

FAREWELL TO ROSEMARY AND JAMES

Rosemary Fletcher has been Minister of the Caversham Methodist Churches for the past eight years. She came to us from an appointment in Swindon, where her ministry was exercised in areas of social hardship and in a strong and fruitful ecumenical atmosphere.

Her ministry in Caversham has been very much appreciated, perhaps most of all for her unwavering commitment to pastoral care. In all she has done, she has gone out of her way to make sure that no-one is forgotten, and no important issue neglected. She has built up a veritable encyclopaedia of knowledge both of the congregations and of community groups.

Rosemary's commitment to ecumenism has also been a characteristic feature of her ministry here as in Swindon; she has been a lively and active member of the clergy group. She has shared in worship with all the churches in Caversham, and took on additional responsibilities during the interregnum at Caversham Park Church.

Within the Methodist churches, she has been assiduous in building a pastoral team to ensure that, so far as is humanly possible, nobody's need is overlooked. But when a pastoral crisis required urgent and unsparing commitment, the person she made the greatest demands on was herself.

Rosemary's years in Caversham



Photo: Jonathan Munn

saw a momentous change in her life, with her marriage to James. They have both been completely identified with the life of the churches, though amazingly James has found time to continue his earlier hobbies as theatre director and playwright.

Rosemary and James have also been active in promoting concern for social justice, with the Jubilee "Drop the Debt" campaign and its successors. They have also promoted their churches' links with the world church. Gosbrook Road is linked with a community in Haiti, and Caversham Heights with a church, a school and a theological college in Zambia. During May a small group from Zambia was able to visit us here in Caversham, a radiantly splendid climax to this particular aspect of Rosemary's ministry.

It is expected that Rosemary and James will be posted in due course to Sri Lanka, and the Church in Sri Lanka want to meet them in the

coming September to confirm exactly what they will be doing the following year.

Then there will probably be three terms of study and preparation at the United College of Ascension in Selly Oak in Birmingham so Rosemary and James will still be in the UK for a while yet. At College they hope to become familiar with the culture of another country and one of the subjects to be learned will be Sinhalese, the language of the majority group on the island. This is likely to be quite tricky!

Rosemary and James are still assimilating the news. Having said to the Church that they would go where they were needed, a big part of them had hoped for somewhere on the great continent of Africa! They are not looking forward to leaving Caversham, and are wanting to enjoy the time left here. They ask for your prayers and support at this time.

To Rosemary and James, we extend our loving greeting and continued prayers as they move first to Birmingham and then to Sri Lanka. Thank you both for your ministry in Caversham.

STOP PRESS

Rosemary and James move on
2nd August to 27 York Road,
Edgbaston,
Birmingham B16 9HY

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St Barnabas' Church - Mrs P Fuller - 946 1945
St Peter's Church - John Madeley - 947 6063
Caversham Heights Methodist - Pam and Phil Chatfield - 947 2444
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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
John Madeley

Of sandals and scandals

I recently bought a pair of sandals for a fiver. The shop over the road wanted £30, for better quality admittedly, but much the same thing. I congratulated myself on a good buy, and yet....it left me with an uneasy feeling. Where they came from I don't know, it doesn't say, but it's just that I don't see how the people who made the sandals could have got a decent return from them. And even if I had paid the £30, could I have been sure even then?

Whatever the price, footwear is currently traded in a system that rewards the traders, the companies, the middlemen, but which may leave the actual producers receiving very little. People who produce everyday goods for us, equipment, footwear, clothes, toys, most things we buy and enjoy, receive a pittance and many live in abject poverty. And I call that a scandal.

It does not apply to everything however. A growing number of products are now available in the alternative, fair-trade system. Sales of products with the Fairtrade Mark - the guarantee that producers receive a fair return - rose in Britain from £60 million in 2002 to £100 million in 2003. In the United States, sales of fair-trade coffee alone increased by 90 per cent in 2003, to more than £120 million.

Fairtrade Mark foods are now sourced from 360 producer groups in 36 countries, from about 5 million growers and their families. Goods that now carry the Mark include coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, honey, sugar, fruit juice, mangoes, bananas, grapes, rice, pasta, spices, snacks, biscuits, flowers and footballs. Supermarkets stock some of them, and RISC (35 London Street, Reading) has an excellent range.

In a world where there is so much bad news, the increased availability of fairly-traded products is truly good news. Reading has become a fair-trade town, the Oxford Diocese a fair-trade diocese, most churches now serve only fair-trade tea and coffee...but where does it go from here?

I don't want to buy anything which has not given the producer a decent return. I don't want to see my grandchildren playing with toys that have been made by people earning wages so low they cannot escape from poverty. For me this is a deeply spiritual matter. What's happening is too close to exploitation for comfort, and we cannot exploit other people and say that the love of God dwells in us. Yes, of course the exploitation is through a system over which we have no control...but over which we can have influence. For we are the customer. We decide how to spend our money.

Let's go out of our way to buy fairly-traded goods. Every time we do this, we are helping in a tiny way to improve someone's livelihood, to make trade work for the poor. And surely our goal should be that everything we buy has been fairly traded. So let's urge the shops where we buy to stock more of these goods. Fair-trade clothes, household goods, rugs, even wine, are now available, although not yet carrying the Fairtrade Mark. Get a copy of the Traidcraft catalogue (Traidcraft, Kingsway, Gateshead, NE11 0NE. Website: www.traidcraft.co.uk). But let's urge the large retailers to start thinking fair-trade, and let's be passionate about it with the vision to see what might be...and the existing unjust international trading system could be replaced by a more humane, ethical system.

What has been achieved so far with fair trade is encouraging, but is only the start, the start of something exciting - the possibility of a decent return, a living wage, for all who produce, helped through our purchases.

I'm uneasy about those sandals and so I should be. They may well hide a scandal. Behind most things we buy could lie a scandal. But things don't have to be like this.

John Madeley is a licensed lay minister at St Peter's

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the August 2004 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday July 7th. The date for submission of items for the September 2004 issue will be Wednesday 28th July.

All advertising copy for the August 2004 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 6th July. For the September 2004 issue the date will be Tuesday 27th July 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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 (Parish Office: Tuesday-Thursday 9.30-12.30. Tel: 947 1703 email: parishoffice@stpetercaversham.idps.co.uk)
 Fr Keith Kinnaird, St. Andrew's Vicarage, Harrogate Road. Tel: 947 2788
 Revd Derek Chandler, 20 St Barnabas Road. Tel: 947 8239.
 Fr Philip Dallaway, The Vicarage, St John's Road. Tel: 947 1814
 Revd Margaret Dimmick, 12 Lowfield Road, Caversham Park. Tel: 947 0258
 Revd Alveen Thoresen, 1 Crescent Court, Crescent Road, Reading. Tel: 926 7119
 Revd Keith Kneeb-Robinson, Mill Cottage, Bradfield, Reading. Tel: 974 4526
 Revd Heather Serjeant, 4a The Mount, Caversham Tel: 947 2729

CAVERSHAM PARK ECUMENICAL PROJECT
 Rev Lynne Davis, 51 Galsworthy Drive, Caversham Park Village Tel: 947 5152.

METHODIST TEAM MINISTRY
 Rev Rosemary Fletcher, 72 Highmoor Rd. Caversham Tel: 947 2223

BAPTIST
 Enquiries to 954 5353 or 987 2563

CAVERSHAM HILL CHAPEL
 Eric Bird Tel: 947 4529

ROMAN CATHOLIC
 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
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Woodcote Parish Church
 9.45am (second Sunday)

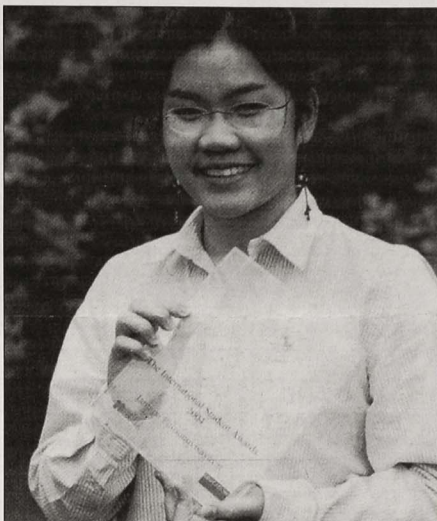
ROMAN CATHOLIC
Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue
 Saturday 5.30pm,
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SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers), Church Street, Reading
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 (House study groups Sept-June Tel: 9475783)

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD, Church Street, Caversham
 9.30am Sunday School
 11.00am Divine Worship
 6.00pm Evening Service

YOUTH

NEWS FROM QUEEN ANNE'S SCHOOL



A sixth form student from Thailand studying at Queen Anne's School in Caversham has won a major national award, thanks to her inspiring story of life in the UK.

Jantapa Phisanuvissayavat, 18, was one of only 12 students across the country and one of only two boarding school pupils to gain a top honour in the International Student Awards – a national awards scheme run by the British Council. The other award winners were all undergraduates.

The Awards recognise overseas students who have achieved personal ambitions, enjoyed new experiences, learnt new skills or made an important contribution to their educational institution or community since coming to the UK. Over 2300 students, representing 145 nationalities, entered the Awards, by writing letters, as if to friends or family back home, describing their experiences of life in the UK.

As well as studying for her 'A' levels, Jantapa has made friends with students from many different cultures and embraced a host of non-academic opportunities, including a two-day 22km expedition for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and work experience at a local police station. She has formed a sales company called 'Scratch' with friends under the Young Enterprise Scheme, and sings in the school's senior choir. In her entry letter she wrote "When I look at myself now, I can see that I am a stronger person than I used to be. I know that I have made the right decision to come to England, because the experiences I have gained here have been so valuable."

Jantapa was presented with her Silver Award at a winners' ceremony at the Kensington Roof Gardens, London, hosted by TV news journalist Krishnan Guru-Murthy. As well as a trophy, Jantapa received £1,000 prize money.

Andrew King from the British Council said: "Jantapa is a very worthy winner. Her story will be an inspiration to future students who are considering coming to the UK to study."

DRUMS AT ST MARTIN'S



Members of staff trying out their skills with a selection of the drums.

At the beginning of this term, as part of the Artsmark provision, the Kaya Drumming Workshops were invited into school for an Assembly. The two young men who run these workshops brought a collection of African and Native American drums and percussion instruments to demonstrate what can be achieved with them. Pupils and staff were given the chance to try out the drums for themselves in what was a great fun session.

The event proved very popular and thirty pupils have now embarked on a ten week course of after-school workshops. The head teacher described this course as "a wonderful means of stress busting, gaining self control, improving listening skills and co-operation and improving self-esteem as well as developing rhythm and musical competence."



CAPTION: L to R Matthew Allen, Lewis Yates, Callum Chinn, Oliver Sanders, Christian Plummer.

CAVERSHAM PARK PRE-SCHOOL

Caversham Park Pre-School welcomed 7 new children at the start of the Summer Term; in addition eight of the younger children transferred from the afternoon to the morning sessions which are more structured and introduce them to the Foundation Stage curriculum thus helping to prepare them for Primary School.

The fundraising section of the Parent Committee recently ran some stalls at the Easter Bonnet Parade and Treasure Hunt, raising £160. The children raised £150 for Childline by doing a pedal push (in the rain!).

Following a generous donation from the Acorn Lodge of the local Freemasons, children can experiment with a new collection of musical instruments.

The annual Sports Day is on 8th July. The School will be running some traditional side shows at the Caversham Park Festival on 17th July.

SPORTSMARK ACHIEVEMENT AT HIGHDOWN SCHOOL

Tim Royle, Headteacher of Highdown School writes: We are proud to announce that Highdown School has been awarded a prestigious national award by Sport England. Sport England aims to lead the development of sport in England and also distributes lottery funds to sport.

Sportsmark is a national accreditation programme, which sets a range of challenging targets. Particular areas of focus include the provision of a well-balanced physical education programme:

an out of school hours programme that offers all students access to a range of opportunities and sporting links with the local community to help students make links from school sport to sporting opportunities in their community.

We have welcomed this opportunity to review our PE and sporting provision and are delighted to receive recognition of the wide range of opportunities we provide for all our students.

We aim to provide all our students with

the opportunity to be active and involved in sport and have an enjoyable and satisfying experience in doing so, whatever their level of ability. In this way, we hope to foster a positive attitude towards sport so that students continue to participate in, and reap the benefits of, a physically active lifestyle.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped to make the achievement of this award possible.

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Community News

MORE CHANGES IN CAVERSHAM

Post Office in Prospect Street closes after over 100 years

There has been a post office in Prospect Street since 1877, it can be seen marked on the Ordnance Survey map of that year in the Local Studies department on the top floor of Reading Central Library. Before that, it is recorded that J Green was the post office receiver in 1867, then one Edward Gale took over the following year. Letters were received at 7.30am and 2.30pm and they were dispatched at 11.50am and 7.30pm. There are records of receiving houses in Reading and its environs from 1839 onwards so there is a fair chance that there was one in the Oxfordshire village of Caversham even before 1867.

The last day of business for Prospect Street Post Office was Saturday 15th May 2004 but before that stocks had been run down as Inderjit Sahota and Manjit, his wife, prepared to vacate the premises.

The Sahotas came to Caversham from the north-east nine years ago but for Manjit it was a return to where she was brought up. She is an ex-Kendrick student whose relatives live locally and she and Inderjit wanted to be near her family as they brought up their own three children. They are comfortably settled in Emmer Green and plan to stay there as their children attend local schools and they feel very much part of the neighbourhood.

Inderjit previously worked in local government and when asked if he has enjoyed being a postmaster he replied 'It has been an interesting experience. We were warmly welcomed by the local community and have regarded many of our customers as part of our extended family'.

Inderjit sees his new found leisure as an exciting opportunity to develop his work as Assistant General Secretary of the Sikh Gurdwara, or place of worship. This honorary post means that he is responsible for Public Relations and the Media and he plans to promote links with local schools and other organisations, encouraging communication and interaction between people of different faiths. He firmly believes that 'people gain strength from working together'. As a member of Caversham Rotary Club and an integrated member of the local community he wants 'to put something back'.

The editors of the Caversham Bridge wish the Sahotas well. They will be missed by their customers.

New Post Office counter opens in Pharmacy

The Post Office is in the process of closing down many small branches and we are very fortunate in Caversham that we have not lost the services of a post office with the closing of the Prospect Street branch. The new post office counter at the Day Lewis Pharmacy (known still to many as 'Rankins'), was officially opened by the Mayor, Councillor Jeanette Skeats, on Monday 10th May and business was immediately brisk.

This is the fourth branch of Day Lewis to have a post office put in it and the branch manager, Mrs Sheila Lennon, says that 'public reaction has been very good' and that 'it has breathed new life into the pharmacy with increased custom'.

The pharmacy cum post office is in an ideal position. Sheila has been busy recruiting new staff and restocking the shelves to meet the needs of both post office and pharmacy customers, so there is a wide range of goods and services to be had under one roof. In addition, there is a new designated area where customers may consult the pharmacist.

Sheila and her staff are very positive about this new venture and are accepting the challenge with enthusiasm. No doubt by the time this goes to press the people of Caversham will have become quite used to collecting their pensions with their prescriptions and picking up some stamps at the same time as their shampoo!

CONGRATULATIONS TO SAFETY STREET VOLUNTEERS

Three volunteers from Caversham have been given awards for their dedicated service to Reading's Safety Street project since its inception ten years ago. Darrell and Betty Evans and Cyril Kirby, who all live in Caversham Heights, received commemorative plaques from the Mayor, Councillor Jeanette Skeats, in recognition of their work teaching children how to stay safe both indoors and outside.

Nine different dangerous scenarios including a road, a railway track, a river and lock and a kitchen are mocked up at the Safety Street HQ in Great Knollys Street. These prompt discussion between the children and the volunteers as to possible hazards. Mr and Mrs Evans, and Mr Kirby, all of whom are in their welcome the opportunity to work with the children on such a rewarding project.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to former Caversham Methodist Minister (1972-75), the Revd Dr Leslie Griffiths, who was offered a Life Peerage at the beginning of May 2004. He will take the Labour Whip in the House of Lords.

OBITUARY: Aubrey Bucquet

The oldest member of St Peter's congregation has recently died in his 102nd year. The Caversham Bridge ran an article on Aubrey, a well-known local resident, on the occasion of his 100th birthday in September 2002. The editors offer their condolences to his family and friends and give thanks for his long and fulfilling life.



Photo: Ken Tillman

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COUNCILLOR JEANETTE SKEATS REFLECTS ON HER YEAR AS MAYOR

Caversham has again had the privilege of providing Reading with its Mayor during the past year and, as this year's Local Government elections were delayed to coincide with the European elections in June, Councillor Jeanette Skeats' tenure as Mayor has been longer than usual.

Desire to serve the public

Jeanette Skeats moved to Reading from Hull in 1977 after her marriage. She became a local Councillor in May 1996 fulfilling a desire to be a public servant: someone who is "able to make a difference". The high regard in which she is held as a good constituency councillor led her to being asked in 2002 to be the next Deputy Mayor and, by succession, Mayor for 2003-4. Jeanette spoke of the honour and privilege of being asked to serve her adopted town in this way and of the great love she has for Reading.

- but not forgetting the family

Her year in office has been a balancing act, but her family have, she said, been very understanding and have given her all the comfort, help and support needed to fulfil both her official and family roles. Her grown up daughter lives at home but is independent, and her husband, a qualified accountant and financial director who works in London, acts as her Consort.

The role of the First Citizen

Jeanette spoke of the position of trust that surrounds the office; as Mayor she chairs the meetings of the full Council and acts impartially, although you can only become Mayor if you are a Councillor. She saw her role as first citizen of, and an ambassador for, the town of which she is very proud. She has loved her year in office, giving 100% to it including not having a holiday for two years, although she did admit to looking forward now to having one.

750th Anniversary

Perhaps the highlights of an eventful year have been the celebrations surrounding the 750th Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth the First granting the town a Royal Charter. This was marked on 4th July last year when 100 guests sat down to a medieval banquet in the Town Hall. The guests, drawn from voluntary groups, also included the civic leaders of Reading's twin towns: Clonmel, San Francisco Libre and Düsseldorf. The same day also marked the signing of a Charter by the Mayor and the High Commissioner for Barbados twinning the town with Speightstown on the Island of Barbados.

Links with Twin Towns

Links with the twin towns have been active. They included a December visit to the Christmas Market in Düsseldorf, to Clonmel on St Patrick's Day (this year was special and celebrated the 10th anniversary of the twinning with Clonmel) and a visit to Barbados in April when the Mayor unveiled a plaque affirming the twinning with Speightstown. Such visits have been privately financed and are not a drain on Council Tax income. The link with Speightstown recognises that

Reading has the largest Bajan community in Britain. The Prime Minister of Barbados paid a return visit to Reading in May.

Women, Royalty and Reading

It was appropriate that Reading had a woman as Mayor during this anniversary year for Queen Elizabeth the First did much to feminise the English Court. Currently in Reading, women are prominent in all three political parties in Local Government and the Chief Executive is also a woman. One Royal link of which Jeanette is proud is the Royal Coat of Arms that is incorporated on her chain of office. This relates to a temporary privilege bestowed on Boroughs during Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Year. Officials were supposed to return the emblem at the end of that year but someone forgot in Reading. The emblem was noticed by the present Queen when she visited Reading in 1977 and, as a result of some diplomatic negotiation, Reading now has the honour of officially retaining the Coat of Arms. This is something that the Mayor was proud to display when, in company with other Mayors, she attended a reception at Buckingham Palace which was the first time that chains of office were worn.



The Mayor alongside the town's Coat of Arms.

O. Jewiss

Community life

Jeanette has been particularly struck by the amount of work carried out by the voluntary sector. Those giving up their time are not just the middle-aged and elderly but also younger people who need a pat on the back because they will be carrying on after the others have given up. She thought that young people had little interest in civic affairs because it was not on the curriculum in schools.

Reading is a diverse community with a mix of different religious faiths; she instanced how one Sunday she had been at the Sikh Vaisaki celebrations in the morning and at the St George's Day Service in St Mary's Church in the afternoon. She spoke with affection of this ancient church and the support she had received from her Chaplain, Canon Brian Shenton.

Support for Charity

Jeanette chose disability as her charitable theme. Her running in the Reading Half Marathon had been prompted by a friend who suffered a stroke on the day she became Mayor and, during his recovery, asked if she would run it with him; so far they have raised £10,000 for an ECG machine and money is still coming in. From her disability fund she has been able to give money to Cygnets, allowing them to send a team to the 2nd Downs Syndrome World Championships in South Africa. Donations have also gone to ASBAH (Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus) and a blind association. Money raising events included the Mayor's Market and the Mayor's Ball, while a bucket collection at the Hexagon Pantomime raised £6,000.

The visit of a choir of blind children from Sierra

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

AROUND THE CHURCHES

THE WORK OF CHRISTIAN AID HIGHLIGHTED IN CAVERSHAM SERVICE



Owen Jewiss

Paula Clifford of Christian Aid (right) with Meg Gale, Churchwarden at St Peter's.

After a gap of one year, when the annual Christian Aid Service was held in central Reading, Caversham reverted to its former pattern of its own united service at the beginning of Christian Aid Week, providing an opportunity to hear at first hand something of the work of Christian Aid from one of its staff. This year the special preacher at the service held in St Peter's Church was Paula Clifford of the Christian Aid's Churches Team. Many of the prayers in the service were written by staff at or derived from worship at Onè Respé Christian Aid's partner in the Dominican Republic.

Onè Respé in the Dominican Republic

In her address Paula Clifford drew upon the ongoing love of God through Jesus, saying true love means action for the lost and strayed. For this reason, Christian Aid, in dealing with life before death, is reaching out to those in the worst of situations. As an example she referred to Onè Respé, (honour and respect), an organisation that gives healthcare, education and support against racism, chiefly to Haitian illegal immigrants in the Dominican Republic, some of whom are used as domestic servants and others almost as slave labour to cut sugar cane and are then abandoned at the end of the cutting season.

Zambian copper belt

Paula also told of the plight of the people in the Zambian copper belt where, because of the action of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in trying to establish conditions for debt relief, the mines had been sold off and fallen into disrepair, where people were now searching for work. She revealed how HIV/AIDS is spreading because as a side effect women seeking work are being forced into becoming sex workers. Christian Aid offers young people a chance to hang on to life, and helps with education and support. Christian Aid campaigns against injustice and takes an active role in the Jubilee Debt Campaign.

The service finished with words of commitment from Onè Respé for those who were collecting, giving or praying in Christian Aid Week.

In the following week, with the exception of Caversham Park, local collectors visited about 80 % of the homes in Caversham and Emmer Green; details of the sum raised will appear in a later issue.

CELEBRATIONS FOR THE SIGNING OF ANGLICAN-METHODIST COVENANT



Owen Jewiss

Representatives of Anglican and Methodist Churches in Caversham sign a copy of the Covenant in Gosbrook Road Methodist Church.

Methodism dates from 24 May 1738 when John Wesley felt his heart strangely warmed as he listened to the reading of Luther's Preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans at a Society meeting in Aldersgate Street in London. May 24 is now known as Aldersgate Day or Wesley Day by the Methodists. It was therefore fitting that this year on the Sunday that happened to be the day before that date, there should be a service in Reading celebrating the national signing of the Anglican-Methodist Covenant. The Minster Church of St Mary the Virgin in Reading was a fitting venue on this historic occasion for the service which was jointly conducted by the Revd David Ellis, Superintendent Minister of the Reading and Silchester Methodist Circuit, and Canon Brian Shenton, the Area Dean of Reading. The Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell, the new Bishop of Reading, preached and Lt Col Mary Harwood, Lay Chairman of the Reading Deanery, and Mr Derek Guy, Senior Circuit Steward, also participated.

Bishop of Reading sees a new future for the Church

Bishop Stephen said he was delighted and humbled that one of his first commitments since becoming Bishop was to be part of this historic celebration. "The signing of the Covenant is a great help to the world. When people see the disagreements and squabbles among Christians they turn away. How can we preach and teach reconciliation if we can't agree among ourselves?"

Caversham representatives also sign the Covenant

Churches Together in Caversham also had a service on the day after Wesley Day to celebrate the signing of the Covenant. Held at Gosbrook Road Methodist Church this carefully devised service led by the Revd Rosemary Fletcher traced the events in John and Charles Wesley's lives that led to the start of Methodism, and included some of the same hymns sung by the Wesley brothers at that time, and several written by Charles Wesley.

Representatives of the Anglican and Methodist Churches in Caversham made an historic affirmation of the Covenant by signing a copy after the service.

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AROUND THE CHURCHES

VISITORS FROM ZAMBIA



Caversham Heights Methodist Church is twinned with a Church of the United Church of Zambia in Mindolo, Kitwe and three members of its congregation recently visited for ten days.

Our visitors were Wilson Tegha (Church Treasurer who works in his family business); Mary Mbulo (Member of the Women's Christian Fellowship who teaches pastoral care, whose husband is communications secretary for the Synod and works in Kitwe; they have seven children); and Dave Mvula (Chief Church Steward and Vice-Secretary, a member of the Men's Christian Fellowship and married with five children).

They arrived in Christian Aid Week, their first Sunday being World Debt Day (when we highlight the plight of the poorest countries of the world held back by huge debt). Wilson told the morning congregation, "Poverty levels are currently high in Zambia. In 1998, 73% of the population were living below the poverty line and 58% of the population were considered to be extremely poor, 15% moderately poor and only 27% were considered to be above the poverty line. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have set an impossibly high economic target before there can be any donor funding or lending of money. This has resulted in a wage freeze, high taxation, 80% unemployed and living on less than \$1 a week, and an urgent call for the cancellation of their \$3.8bn debt."

A varied programme took them to the Christian Community Action (CCA) warehouse, its Oxford Road shop and Support Centre, and 'The Open Door' community-run cafe in Tilehurst; for a walk-about in Caversham, along the Thames and into the old centre of Reading; for a Church Walk on to the Mapledurham Estate; to Blenheim Palace and Oxford (including the Carfax Tower); a boat trip to Henley; to two schools (Maiden Erlegh, whose pupils have raised £15,000 for the building of a new school in Zambia, and Langtree); to Reading University; to the Caversham Girls' and Boys' Brigades; and the Caversham Methodist Prayer Lunch. Dave and Mary also visited the Churches Together in Caversham Youth and Family Initiative's Messy Play Project at Amersham Road.

Two highlights of their visit were the trips to London and Portsmouth. London included Wimbledon, Chelsea Football Club, Buckingham Palace, Chinatown, St Paul's, Tower Bridge, the Tower of London, the Houses of Parliament, the London Eye, a trip on the Underground, Queen's Park Rangers' fans en masse, and the Madejski Stadium on the way back! The Portsmouth trip took in Winchester Cathedral, Portsmouth Dockyard, the Victory, a yacht marina and the SEA at Hayling Island, tasting the sea's

saltiness and having fish and chips on the beach.

Our Church Council heard "Many of the children are orphans because of HIV/AIDS and others just can't afford school. The church has started a community school in a hall without much furniture, so the children sit on the floor. They have no textbooks or exercise books. The church is fighting for children to be able to read, write, do arithmetic, and speak English. The dilapidated hospitals in Zambia have few nurses or none at all, as many have gone to Botswana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, or the UK. There are no drugs and a lot of deaths because of HIV/AIDS, due to the high level of poverty, unemployment and prostitution. They can't afford to buy medicines, so if you get sick - that's it! You just die! Another problem in Zambia is the bad road network, which means that food cannot be collected and so goes to waste. There are no subsidies for the farmers. It is difficult to afford to pay for our children's schooling, their transport and food, and other necessities when the Government takes 40% of the pay of all who are in work."

Finally, the twinned churches exchanged gifts and shared an evening meal in the garden of two members of the church. Many members of the congregation turned out to say a very touching farewell to our Zambian visitors.

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TWO YOUNGER MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH
WRITE OF THEIR VISITS TO ZAMBIA

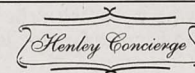
Jennifer Alsford writes:

I am a medical student at Warwick University. As part of our training we are allocated 7 weeks when we can go anywhere in the world, within reason, to study medicine. Thanks to the church's connection with the UCZ I managed to make contact with a doctor who works at Kitwe Central Hospital.

During my time working in the hospital, I learnt a lot about the culture and beliefs of the Zambian people. The conditions are very poor in the hospital. The place is dirty, the beds are rusty and patients are often on the floor due to lack of space. There are no curtains around the beds and when people die they stay in the ward amongst the other patients for a long time. There are no resuscitation facilities and the patients are usually young. The resources are very limited. They do have basic drugs and they use clean needles for each patient. However, investigations are limited and patients must pay. For example, it costs £1.20 for a chest x-ray and many patients cannot afford this. If the patient can't pay, the investigation will only be carried out if it is very urgent.

I found it difficult to understand the beliefs of the people. There is a very strong belief in witchcraft and people often go to witchdoctors for advice. Also patients believe that if they consent to having a lumbar puncture or oxygen treatment, they will die. Witchdoctors are partially responsible for the increasing belief that if you have sex with a baby you will rid yourself of the HIV infection. I spoke to Reverend Kalongo about this belief, which has come from South Africa, and he said he had broached the subject in church but many people thought it was inappropriate to discuss it; the problem is that the Zambian people don't talk about issues such as HIV. There is no treatment available (unless you can pay), so to receive a positive test is like being given a death sentence. Also, at funerals, the cause of death is announced, and if it is AIDS then the family is looked down upon.

The people are very relaxed in Zambia. No one is in a rush and they are very friendly. Buses go when they are full, not at a set time! When you arrange to meet someone they arrive 2 hours late - they call this African time! People are not stressed like they are in England. The church services sometimes last for 4 hours but no one is looking at their watch thinking of the list of things they have to do. They really enjoy themselves singing and dancing with huge smiles on their faces. I think we can learn a lot from their attitude to life. They love life and they are grateful for what they have. My experiences have opened my eyes to the harsh realities of these people's lives. I have become much more grateful for what I have and I think I will be very intolerant of people complaining about the NHS! (Continued on page 9)



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AROUND THE CHURCHES

ZAMBIA CONTINUED

Laura Peirce writes:

I have just returned from a four week trip to Kitwe, Zambia. First I spent 10 days in Livingstone where I attended a conference on mission; during my Gap year in Zambia I had helped to plan this. It was good to see the final outcome of my initial work. I also learnt so much about mission in the various conferences and how needs differ so greatly from place to place. I learnt that Europe tends to be quite arrogant and that there is such a need for western countries to be more open to learning from the African continent as they really do have so much to give. It needs to be a two way process.

Then I travelled to Kitwe for 3 and a half weeks where I worked with street children. Again, this was awesome as I had spent 7 months previously working with these children and was so desperate to see how they all were and to check that the project which works with them was still running.

I found things which both greatly encouraged me and deeply saddened me. Many of the children with whom I had worked before and had helped to reintegrate back into a family situation and into government schools were still there and were happy.

Many of the other children whom I helped to reintegrate back into homes from the streets had however, returned to street life. They were once again caught in the cycle of begging and drug taking. However, I was also just so pleased to find these children alive. It was to be expected that some of them would have returned to the streets. The joy on their little faces when they saw me thrilled me.

The thing that I found so difficult was the number of new children living on the streets. I was last in Kitwe two years ago and since I was there, there must be about 100 new street children and it isn't a very big town. This really did dishearten me so much and made me realise in a new way that I could



Laura with abandoned twin girls.

only do such a small part to help. However, every little bit really can and does make a difference.

There is still a lot more work to be done. The roots of the problem such as poverty and abuse, which drive the children to the streets, still need to be dealt with.

So often, we forget how wealthy we are in comparison to others. These children live on the streets with no shoes, and only the clothes they stand up in. They have no education and go many days without food. Points to ponder... how many pairs of shoes do we have? They have none. How many T shirts do we have? They have one. How often do we go a day without food? It's a normal occurrence for them.



THANK YOU ALL



Churches In Reading Drop-In Centre An open door for the homeless and needy

Thanks have been received from CIRDIC for what has been described as a 'generous donation' of £400 by Caversham Christian News Ltd (Caversham Bridge) to the drop-in centre.

Readers may like to know that the fire damage has virtually been all repaired and the centre is in full operation serving over 50 lunches per day, operating the clothing store and receiving regular visits from nurses and housing specialists. Because of the response from individuals and from organisations such as the Caversham Bridge the centre is able to continue its work and the lease will be renewed shortly.

Bringing hope to the people of Mozambique

Dr Neil Applegate, Executive Secretary of Reading3000, has also sent a letter of thanks acknowledging the gift of £100 donated by the Caversham Bridge to the organisation.

The money will be used to help provide shelter, clothing, food and medical care for the desperately poor people in the Gaza Province of Mozambique.

Thanks to all of you who contribute to, distribute and read the Caversham Bridge. You have helped to make possible the gifts to these two very worthwhile charities doing such vital work at home and abroad.

PARTY AT OUR LADY AND ST ANNE'S



Charlie and Georgie Beveridge.

Members of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society at Our Lady and St Anne's recently organised a Senior Parishioners' Tea Party. The party took place in St Anne's hall on Sunday afternoon, 9th April. About fifty senior members of the parish enjoyed a couple of hours of entertainment followed by tea and a raffle.

Throughout the afternoon Michael Offen provided music on a keyboard. Charlie and Georgie Beveridge, two youngsters from the Oratory School, entertained, Charlie singing and playing the flute and Georgie playing the piano and the clarinet to an appreciative audience. They were followed by a display of Irish dancing by pupils from St Paul's School, members of the Michael Munley School of Irish Dancing. A solo hard-shoe hornpipe was followed by several other traditional dances. The children were introduced by Julie Feeney, head teacher of St Paul's, who helps train the dancers.

After this, everyone tucked into a scrumptious tea when there was plenty of time to converse and enjoy the company of people who might otherwise only be seen in passing at church services. The afternoon was rounded off by a raffle before everyone went home after a very enjoyable social occasion.

Anyone interested can find more pictures of the event on the recently launched church website at www.ourladyandstanne.org.uk

Photos by Jane Shaw

Report by Jane Shaw



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Scops Owl



A few pairs of Blackbirds were singing at 4.30am, but I fear judgment should be reserved on their breeding success. As reported last year, Blackbirds continually returned to hungry young with only ONE grub in the bill. No young were observed.

Weather this year has delayed visiting migrants. Lack of insect life may well have prevented successful breeding. This includes Warblers as well as Swifts, Swallows and House Martins in this area.

Downstream along the Thames, Common Terns HAVE been successful. They have been seen flying around Caversham Bridge. Like a small gull with black CAP and pointed red bill, they have an ultra-bouyant flight.

Grey Wagtails may sometimes be seen near the lock-gates by Kings Meadow. They are elegant, grey on the back, yellow beneath with longish tails. Watch for the Kingfisher in this reach, blue above, red below and piping call. They fly very fast along the opposite bank, just above the water, requiring high-speed binocular work.

Near the Caversham Bridge Swan flock, Pied Wagtails are sometimes on the bank side. They bob their tails and call a sharp, "Chissik".

BIRDS IN CAVERSHAM

Canada Geese may be vocal among the Swans. Feral Egyptian and Greylag Geese have joined the flock at times. Male Mallards are handsome though common, with bottle-green heads and curled up tails.

Great Crested Grebes may also be seen with the Swans. The male has a rusty-coloured frill and looks spectacular. When they dive they will re-surface a long distance from submerging point.

Although not diving as much, Coots with white bills and foreheads and perhaps a Moorhen with red head, could be seen near Caversham Bridge.

A walk to the end of the Promenade, may produce a singing Willow Warbler or Blackcap in trees on the opposite bank. The Willow has a sweet, descending song, the Blackcap a strong and musical one.

If one parks at Blagrave Lane and walks alongside the Golf Course towards Chazey Woods, it is possible to hear the song of an ascending Skylark and await its "parachuting descent." A Meadow Pipit may also be seen with its "Seep, Seep, Seep" call. I have tape-recorded Lesser Whitethroat as it sang in the copse, just before the bend down to the Warren.

The woods are private.

Scops Owl

FORTY YEARS ON for ST PETER'S WIVES

Described in a national newspaper of the day (The Sunday Mirror 17th January 1965) as a 'rebel social group' St Peter's Wives celebrated their fortieth anniversary with a party at Church House on the 18th May.

A number of former members were present, including some who had travelled long distances. Messages of goodwill and congratulations were received from those unable to attend, including one from Canon John Grimwade and his wife.

The first chairman, Barbara Vowles, who had come from Wales, recalled their early struggle to get established. Under the inspirational leadership of the late Mary Clift, wife of the then curate, Revd David Clift, the founder members were determined that the title would not include the words 'Young Wives', which implied an extension of the Mothers' Union with its then strict rules regarding the admission to its ranks of divorcees*. They wanted a completely open group with no religious or marital restrictions, believing that the church should offer support to those who had suffered marital breakdown and that all should be welcomed irrespective of religious affiliations.

Following lengthy discussions with the newly appointed Rector of Caversham, the Revd John Grimwade, it was agreed that the group would indeed be open to all, with the proviso that the chairman must be a communicant member of the Church of England. The constitution was drawn up with great care and Barbara said she felt very proud that it was still in use today. Both the Rector and the then Bishop of Reading, the Right Revd Eric Knell, were fully supportive.

Barbara then recalled changes that had taken place in women's lives over the past 40 years saying that her chairmanship of the Wives had given her the confidence to study for a degree and then work for the Open University.

Also present at the party were three other founder members who were on the original committee: Jean Fry who was secretary, Marie Smith who was treasurer and Kathleen Hardy who organised the St Peter's Playgroup. Kathleen recalled that the Rector gave her five pounds with which to buy play materials. Under Kathleen's leadership and with the help of other members the playgroup, which was held in Balmore Hall (now the site of Balmore surgery) was soon held on four mornings a week and then had a waiting list. The cost was 6d a session including biscuit and orange!

The playgroup continued, with other members taking a turn, until the late 1970s when the falling birthrate and greater availability of nursery places caused numbers to dwindle and it ceased to function. However those involved made lasting friendships and it has been a thrill over the years to read in the local news of the marriages or scholastic achievements of the playgroup 'children'.

The present chairman, Jean Crosbie, and her committee had organised a splendid supper which was enjoyed by the forty or so members and guests. The Revd Canon Richard Kingsbury, proposed a toast to St Peter's Wives, wishing the Wives many more successful years. Jean and Barbara then cut the celebration cake which was made by Dorothy Churcher, a past chairman, and iced by Vera Piper, a member of the present committee.



Barbara Vowles and Jean Crosbie cutting the Anniversary cake.

There was a display of past photographs and archive material relating to the group. The Wives started as they were to go on with a full and interesting programme of speakers on a variety of subjects. Over the years the group has raised money for local charities through jumble sales, raffles, bring and buys and carol singing. On the lighter side there have been walks, river trips, dinner dances, barn dances, skittle evenings and outings to places of interest.

Although the average age of a St Peter's Wife has risen since those first heady days, it would be fair to say that the wives are still young at heart and as open in mind and spirit as they ever were and new members are always welcome. Meetings are held at Church House on the third Tuesday in the month at 8pm.

*In the 1970s the Mothers' Union modified its approach and now has a positive commitment to working alongside those with family problems.

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Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

Prior to their May meeting the Guild celebrated the past 75 years of the Townswomen's Guilds with a fish and chip lunch. The hall was decorated with token colours of green and purple, which some members wore.

The meeting began with a warm welcome to a visitor, then the signing in of a new member, Lilian Dewar. The speciality groups continue to be very active; Arts and Crafts had their programme outlined up to mid-Summer. Words and Music had received a terrific response to the topic of "Water", with personal memories and original, creative work. Gardening had been rained off, but had much enjoyed a video. The Air-Ambulance was voted as the charity to be supported this year.

Few people get the opportunity to visit the House of Lords, but Mrs Pauline Humphreys, in her talk "Life in the House of Lords", gave members a fascinating insight. As a retired Hansard reporter she spoke in detail on many aspects of her time there, and illustrated her account with large photographs to complement the special guides which had been handed out. As one of a team of sixteen she had seen many changes in the way verbatim reports were done and transmitted to the printers, the priority always being checks for accuracy. Several humorous anecdotes revealed how difficult it was to be in the right place at the right time, un-noticed, particularly on formal and State occasions. Such a subject resulted in many questions and comments, but with little time the Chairman had to close the meeting once Mairwen West had given an entertaining vote of thanks.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm, in St Barnabas Church Hall, Grove Road, Emmer Green. Do come and visit.

Caversham Ladies Club

The Chairman, Mrs Brenda Strong, welcomed all to the May meeting including a new member. Five ladies celebrated birthdays in May and were presented with cards and good wishes from the Club; new programmes for 2004/5 were distributed. At the conclusion of business a video was shown about the Grand Canyon and the Colorado River. For those who have not visited this National Park it was interesting to learn the history and customs of the local tribe, and to see the hair-raising water trips over the rapids and the mule rides down the narrow pathways as well as the spectacular scenery.

Caversham Women's Institute

Law and Order was the subject for the May meeting when the speaker, Mr Dunford, spoke about the role of a magistrate. The origins of the position go back to the 14th century and in the Commonwealth period JPs could perform marriages – an idea that went with the early settlers to America. The working of the local courts was explained clearly. Everyone is welcome to come, as a visitor, as most courts are open to the public.

Mr Dunford judged the competition – only two brave entries with a poem about prison – so the two Margarets were declared joint winners. The business part of the meeting followed refreshments and the evening ended with the raffle.

CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Editor,

I was surprised and annoyed that on page 6 of the June issue you repeated the absurd statement by Re3 that individually each of us produces, NOTE THE WORD PRODUCES, about half a tonne of rubbish in a year.

Individual householders and members of their families have no facilities to produce rubbish.

They are the unfortunate recipients of this rubbish and then they and the local Council have the job of getting rid of it. Only minutes ago I received a copy of "MIDWEEK" published by the Reading Chronicle. The total weight was 14 ozs of which 10 ozs was comprised solely of property advertisements which are of not the slightest interest to me. Of the remaining 4 ozs only half had any information content, again the rest was advertisements. I did not produce this heap of junk but I have to dispose of it. The same applies to the weekly Reading Chronicle. Part 2 is always advertisements for cars, jobs etc. There are plenty of car sales rooms, and there is the Job Centre so again, I am landed with junk newspaper.

The Yellow Pages is another example. They dump these enormous and heavy tomes on one's doorstep but refuse to take away the old issues.

If you buy from a Supermarket almost everything is in tins, boxes or bottles which are non-returnable but householders have to dispose of this superfluous packaging which they have to acquire when shopping.

Last week I had to buy some nails to repair my garden shed. I could not buy six or eight but had to buy a plastic pack of several dozen, most of which I shall never use. Today I bought four small electrical plugs from Maplins in the Oxford Road. Each small item was in its own plastic pack to which was stapled a cardboard label – junk again. These are only a small sample of the packaging and advertising industry running rampant.

Don't publish such nonsense again about the householders producing vast amounts of rubbish. Aim your comments where they belong.

Yours sincerely,
A. E. Lott

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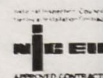
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