die awaiting a suitable organ. This is of concern to everyone.

The second resolution urged the Government not to cut the threshold of Legal Aid to £65 per week of disposable income. It was considered that only the very rich could afford to go to law anyhow and that the majority of citizens had no access to the courts even when the threshold was £75. It was felt that solicitors and barristers were the only ones who gained through law suits. The third resolution concerned the unworkable key legal test in the Obscene Publications Act that material "must have a tendency to deprave and corrupt". This being almost impossible to prove, the courts cannot deal effectively with the purveyors of explicit sex and violence. The alternative of causing offence to reasonable people through the publication of material degrading to man, woman or child seemed more likely to succeed.

The Chazey W.I. delegate to the Triennial General Meeting is Marjorie Harrison, Hon. Treasurer, who will report to the members on 5th July. The meeting on 7th June is an evening outing with supper to Broughton Castle.

St Peter's Wives

At the February meeting the Rev. Elizabeth Brazell entertained members with anecdotes and slides of her travels as a music examiner. The audience was transported round the world and had fun guessing the places shown on the screen. Before the meeting ended the speaker sat at the piano and had the

assembled company singing lustily from sheet music she provided. The whole evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all present.

Mrs Margaret Hill spoke at the March meeting where members learned all about the Drop-in Centre run by the churches in Reading. She had so much interesting information to pass on that a separate article has been written about her talk.

In April the group was treated to a fascinating demonstration of Chinese brush painting given by Mrs. Jean Turton. She told the group that the Chinese had been using brushes for some 6,000 years and that Chinese philosophy and art are intermingled. The group learned that there are many differences between eastern and western art. One of the most important is that in eastern paintings there is always twice as much space as there is painting, to enable the spirit of the painting to flow on. As she spoke, her audience watched with lively interest the unfamiliar brush techniques rapidly creating birds, fish and all manner of plants. Once again, those present had enjoyed an entertaining and informative evening.

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