

MAKE 2004 A YEAR OF HOPE

The Four Candles

The four Candles burned slowly. Their ambience was so soft you could hear them speak.

The first candle said "I am Peace but these days nobody wants to keep me lit".

Then Peace's flame slowly diminished and went out completely.

The second candle said "I am Faith but these days I am no longer indispensable".

Then Faith's flame slowly diminished and went out.

Sadly the third candle spoke. "I am Love and I do not have the strength to stay lit any longer. People put me aside and do not understand my importance. They even forget to love those who are nearest to them".

And waiting no longer Love went out completely.

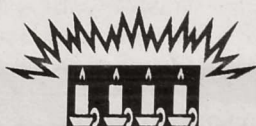
Suddenly a child entered the room and saw the three candles no longer burning. The child began to cry. "Why are you not burning? You are supposed to stay lit until the end".

Then the fourth candle spoke gently to the child.

"Do not be afraid for I am Hope. While I still burn we can re-light the other candles".

With shining eyes the child took the candle of Hope and lit the other three candles. Never let the flame of Hope go out in your life. With Hope, no matter how bad things are, Peace, Faith and love can shine.

Author unknown



THE EDITORS WISH ALL READERS A YEAR FILLED WITH
 PEACE, FAITH AND LOVE
 BUT ESPECIALLY A YEAR FILLED WITH HOPE

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Contributions are welcomed if they are relevant to community matters or church life. Copy should be kept short, typed in double spacing if possible and with a word count. Copy dates are given in the paper each month and copy should be handed in at the Parish Office at Church House, Church Street, Caversham. The office is open 9.30 - 12.30 on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please note the Editors reserve the right to edit copy if necessary.

The Caversham Bridge is delivered each month to homes in Caversham. It could be delivered to you for £2.40 per year. If you do not regularly subscribe to the paper and would like to do so, please contact the Parish Office on 947 1703.

TALKING POINT

By

Canon Richard Kingsbury

Rector of St Peter Caversham and St Margaret Mapledurham

THE EYES HAVE IT

Have you noticed, in pictures of a VIP arriving somewhere, as soon as he's down the steps from the plane he spots someone in the crowd and points at them with wide eyed surprise of happy recognition? Our royals don't do this, of course. Royal males are too busy plucking at their shirt cuffs or, if it's our PM, twiddling his signet ring. Wherever President Bush goes, he does this routine of pointing at an imaginary long lost friend in the crowd. It may look spontaneous, this chummy hi-there-old-buddy stuff, but you and I have rumbled it, haven't we, as the sign of a man with an identity crisis.

The First World War recruiting picture of Lord Kitchener pointing at the viewer with "Your Country Needs You" is memorable because you feel he really is pointing at you. He knows you know what you have to do. Kitchener's piercing stare and pointing finger focuses on me, makes me feel both special and uncomfortable. George Bush's please-like-me smile and finger pointing draws attention to himself.

When I'm confronted with the face of the starving child or the appalling appeal in the eyes of the emaciated refugee, I feel personally addressed. The eyes find me, read me. Even when I've turned away or turned off the telly, the appeal in those eyes remains. I know what I must do.

On the festival of Christ The King, the last Sunday of the church year, the Bishop of Oxford preached to a packed St Andrew's church at the Anglican Caversham Group Confirmation service. His sermon ended with a dramatic call "The King who asks for our loyalty pleads from the Cross 'HELP ME'." The One who spins the universe looks at me and asks me to help Him.

Each January the Methodist Church has a Covenant Service. Methodism's 2004 Covenant Services are a beacon of hope to the whole Church and way beyond the church structures. This year's, at Caversham Heights and Gosbrook Road Methodist churches (for details of Covenant Services see the Methodist Diary on page 7) will, hopefully, attract many Anglicans - as we draw closer together after the C of E backed off from closer union in the 1960s. A covenant is between two people. The Bible's first sign of this is God's rainbow which Noah saw after the flood of despair - "the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all flesh that is on earth". A covenant is two-way. It means a promise. It means an obligation.

Pray this new year we'll be touched by Christ's plea. How does He appeal to us? In the eyes on us and hands stretched out to us - the eyes and the hands of the needy. Will it dawn on us these are the eyes and hands of the King, pleading for us to keep our side of the Covenant? Otherwise, His eyes may look on us as they did Peter after he'd broken his side of the covenant with Him and denied even knowing Jesus.

Why wait for Christian Aid Week - vital as it is - when the eyes appeal today? New year, new start, renewal now of our side of the covenant, by recognising it is our King looking to us to help Him in the needs of all who look to us for help.

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the February 2004 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 7th January. The date for submission of items for the March 2004 issue will be Wednesday 4th February. All advertising copy for the February 2004 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 6th January. For the March 2004 issue the date will be Tuesday 3rd February 2004.

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

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The Editors wish to make it clear that the views expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the board. The Editors also would like to bring to readers' notice that the inclusion of advertisements in this paper does not mean an endorsement of the products or of the services offered.

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

Printed by Seven Ash Printing & Graphics Co. Ltd, 25 Millard Road, Reading RG1 8LG. Tel: 0118 958 9569 Fax: 0118 958 1339 (E24) 0118 958 1340. E-mail: service@sevenash.demon.co.uk
Printed by Newsbury Weekly News (Printers) Ltd.

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email: parishoffice@stpetercaversham.idps.co.uk)

Fr. Keith Kinnaird, St. Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road.
Tel: 947 2788

Rev'd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road. Tel: 947 8239.
Fr Philip Dallaway, The Vicarage, St John's Road. Tel: 947 1814
Rev'd Margaret Dimmick, 12 Lowfield Road, Caversham Park.
Tel: 947 0258

Rev'd Alveen Thoresen, 1 Crescent Court, Crescent Road, Reading.
Tel: 926 7119

Rev'd Keith Knece-Robinson, Mill Cottage, Bradfield, Reading.
Tel: 974 4526

Rev'd Heather Serjeant, 4a The Mount, Caversham
Tel: 947 2729

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT

Rev Lynne Davis, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village
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Fr Anthony Jones, The Presbytery, 2 South View Avenue.
Tel: 947 1787

Fr John Ellis, 18 Peppard Road, Sonning Common
Tel: 972 3418

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

Rev H R Gayle Tel: 945 3849 (contact)

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

8.00am The Holy Eucharist
10.00am Parish Eucharist and Sunday School

St Andrew's, Harrogate Road

8.00am The Eucharist
10.00am Parish Eucharist (Sung)
First Sunday, Family Eucharist
11.30am The Eucharist
6.30pm Evening Prayer (as announced)

An up to date list of weekday Services will be found on the Church notice boards.

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 PROJECT

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

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

10.30am Prospect Street
6.30pm Usually at 191 Kidmore Road

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL, Old Peppard Road

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

THE METHODIST CHURCH IN CAVERSHAM

Caversham Methodist Church (Gosbrook Road)

10.30am and 6.30pm

Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

9.00am (first Sunday), 10.30am and 6.30pm

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

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Saturday 5.30pm,

Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm

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

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers),

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NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham

9.30am Sunday School

11.00am Divine Worship

6.00pm Evening Service

FIRE! FIRE!

Caversham Park mansion was on fire three times and in 1850 it was totally gutted. Indeed this was often the fate of a burning building, it just had to burn itself out.

On Monday afternoon, September 9, 1907, three thatched cottages were burned down in Caversham. The report of the fire in local papers gives a vivid account.

The houses stood on the left hand side of Prospect Street as you walk towards Queen Anne's School. Their destruction left a space that was later to become the car park for the Prince of Wales public house.

Around mid-day flames were seen coming from the thatched roof of Mr Kislingbury's cottage. A local farmer, Mr Ford, first noticed them as he passed by. There was, of course, no phone anywhere near so he went round to the local police station opposite the Griffin and reported the incident.

Imagine how much hold the fire had taken by the time five local policemen arrived on the scene. By then the two other cottages were also alight.

It was now mid-afternoon and the Reading Corporation Fire Brigade was sent for, says the paper, but "in accordance with their duty they declined to attend." Caversham was not then within the Borough of Reading.

However, Mr Plant, a district councillor, made valiant efforts with a "hand syringe"! Quite a band of willing helpers joined in the fire-fighting doing little to quench the flames but apparently providing an excellent afternoon's entertainment to a good crowd of onlookers.

One veteran fireman procured a hose from

FIRE has always been a major hazard throughout the history of communities when none of our modern fire fighting appliances were available and the only forms of help were human chains passing buckets of water, and, later, horse-drawn fire engines, both of limited assistance when coping with a large blaze.

Queen Anne's School and, wearing a helmet several sizes too small, nozzle in hand, scaled a ladder on to the roof; a very brave

effort on his part.

Just as he was about to douse the thatch the hose pipe burst and as a paper records, the amount of water that came out was about enough to drown a good-sized grasshopper!

The fire was thought to have been caused by a spark from a passing "road engine". Was it Mr Ford's? However some years ago I was chatting to an elderly local lady whose brother and family lived in one of the cottages and she remembered that afternoon clearly.

She was then about 13 and had to take care of her brother's children while he and members of the family tried to rescue what possessions they could from the flames. She was quite sure the blaze was started by an old gentleman who lived in one cottage and was always smoking a pipe.

Was it Mr Kislingbury? We shall never know; but whatever the cause it certainly gave the people of Caversham something to watch and something to talk about for several days to come.

I learned later that Mr Plant, the valiant gentleman with the syringe, was the parish clerk who lived in a large ivy-covered house across the road from the cottages.

After he moved farther down Prospect Street his former home was pulled down and until recently the land was never built on but remained as an allotment with one of the original fruit trees from his garden. How all has changed on that corner of Short Street.

M.K.



Fire at Caversham, September 1907.



A more recent view of the same part of Prospect Street. The car park which occupies the site of the burned-down cottages is visible beyond the houses.

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ROUND AND ABOUT WITH NOMAD

Unfinished Business

When I worked for a living, the approach of each 31st December generated a panic. Outstanding letters had to be answered, contracts concluded and reports submitted. The company's year ended on 31st March but still 31st December presented a psychological deadline. That was in a commercial environment. How different from the public sector. Viewed from this late November day, our local community appears destined to enter 2004 with too much inexplicably unfinished public business.

After numerous false dawns, the Police Office in Church House remains unoccupied. Continuing IT problems have been blamed for the delay. Could it be that the "IT problem" is a shortage of policemen to use the computers?

Reading Borough Council has yet to honour its promise to fund the Emmer Green village sign. After months of pressing by the Emmer Green Residents' Association, the promise was confirmed in a telephone call to the Association's chairman on 25th June. The work was then progressed, the sign unveiled by the Mayor on 6th September and the invoices sent to the Council immediately thereafter. To date the Council has not acknowledged the invoices let alone paid the money.

In its issue of 12th June, the Reading Chronicle reported Cllr Steve Waite as saying that money had become available for the clean up of Old Father Time and the brickwork of Caversham Library. Since then, nothing. What's the matter Steve? Found a hole in your bucket?

A Battle Lost

The fate of 2 Bridge Street, Caversham is off the list of matters outstanding. A District Judge has overturned the decision of the Council's Licensing Committee and granted the Public Entertainment Licence necessary to open the premises as a restaurant and nightclub. To soften the blow for local campaigners, operational conditions have been attached. Whether these are enforceable in practice is, as always, a moot point. With unhappy memories of the effect of the presence of the Nue Valbonne on life in Caversham, residents, neighbouring traders, and local councillors are disappointed that their patient but determined efforts to stop history repeating itself have come to nothing. Having secured his licence, if the nightclub's owner wants to show our community early evidence of his wish to be a good neighbour, he could not do better than to clean up, soon, the exterior of the premises. For far too long they have been in a state more appropriate to war-torn Baghdad than to a peaceful English town.

The Environment Centre

When the town's Environment Centre was relocated from Caversham Court to Prospect Park, disgruntled local users were told by Reading Borough Council not to be selfish. Leaving aside the Council's wish to exploit its ownership of Caversham Court for financial gain, the Centre, we were told, had been located north of the Thames for long enough. It was about time that people in other parts of the town were relieved of the obligation to trail across Caversham Bridge to make use of the Council's environmental resources. Seventeen months later the Prospect Park Centre has closed because of "limited need". It is difficult to understand where all the people who were clamouring to have a Centre south of the Thames have gone to in seventeen months. It is equally difficult to understand why a forward-looking, green-thinking, economic dynamo of a town such as Reading cannot support even one Environment Centre as a public service. Probably, as is now customary with community projects, we will have to wait until a "partner" (ie donor) from the private sector appears. In the meantime, any group wishing to hold a meeting at the closed Prospect Park Centre can obtain the key from Beverley Forsyth at the council offices in Darwin Road (0118 939 0725).

Mapledurham Pavilion

In February last, a majority of those local residents and user groups of Mapledurham Pavilion who were fortunate enough to be included in the consultation, voted in favour of replacing the present pavilion; the cost to be borne from the sale proceeds of part of the land for house building. Since then, Reading Borough Council as trustee and the playing fields' Management Committee have been gearing up to identify the land to be sold in order to make the necessary applications to the Charity Commissioners and to the Council's Planning Department. Lodgement of the applications is believed to be imminent. Before ruling on the applications, both the Charity Commissioners and the Council must consult affected parties. The Caversham and District Residents Association and the Warren and District Residents Association will be working together to ensure that the consultations are as wide and as thorough as they should be. From past experience, the residents' associations know that it cannot be taken for granted that they will be on the official list of consultees. It will be helpful if any reader who receives a consultation notice alerts either

the Secretary of Cadra (0118 947 8744) or the Secretary of Warren and District RA (0118 947 0403).

End Piece

Sadly I report that this is Nomad's last article for Caversham Bridge. 10 years ago Mrs N and I began a holiday romance with the South Shropshire Hills. Now we feel it is time to dig out our walking boots and spend our remaining active years wandering among those beautiful peaks and valleys.

When, in June 2001, the first Nomad column appeared, I had no thought that it would end in January 2004. I expected that the editors would lose patience long before then. However, they have been very kind to me and I am grateful to them for allowing me the privilege and the pleasure of continuing to contribute to this highly respected community newspaper for 32 issues.

I am grateful also to you, the readers, for your tolerance when hobbyhorses were being well and truly ridden and for your encouragement when what was written seemed to you to be worth reading.

Thank you Caversham and Emmer Green for the many happy memories we shall take with us. Fare You Well!

The Editors are very grateful to Nomad for having written such an informative, interesting and entertaining column over the past three years. They are sorry that this is the last time his column will appear in the Caversham Bridge. They extend their best wishes for the future to him and Mrs Nomad as they move to Shropshire early in the New Year.

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ST. MARTIN'S SCHOOL COUNCIL



Members of this year's School Council

Photograph by St Martin's staff.

St Martin's new school council was set up in September with representatives from each of the five classes in the school. Pupils from each class wrote their manifestos, saying what they would do if elected. They presented them to their classes and each class then voted for their choices, one boy and one girl from each class. Mrs Kathryn Potter is responsible for helping the council members. They will hold office for one year.

The aim of the school council is "to make suggestions and changes within the school on the pupils' behalf". So far, they have put suggestion boxes in each classroom for pupils to post their ideas about improving the school, created a school notice board and have sent out their first half-termly newsletter. They now want to raise funds for extra playtime equipment and are working out ways to do this.

In doing all of this, the council members are developing many social and organisational skills. Their enhanced self-confidence was well illustrated when three of the older children made a presentation in November at the Governors' Annual General Meeting with Parents. At the beginning of term, there was no way that those children would have stood up in front of an assembly of parents and governors to say their piece.

A manifestation of what they can do is to be seen in the newly refurbished toilets: the colour scheme was chosen by the members of the School Council and not by the staff of the school nor RBC.

Report by Jane Shaw

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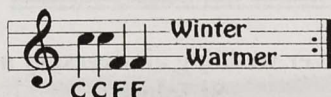


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1st Emmer Green Rainbow Guides

The 1st Emmer Green (St Barnabas) Rainbow Guide unit is now up and running. On Monday 3rd November all the girls and the three Guiders made their Promise in front of a large audience of parents, friends and well wishers. The unit meets in St Barnabas Church Hall on Monday afternoons, 4.15 to 5.15. If you would like to find out more then please speak to Diane Whelan on 948 2501.

Girlguiding in Caversham is always looking for adult assistance. If you can spare some hours to help a unit or to help with administration, please contact Caroline Smith on 0118 949 2382 (daytime only).



C. Smith

COLIN DRUCE AT CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS

A large and appreciative audience enjoyed the return visit of this virtuoso organist to Caversham Heights Methodist Church on Saturday 15th November.

By popular request the programme included those familiar works for organ - the Toccata and Fugue in D minor (Bach) and the Widor Toccata - good pieces to start and finish the programme, each using the full resources of the organ and played with crispness and flourish. The Toccata by Pietro Yon was a complete contrast using only one swell flute stop - a positive delight. Stops selected for the Arrival of the Queen of Sheba sounded very Handel-like and quieter pieces by Vienne, Walton and Whitlock made full use of the soft tones of the organ and provided a good contrast within a very varied programme. Everything had a tune in it somewhere - something not always apparent in some organ recitals. The second half of the

programme charged off at a terrific pace with The Ride of the Valkyries (Wagner) and just before the end a delightfully light Flight of the Bumble Bee (Rimsky-Korsakov) had us gasping at Colin's dexterity - this piece was made even more difficult by lack of a couple of notes at the top of the organ! There was certainly no dust in the pipes at the end of the recital but I'm not so sure that the Bumble Bee wasn't still buzzing around the following morning.

Colin introduced the pieces himself, interposing amusing stories along the way. As an encore a rousing interpretation of the "Monty Python" march gave a whole new meaning to "Rolling in the Aisles! Sumptuous refreshments were provided by the ladies of Gosbrook Road in the interval and about £500 was raised for their building fund. Our grateful thanks to Jim Plunkett for organising this very successful event.

SABITA CLARK C.I.B.T. R.N.



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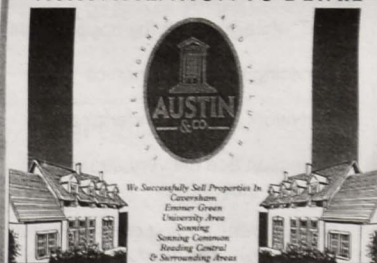


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THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY

by Hamish Preston

Following the controversial appointment of Canon Jeffrey John to be Bishop Reading, and his subsequent withdrawal, a public meeting was held in November at Abbey Baptist Church on the authority of scripture and human sexuality.

Dr Philip Giddings of Greyfriars Church took the traditional view of the authority of the Bible, that the Bible is the written word of God, and that if we fail to treat it as absolutely authoritative, we lose the certainty on which our faith is founded. Certainly, there are conflicting texts and aspects that will increase or recede in importance from one era or culture to another, but the word of God is the same today and for always; our guidance always comes from within the scriptures themselves.

The liberal criticism that the references to homosexuality are invalid today because of the vast cultural differences between the first century AD and today is invalid, he said; people knew about homosexuality then and consistently condemned it.

Rev. Sebastian Jones, Vicar of South Ascot, took a broader view of the scriptures. Taken overall, Christ's message was an inclusive one, he said. He consorted with sinners; they were the people of his kingdom. No one was condemned. In our present society he would surely want to include homosexuals - outsiders, a barely tolerated minority. We have to focus on how gays and lesbians feel about being excluded. St Paul condemns homosexuality as unnatural. But a homosexual simply retorts by saying "it's natural to me".

As to the perception that Christians in the first century knew about homosexuality and consistently condemned it, none of the texts deals with permanent, faithful relationships; all the instances are exploitive - which we would all condemn, whether homo or heterosexual.

There was some lively questioning from the audience. In reply to a question on repentance, Philip felt that it wasn't enough for Jeffrey John to say that he was now celibate; he had to acknowledge that the homosexual relationship he had been part of was sinful, otherwise he was not accepting the church view that homosexual practice is contrary to God's word. Sebastian said that we had to consider the effects of any Christian person

who was or had been in a permanent, faithful relationship being asked to repent for being a homosexual. It would be asking him/her to condemn the partner who had been faithful to him/her, and this is something we should not ask.

AN IMPRESSION OF THE MEETING

by Sue Jenkins

I went along to the meeting at Abbey Baptist Church expecting a huge gathering with highly-charged emotions. How wrong could I have been? The mood has obviously changed and people have been listening to the Archbishop of Canterbury's call for a period of calm reflection on the issues.

The first speaker, Philip Giddings, circulated a two-sided A4 sheet entitled "What the Bible says about homosexuality" and (Some of) what the Bible says about sex and marriage". He gave a well-structured and clearly ordered expose of his understanding and the background to his interpretation of the issues as a "conservative", that the Bible has to be accepted as it is and that its authority is normative for all time.

Sebastian Jones took a different approach. He said he had been challenged over the last six months over these issues. I felt in tune with him as this was what had drawn me to the meeting. I too wanted to learn more about what had fuelled this strong debate. He said he preferred to look at the big picture of the Bible with its main theme: the revelation of God and the salvation story, an inclusive story. He said Jesus said nothing about homosexuality, but a lot about marriage and faithfulness.

Bishop Gene Robinson was mentioned during the questions, as well as the media's obsessions with rows about sex which, Philip Giddings said, "we shouldn't feed".

To sum up, my impression was that there are heartfelt views on both sides and there does not seem to be much middle ground. However, when the chairman asked for a show of hands on a question "is it possible to stay within the same Church and disagree fundamentally about sexual ethics", the overwhelming answer was "yes".

Fairtrade

Because of lack of space, it was not possible to provide, at the end of the article on page 10 of the December issue of the Caversham Bridge, a list of the churches and contacts in Caversham where Traidcraft products can be purchased.

Fair Traders regularly sell such items at the following local churches:

St Andrew's Church of England (contact Mrs Vivien Vincent 947 7644)

St Barnabas' Church of England (contact Mrs Pat Fuller 946 1945)

Caversham Heights Methodist (contact Pam and Phil Chatfield 947 2444)

St Michael's Roman Catholic, Sonning Common (contact Mrs Sue Carey 948 3195)

Charity Concert

St Peter's Church is to host a concert given by the Erleigh Cantors, a musical group which is directed by Ian Westley, the organist and choirmaster at St Peter's.

The Cantors will be presenting a programme of sacred, choral and instrumental music in the concert which will start at 7.30pm on Saturday 28th February.

The tickets will cost £8 (concessions £6) and the charity to benefit from the concert is The Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust.

Silver wedding anniversary at St Johns

Congratulations to Ken and Ann Deane who celebrated their silver wedding anniversary on 4th November 2003. Long term members of St John's congregation, Ann is currently Church warden and secretary of the Mothers' Union while Ken's varied responsibilities include that of Gift Aid secretary. Both, for many years, helped to deliver this newspaper and have been much involved in Caversham's Sue Ryder support group.

Caversham Methodist Church Gosbrook Road

Congratulations to Carolyn and Chris Booth on the birth of a daughter, Frances Hope, born on 15th November, a sister for Harriet.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

JOINT SERVICE with DEAF CHURCH

The evening service at Caversham Heights Methodist Church on 6th October was a new experience for many of those present. Some six months before, inspired by a Methodist 'Disability Awareness' conference, the Reading Deaf Church was invited to join the normal evening worship at Caversham Heights. Owing to lack of experience in this area, a preparation meeting was held about a month earlier to outline the service and to establish how best to meet the needs of the visiting congregation. In the event it went very well and most enjoyably.

Virtually the whole service, including a complete large screen presentation, needed to be prepared in advance. This included all the hymns, prayers and one of the addresses. The deaf congregation arrived early

for a run through of the hymns with the organist, Peter Bernard, who chose to use the piano for this service, to establish the tempo he would be using. The Deaf Church Choir signed all the hymns and were led by a Lip Speaker from the front row. While they knew all the words and signs, the Lip Reader was able to keep the signing in time with the words and the music.

The spoken prayers and readings were signed by an interpreter and he likewise spoke the signed prayers and readings.

Revd Rosemary Fletcher spoke about St Francis in her introduction and later based her address on his life. Revd Roger Williams, the Oxford Diocesan Chaplain for the Deaf, was able to speak and sign his own address simultaneously. The congregation learnt from the experience of this service, and particularly from

Roger's address, that 'Seeing' is not only believing but is also 'Hearing', especially for those who are deaf. The traditional bowed heads and closed eyes are of little value to those who are dependent on being able to see clearly the lips and hands of those with whom they communicate.

The final hymn signed by the deaf choir was 'The Tree is Bare' from the British Sign Language Hymn Book. There was no music for this item but the words could be read from the screen as the signing progressed. The hearing congregation was then invited to repeat the whole hymn using the signing that had just been demonstrated. The Deaf Choir generously awarded the hearing congregation a round of applause for its efforts by waving their hands in the air. So now you all know how to clap in BSL!

Peter Boardley

METHODIST DIARY

CAVERSHAM METHODIST CHURCH
(GOSBROOK ROAD)

January 4	Epiphany
10.30am	Covenant Service - Revd Rosemary Fletcher
6.30pm	Mr. Chris Evans
January 11	Mrs. Marion Cruddas
10.30am	Covenant Service - Revd Dr. John Ogden
6.30pm	
January 18	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Parade Team Service - Mr. David Munns
10.30am	United Service at the Chapel on the Hill
4.30pm	
January 25	Mrs June Hardcastle
10.30am	Revd Rosemary Fletcher
6.30pm	

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH

January 4	Epiphany - Holy Communion for Epiphany - Revd Rosemary Fletcher
9.00am	
10.30am	Epiphany Service - Revd Dr John Ogden
6.30pm	Covenant Service - Revd Dr John Ogden
January 11	Covenant Service - Revd Rosemary Fletcher
10.30am	Dr David Williams
6.30pm	
January 18	Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - Canon Richard Kingsbury and Revd Rosemary Fletcher
10.30am	United Service at the Chapel on the Hill
4.30pm	
January 25	Revd George Simons
10.30am	Taizé Service - Mrs Margaret Havers
6.30pm	

ST. LEONARD'S, WOODCOTE

January 11	9.45am	Covenant Service - Revd Dr John Ogden
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Contact David Herbert 947 8209.
Caversham Heights Methodist Church: Contact
Mrs. Janet Offord 947 0903 or (Wesley Lounge)
Judith Higgs 947 4494.

QUIET DAY at DOUAI ABBEY

The visit of the President of the Methodist Conference, Revd Dr Neil Richardson, to the Southampton District of the Methodist Church included a Quiet Day on 3rd October in the beautiful, worshipful atmosphere of Douai Abbey. Methodists from Caversham joined others from Reading, Newbury, Basingstoke and Andover to experience this day entitled 'A Kind of Praying'.

The President began by saying, "It is more important to be human than religious. How do we cope with living and praying under pressure? What is the formula for nourishment if you are Christian? The Bible is a source of revelation to make the most of. We should read it to form us as Christians. To read the Bible is a form of prayer. To learn about the discipline of prayer, remember that John Wesley said that if anything is small enough to worry about, then it is big enough to pray about."

Dr Richardson explained that Jesus is not so much concerned about changing the world as he is with changing us, showing from Mark's gospel how Jesus changed people. The President said that Jesus asks, "what do you want me to do for you?" Dr Richardson said that in his year of office he was calling people to recover their calling to create a God-centred church.

After lunch, participants joined Prayers in the Abbey led by the monks at Douai. In the meditation on Mark's gospel Dr Richardson said, "ministry is first of all about being rather than doing, as is the Christian life". He spoke of 'Mark's sandwiches' where a good incident occurs in the middle of two evil events and commented that the church's mission takes place against a backdrop of wickedness, yet the work of Christ still goes on allowing light to be shed on the darkness on either side. Nothing offered to God in faith and love will ever be lost. How is it possible to keep one's nerve in a world where the (western) church is in decline? He called on his hearers to be steadfast on God and be overwhelmed by His generosity. To be more than third rate disciples it is necessary to take on board the promises of the gospel.

COLD ASH RETREAT

In November, twelve of the congregation from St Peter's and St Margaret's enjoyed a weekend retreat at Cold Ash Centre. The Centre, which is separate from the Convent, is run by seven nuns and is warm and comfortable, with good, plentiful home cooking. The largest sitting room has beautiful views over the Kennet valley and there was a small chapel for the visitors' use on the first floor. They were able to walk in the grounds and around Cold Ash or just sit in the garden in the warm autumn sunshine.

The theme for the weekend, led by Revd Alveen Thoresen, was "To a Dancing God". Participants were encouraged to look and see how, in each one, their walks of faith, though different in many ways, are sustained and nourished by God at every twist and turn that they make. With bible readings, psalms, poetry and prose, all could really discern and appreciate the closeness and love of God. The day finished with a simple service and then all were quiet until after morning service and breakfast the following day. A most refreshing weekend.

Quiz Evening

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DEANERY CHALLENGED BY PLANS FOR SHAPING THE FUTURE

The new Diocesan Strategy for Sharing Life was presented to the Anglican Deanery Synod by Mrs Rosemary Pearce, the Diocesan Secretary, when it met in October. This challenges the congregations in Reading to new ways of being the church. The underlying purpose of the strategy is to create caring,

sustainable and growing Christians in every part of the Diocese of Oxford. However, she said that this had to be done against a culture in which Christians are regarded as outdated, rather like flat-earthers, where the church is no longer needed for social opportunities and among a society in which it has to pay its way and maintain its many historic buildings. Statistics show that of the 816 churches in the Oxford Diocese 475 are Grade I or II* listed buildings. However, in comparison with national figures, the financial resources of the population within the Diocese are judged to be above the median level. The Church of England's human resources in terms of stipendiary clergy have fallen over the past decade both nationally and across the Diocese, although when non-stipendiary, local ordained and lay ministers are included, numbers have in fact risen.

Creativity and flexibility for our Christian communities

Against this background a framework for action is proposed in five strategic directions. The first focus is on creativity and flexibility for our Christian communities. Mrs Pearce suggested that in future people from neighbouring parishes, deaneries and denominations will need to work together with greater lay involvement, including paid lay workers; it will be necessary to look at the use of our buildings and, above all, avoid slipping back into old ways of working. The Bishops, Archdeacons and the whole staff team within the Diocese are now committed to see that this will happen.

Encouraging and resourcing innovative forms of outreach

The second focus encourages innovative forms of outreach and its resourcing through, for example, networks such as schools and leisure centres, or through passionate concerns like ecology, trade justice, the arts, and community service, through church-cells, ecumenical partnerships, alpha courses and cutting edge ministries.

Implementation at local level

This is the third focus and relies on local people rather than a top down approach. Mrs Pearce suggested that to do this people may have to work in units larger than a parish, such as several parishes together or at deanery level; the latter could involve a whole spectrum of different churchmanship.

Sustainability and refocusing on financial resources

Any new developments would have to be financially realistic and



O. Jewiss

The Diocesan Secretary, Mrs Rosemary Pearce, (centre) with the Lay Chairman (Lt Col Mary Harwood) and the Area Dean (Canon Brian Shenton) at the recent meeting of the Reading Deanery Synod.

sustainable, elements that constitute the fourth strategic factor. In three to five years time the Diocese would need to balance the income from the Parish Share with the ministry deployed. Figures presented showed that the gross annual costs of parochial ministry varied between £40,000 for an incumbent to £200 for a licensed lay minister; the incumbent costs

include stipend, National Insurance, pension, housing, training and Central Church costs, but exclude any contribution from the Central Church. It was revealed that across the Diocese the deanery contribution to the total costs of ministry varied from 38% to 134% of gross costs. While some degree of mutual support is accepted, this variation is very wide and deaneries and their constituent parishes would need to work towards a more sustainable position.

Training for servant leadership

This final strategic direction envisages the encouragement and affirmation of a future ministry that is shared and collaborative. The Deanery Synod then gave an example of shared ministry by splitting into groups, each of which considered a question relevant to the sixfold strategy. The feedback, both at the meeting and subsequently on paper, indicated the willingness of the Deanery to take the ideas on board, whilst emphasising some of the perceived difficulties. The real challenge remains as members of the Synod take these ideas back to their parishes for further discussion and subsequent action. These proposals are being discussed throughout the Diocese and are expected to have been endorsed by the Diocesan Synod before this issue of the *Caversham Bridge* is published.

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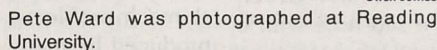


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LIQUID CHURCH

The church was once the centre of the social and economic community but under his definition of Solid Church he now sees a mutation. For some, the church has become a refuge: a club which is a quiet backwater where those who attend have significance; it is run for the people who attend and, at least for some, it is dysfunctional for universal mission. For others, the church has become a heritage centre; the people like the hymns and the

Liquid Church by Pete Ward is published in paperback by Hendrickson and the Paternoster Press price £9.99. The perceptions it contains are challenging and, perhaps for some, disturbing.



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Caversham Women's Institute

A trip to Austria was on the cards for members at their November meeting. Not a skiing trip but the lovely scenery of the country in summertime. Elegant palaces, many built by Empress Maria-Theresa in between having 16 children! The slides of Mr John Howes also showed rather hair-raising mountain railways and more sedate horse and carriage rides.

After refreshments, Mrs Sylvia Myszor was declared the winner of the competition for a pretty scarf. The result of the Autumn Fair was announced – a profit of £188 – a useful addition to funds. Meetings are held on the third Thursday in the month.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

The November meeting of the Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild began on a sad note with a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Mabel White, a long serving member of the Guild and a good friend. She will be much missed.

The meeting continued with a full report from the September Federation meeting and an account of the happy time spent at the "Autumn Falls" day. Emmer Green was well represented in the competitions and thanks were extended to those taking part. During November members attended Swan Lake at the Hexagon, explored American music and literature and remembered warmer days whilst watching videos of Chelsea and Versailles. Mrs Doris Prentice thanked all who sponsored her granddaughter on her walk to the Everest Base Camp. £90,000 was raised for the Antony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust.

Mr Larry Crosier, the evening's speaker, talked about the restoration of the Kennet and Avon Canal. His talk was accompanied by excellent slides showing the "before and after". A petition containing 50,000 signatures was submitted to the Queen pressing for the restoration to go forward and a Heritage Lottery Grant enabled the work to forge ahead. Nevertheless, fund raising is constant as the sums involved for restoring and maintaining the canal and towpaths are enormous. Recently, a Declaration of Gratitude containing many of the original signatures was presented to The Queen for the work being completed.

It is now possible to walk, cycle or travel by boat from Kennet Mouth to Bristol. Although the canal proper ends at Bath, the Avon Navigation joins it to the Bristol Channel. As well as being used for leisure purposes, working boats can sometimes be seen; the first consignment of Bath Stone for the restoration of Windsor Castle following the fire was sent by water. Facilities have been provided for wheelchair and pushchair access with good bridges being easy to use, and the towpaths are constantly being made good after harsh weather, flooding and much use. Mrs Margot Sutherland gave the vote of thanks for an excellent talk with especial mention of Mr Crosier's beautiful photography.

St Peter's Wives Group

On 21st October we were due to have a talk by a representative of Waitrose, but unfortunately the person concerned was unable to attend. Luckily, Mrs Graham was able to fill the breach and gave a very interesting talk with slides on the northern seaside resort of Scarborough. The slides were most interesting as many of the coastal features shown have since disappeared into the sea due to erosion of the coastline. An amusing and most informative evening.

On 18 November we held our AGM chaired by Canon Richard Kingsbury. Three new committee members were elected and our Chairman, Mrs Jean Pugh, who retired was succeeded by Mrs Jean Crosbie. Our Treasurer, Mrs Jean Fry, announced that we had contributed £800 from our funds to the Sue Ryder Home at Nettlebed.

After the business of the meeting was concluded, we were treated to a talk by Anna Cannon, a medical herbalist, of Caversham Herbs in Prospect Street. We were fascinated to hear the history of the use of herbs in medicine from the very earliest times and their application now, either on their own or as complementary medicine to conventional medical treatment. Used under medical supervision and in the right doses, herbal remedies can play an important part in combatting the effects of many everyday illnesses, from headaches to bronchial, skin and stomach problems, without any of the side-effects produced by many modern drugs. However, Anna stressed that it should not be assumed that because herbs are natural remedies, they are all safe to take in any quantity, as many are toxic but have beneficial effects if taken in low doses. It is always best therefore to consult a trained medical herbalist before taking herbal remedies. We found this a most interesting and informative evening.

Meetings are held at Church House on the third Tuesday of each month at 8.00pm. On the 20th January Maurice Johnson will be talking to us about "The Other side of War."

New members are always welcome.

St Peter's and St Margaret's Mothers' Union

On a cold, wet November evening those Mothers' Union members who braved the elements to hear the Rev. Pam Gordon, Curate at Wargrave, talk on 'Colour me Christian' were justly rewarded.

Pam, who was ordained this year, brought with her some of her very colourful robes and scarves that she uses in her ministry. Through them and their beautiful colours and embroidery she shared her spiritual journey and faith – a feast for the eyes and the soul – thank you Pam!

In December the Christmas Bible Study took place led by Richard Kingsbury.

When you read this we shall be busy preparing for our 'Christmas Party', traditionally always held in January. This is a very popular evening which everyone enjoys and we do hope that all MU Members will try to come this year and share the fellowship and the fun which our Mothers' Union offers.

The new 2004 programme looks very exciting; speakers, events and a trip to Mary Summer House and the London Eye are planned and much more.

Do come along to any of the meetings as a visitor and you might be tempted to stay. The Mothers' Union is open to men, so come on you chaps, be adventurous!

For more details about the Mothers' Union contact Janet Soden 947 2957 or Marion Pyke 947 5834.

the CLUBS

THE READING AND DISTRICT PROBUS CLUB

The Club held its monthly luncheon meeting at the Caversham Heath Golf Club, after which the Neighbourhood Watch Manager, Mrs Liz Herbert, who works from the Reading Police Station, was introduced by the Chairman, Dick Wheeler. Mrs Herbert is the Crime Watch Advisor and Co-ordinator for the area, having been motivated into becoming a local co-ordinator when a neighbour was burgled.

An obstacle she encountered however, was the reluctance of her neighbours to become, as they assumed, 'Neighbourhood Spies'. From the original 47 members in her area there are now over 470. In fact through the Policy of Caring and Communication there are now over 250,000 members in the Thames Valley. Liaison with the police is vital; that way information is passed on of the current situation regarding areas being targeted, burglaries, vandalism, and the activities of bogus 'Door Callers' who always try to get into the house. She stressed vigilance, noting the unusual, the noting of vehicle number plates, so helpful should a

police follow-up be required.

Mr Garry Tallet, the Crime Reduction Advisor for the Area, was introduced. He stressed the importance of security, and advocated post-coding TVs, Videos, and other valuables, anything that could be sold on by a burglar. Warning was given about leaving door and car keys on a shelf or table near a door, within reach of a fishing rod poked through the letter-box. Be security minded. Many other common failings, which help the potential and opportunity thief, were illustrated.

The response from Club members, questions and observations proved that the 'after-lunch' feeling did not occur.

A full programme of speakers has been arranged for this year. Any retired men who want to meet in a sociable way with similar chaps should get in touch with the Secretary, Ray Head, on 941 1445 (if someone hasn't pinched their mobile!). Go on, pick up the phone. PROBUS could be just what you have been looking for. Each month brings in new members. The next could be you.



Scops Owl

October and November sing with soft "See-up" calls of migrant Redwing. Those from Iceland fly to Spain, while Northern European birds visit Britain. These red-flanked thrushes will feed on berries but may be seen on Emmer Green parkland.

At Caversham Bridge, hungry swans feed eagerly on bread. Occasionally one or two Whooper Swans may join them, en route from far North to Slimbridge on the River Severn, the late Sir Peter Scott's Reserve.

Noisy Wigeon, here for Winter, often sing their continuous "Wheree-oo" on the Marina Pit, sometimes joined by rarer Smew, Goosander, Merganser, and Pintail ducks.

A telescope and tripod are necessary to view distant birds - there is another "world" out there. Gravel pits are hazardous with crumbly banks and deep water. It is advisable to keep clear as birds can be disturbed.

Fairly recently these articles were devoted to birds of the Caversham area. Descriptions, calls and the best places to see them were included. The Thames and Henley Road gravel pits still hold their own, now with the bonus of Red Kites above Emmer Green and Caversham Park. The latter species could only be seen in Central Wales at Gwenffrwd RSPB Reserve until recent re-introduction.

NOVEMBER BIRDS HOME AND AWAY

In late October a small, warm brown warbler was enjoying the offerings of the front lilac. My visiting bird-mentor declared it was a Chiffchaff. A brief reflection upon "Dusky Warbler" was uttered - it being late October - but hastily rejected. What, after all, had I done to merit such a rarity?

Way back in November 1983, we set off to Gibraltar Point, Lincoln, for an American Redstart. Driving sleet and mighty winds swept visibility into impossibility, then later cleared as the cold front tore South Eastwards.

We hastened across the narrow road just as the Redstart emerged from its own cover. It was a lively, colourful little fellow with an inverted, black "T" on his tail, similar to a Wheatear. It flew accommodatingly around us, making binoculars almost unnecessary.

The species is a Three Star rarity, perhaps less than one in ten years. We have never seen another. The three hundred and twenty miles round trip was truly worth every moment.

At that time, dear Scooby was just a puppy who always enjoyed my visits to his young owners. How very much he would have loved THAT experience for such a "FIRST" with us.

Scops Owl

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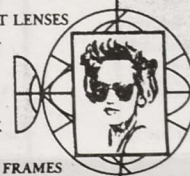
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