

LEST WE FORGET

Safeguarding the Welfare, Interest and Memory of Those Who Have Served in the Armed Forces



POPPY APPEAL

Once again we are around to Remembrancetide when the Royal British Legion makes a special effort to collect money to help 'old soldiers' and their dependants. Caversham Poppy Appeal organiser, Pauline Palmer, says: "Caversham is a lovely place to live and even though there have been many changes over recent years it still retains its 'village' atmosphere and community. This is why our Poppy Appeal collections in Caversham are always so good - last year's Appeal raised over £21,000 and Caversham won the award for the highest percentage increase in the whole of Berkshire! We are aiming high again this year and that is why I am asking you to 'buy locally' - please make your donation for a poppy in Caversham either from one of our door-to-door collectors or in one of the shops, schools, pubs, offices or other businesses in Caversham who so kindly display collecting boxes and poppies. Please help us to help those who really need our help."

It is worth remembering that there has only been one year throughout the last century and to date when not one of our servicemen or women has been killed or injured on active service. The Appeal starts on October 30th and continues to 13th November. Caversham Royal British Legion will be remembering those who died in the two World Wars at 11 o'clock on Thursday 11th November outside the Working Men's Club - it is hoped that as many people as possible will observe the two-minute silence.

On Sunday 14th November the usual parade will leave Westfield Park at 10.30am and the Rev Fr Philip Dallaway, the Branch Chaplain, from St John's will conduct the service of Remembrance at Caversham War Memorial in Christchurch Meadows - everyone is welcome to attend.

The move to record on the War Memorial in Christchurch Playing Fields the names of those from Caversham who died in the Second World War, some 60 years after that war ended, is to be applauded. Within a comparatively few years the number of those who have personal memories of that time and, through their parents, any close knowledge of the 1914-18 war will diminish to vanishing point. Future generations need to be reminded of the sacrifices that were made for the freedoms we now enjoy.

The Memorial in Christchurch Playing Fields is not the only one in what some now think of as North Reading. There is a permanent memorial in the porch of St Barnabas' Church to the 18 from Emmer Green who were killed in the First World War; only a third of those names appear on the Caversham Memorial. The record of those who died in the Second World War is in the frontispiece of a King James Version of a Lectern Bible presented to the church by the Emmer Green Branch of the British Legion. These names are also recorded on the November page of the Book of Remembrance in the church, the pages of which are turned each month. The lists of names for both wars also appear on page 121 of *Emmer Green Past and Present*, which was published by the *Emmer Green Residents' Association* in 2000. (Copies of the 2nd edition are still available from Map Reading and some local bookshops).

The Emmer Green Branch of the British Legion was disbanded about 12 years ago since when the colours of the Branch and the Women's Section have been laid up within the church. The list of names of those who died in the Second World War is given below. As mentioned above, twelve of the names do not appear on the list from Caversham published last month. The total list includes the names of boys from the former Church of England Children's Society Home, St Benets, which was on land now occupied by Lyefield Court. This piece of research has revealed that through a clerical error the name of PJ Lane has been missed from the Book of Remembrance and subsequently from *Emmer Green Past and Present*, although it appears in the memorial list in the Holy Bible; this omission is being rectified in the Book of Remembrance.

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INSIDE

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--|---------|
| Schools..... | page 3 | Mexico Report, Obituary..... | page 8 |
| Bystander..... | page 4 | Diamond Wedding, Forthcoming Events... | page 9 |
| 'Old Caversham' Revisited..... | page 5 | Environment & Good Neighbours..... | page 10 |
| Churches | pages 6 & 7 | Clubs | page 11 |

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The Caversham Bridge is your paper, providing a link between the churches and the community.

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

Revd Margaret Dimmick

REMEMBRANCE

"Rosemary for Remembrance", says Shakespeare's Ophelia in Hamlet as she apparently absent-mindedly strews her herbs. But it is very poignant, for she is carefully considering the meaning of the plants. It is appropriate that Sue Ryder has chosen a sprig of rosemary as a symbol for their logo.

At this time of the year, we have All Saints and All Souls day, when we remember the illustrious examples of the faithful and our departed loved ones, soon to be followed by Remembrance Sunday when we remember those who have died in warfare.

This has been a year of remembrances, of the ninetieth anniversary of the outbreak of the first World War, when it has been wonderful to see men over 100 years old recalling clearly memories which they had hoped to forget for so long. It was the sixtieth anniversary of the D Day invasions and it was interesting for us "young ones" who were born that year to know what was going on. The events were emotional as memories of comrades and events were stirred, as those people who were involved at the time made sense of their past experiences and reflected on the effect they had on the world, and to reflect on where God was in their lives.

We are talking to the people involved and recording their feelings as well as their experiences while they are still with us, before the events become details in a history book.

Celebrating remembrance is not solely a Christian sentiment. At an Interfaith Group meeting in Reading in September, I noticed in a Jewish display explaining their customs, that they have ceremonies to remember the dead. We also have a custom of putting flowers on a grave as a way to remember. In recent years, they seem to be taken to an accident site or the place where a tragic death has occurred. Why does this happen? In ancient times or other cultures, it may have been done to appease the spirit of the dead person; it may have been an offering to them. Perhaps nowadays it can be a symbol to express grief or be a symbol of something we want to do to express our mixed emotions.

Most Christians and Jews have symbolic meals to remember their religious identity, their place in the understanding they have as people of God.

We remember Jesus. It is so central to us in the Mass, the Eucharist, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper. Here, we remember a death, that of Jesus, who brought us the hope of salvation. By his death, Jesus opened the gates of Heaven and brought us eternal life.

So this may be a sombre time and an emotional time, but also a time of joyful remembrance, of the positive things we remember of our loved ones and the eternal hope of salvation in Jesus Christ.

(Revd Margaret Dimmick is an Anglican priest at Caversham Park Ecumenical Church).

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE

Contributions for the December 2004 issue of this paper should be sent to the Parish Office, Church House by noon on Wednesday 3rd November. The date for submission of items for the January 2005 issue will be Wednesday 24th November.

All advertising copy for the December 2004 issue should be sent to Mrs Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham, by Tuesday 2nd November 2004. For the January 2005 issue the date will be Tuesday November 23rd 2004.

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EDITORS: Mr Eric Chappell, Mrs Marjorie Tillman, Mr Kevin Corrigan, Mrs Kathy Munns, Mrs Val Reynolds, Mr Alan Bradbury c/o Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham, RG4 8AX Tel: 947 1703.
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Mrs Sarah Lobley, 15 Albert Road, Caversham RG4 7AN. Tel: 947 3020.
CIRCULATION MANAGER: Mr M. Staunton, 23 Albert Road, Caversham, RG4 7AH. Tel: 947 2389.
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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

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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)

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Caversham Heights, Highmoor Road

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

Woodcote Parish Church

9.45am (second Sunday)

ROMAN CATHOLIC

Our Lady and St Anne's, Southview Avenue

Saturday 5.30pm,

Sunday 10.00am and 6.30pm

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

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9.30am Sunday School

11.00am Divine Worship

6.00pm Evening Service

SCHOOL NEWS

News from St. Anne's School

Catholic Cluster Mass

On 21st September there took place the annual Catholic Cluster Mass for teachers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, who teach in the Reading Catholic Cluster Schools and for Catholic teachers who teach in other schools in the area. This year it was hosted by the staff of St Anne's School who prepared the Mass and provided refreshments.

About one hundred teachers from various schools attended the Mass which was celebrated by Father Tony Jones, assisted by Father John Ellis of St. Michael's and Father John Chadwick, assistant priest at English Martyrs.

Father Tony reminded the congregation that it was the feast day of St. Matthew who had been specially chosen as an apostle although he belonged to an unpopular and mistrusted class of people, the tax collectors. Jesus reminded critics of this choice that he had come to call sinners, not the righteous, to repentance and that it was the sick who were in need of a physician.

Father Tony drew upon his reading of Philip Pullman's *Dark Materials* trilogy to compare and contrast Pullman's Magisterium with the Catholic hierarchy. The Magisterium was a hierarchy responsible for carrying out what were

thought to be the wishes of a cruel and vindictive god. Anyone daring to step out of line or to break the rules laid down by the Magisterium was punished. On the other hand, the Catholic hierarchy, from the Pope downwards, endeavours to carry out the wishes of a benevolent and sympathetic God. St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians which was the first reading of the Mass, includes teachers in a diverse list of people who "make a unity in the work of service".

Father Tony welcomed and thanked the non-catholic teachers present at this Mass, who teach in the cluster schools and who are committed to furthering the spiritual welfare as well as the education of their pupils.

In closing his address, Father Tony invited the congregation to take refreshments in the Cenacle after Mass. As an inducement he offered to present a cucumber sandwich to anyone who was not one of his parishioners who could tell him what a Cenacle was.

That the Mass was greatly enjoyed was clear from the enthusiastic singing and the general air of friendliness. The meeting was a happy occasion from both the social and religious points of view.

Norman Shaw



Teachers enjoying refreshment after Mass.



Pics Jane Shaw

News from St. Martin's School

The Foundation Stage Area

Mrs Corinne Hackett, Class 1 teacher, writes:-

During the summer, the infant playground at St. Martin's Primary School was developed to include a specific area for Foundation Stage (Reception) children.

The idea was that the children were able to integrate with older children but also have an area which enabled them to feel safe and secure in their new environment.

A canopy was erected which allowed all-weather outdoor play and a new door was built on to Class One to enable direct access for the children. A new sand pit was placed under the canopy as well as plenty of room for such apparatus as water trays. A shed was also included to

provide ample child-friendly storage for the bikes, scooters and other play equipment. Finally, the area was fenced off with attractive pencil fencing.

The children are thoroughly enjoying this new addition to their playground and have spent lots of time exploring it. They take pride in their new area and are keen to keep it clean and tidy. They talk constantly about being allowed to go outside. The area is no longer just a playground but a real extension to the classroom. With the requirements of the Foundation Curriculum the area has provided vital resources to enable us to deliver diverse, interactive and fun outdoor lessons.

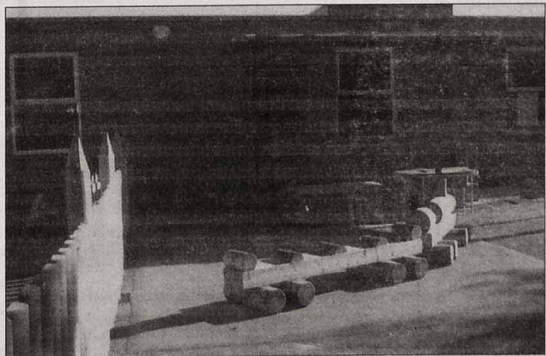
Appeal for Clerk to the Governors

St Martin's needs a Clerk to the Board of Governors.

If you can take notes (not necessarily in shorthand) and can attend about five evening meetings during the school year, would you consider this post? Apart from taking minutes at the meetings the main duties would be to write up and send out copies of the minutes after the meetings and to send agendas when the next meeting is due. You would also receive information from Reading to pass on to the Governors.

It would be an interesting situation and your efforts would be greatly appreciated. All expenses would be covered, of course.

If you are able to help, please contact Mrs Hogg, Acting Headteacher, on 0118 901 5544, who will give you further information.



Pic Jane Shaw

The new Foundation Stage area showing canopy, sand trays and wooden train

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BYSTANDER

What does Your garden grow?

*Mary, Mary, quite unwary
What did your garden grow?
She sold some land for sixty grand
And now sees houses, all in a row.*

This parody of the well-known nursery rhyme highlights a modern dilemma that is becoming increasingly evident in Caversham. More and more planning applications are being made to the Council that involve development in one or more back gardens. A common situation is that it becomes known that a house in a row of terraced houses, or in a string of detached or semi-detached properties, either has been, or is likely to be, put on the market. If it happens that these properties have good sized rear gardens, developers are attracted like wasps to a honey pot and should the property in question, if demolished, afford the only entrance to a possible rear garden site, the potential selling price of the house and garden together with parts of neighbouring gardens are greatly enhanced.

This ushers in a dilemma! The developer makes tempting offers for sufficient garden areas that would make development a financially viable project for them, while leaving neighbours with the agony of deciding whether or not to sell in the light of their circumstances. Comparing the several factors involved in deciding which is the best course of action for an individual householder to take is not easy.

Factors such as the loss of a cherished garden, the intrusion of new houses being built in close proximity, the loss of a pleasant view and the effect of a development on woodland and wildlife have to be considered. On the other side of the coin, a typical offer for the purchase of a reasonably sized local garden area could amount to several tens of thousands of pounds. This substantial financial return could significantly help to reduce a mortgage commitment or (especially for the older generation) bring greater financial security and perhaps obviate the need for recourse to an equity release scheme.

For those thinking of selling part of their garden, one or two points that might be overlooked need consideration. The offer price represents both the cost of the land and some compensation for the subsequent reduction in the market value of the property, while the cash offer may be paid in stages, the final payment being made only when the last dwelling in the development has been sold. Also, once the sale agreement has been made, the seller cannot object to the type of dwelling or the density of the properties in the development.

Local Residents' Associations are concerned at the rapid growth of this type of development as they feel it is important that the character of Caversham is not jeopardised by the implementation of some of these schemes. All these Associations would welcome new members who might wish to support their aims.

The Village

One often has the impression that the shopping centres of many towns look very similar. A walk along the High Street or through the shopping malls reveals the presence of the same retail outlets with very few individual shops to relieve the monotony. This situation is now referred to as 'Clone Towns' and according to recent reports, Reading comes high on the list of being very much a clone.

But is Caversham a clone? At first glance, it may appear to be, but move away from Waitrose and it soon becomes apparent that this is not the case. Among the variety of shops and businesses, only two types seem to dominate; estate agents (of which there are eleven) and restaurants of which there are several small ones and two large pub restaurants. In Caversham, we have, among others, Greek, Italian, Spanish, Indian, Chinese and Thai restaurants, a bakery and tea shop, a sandwich bar and four take-aways.

Most of the other essentials are covered. We have dentists, opticians, a foot clinic and two doctors' surgeries, hairdressers, shoe shops, a pet shop, a hardware shop, florists and many other useful shops. Sadly, we do miss Nicksons, the country shop and the excellent Caversham bookshop.

Can we say that Caversham is an attractive place? We have to admit that it is like the curate's egg - good in parts! The public library, now that it has been cleaned, looks splendid and the paving, railings and shrubs surrounding it do it justice. We also have the very fine magnolia tree with its beautiful large creamy flowers in Priory Avenue and the lovely Scholar Tree near the library bus stop, with its delightful pale green leaves in spring followed by yellow flowers in August.

Unfortunately, other parts of Caversham do not have the same appeal. By Caversham Bridge on a sensitive site overlooking the river, is the unsightly and dilapidated empty casino restaurant. This building gives a poor impression to those approaching Caversham from Reading and it has spoiled an otherwise pleasant view for years. Can nothing be done to improve this situation?

The corner where Church Road meets Church Street is a potentially attractive place, as the old cottages there with their little dormer windows and uneven tiled roofs are reminders of the reason why people who have lived in Caversham for a good length of time call it 'The Village'. The

little new trees planted in front of them with their tasteful protective railings look well, but the whole effect is spoilt by the planters with their untidy and neglected shrubs, the two mysterious ugly grey boxes and the black railings at the edge of the pavement. Do we need all these railings to prevent us from perishing amongst the traffic?

Finally

We were sorry to learn of the recent death of May Leach who for a very long time was an active committee member of the Caversham and District Residents' Association.

Throughout her membership of the Association, she made significant contributions to the work of the Association and we are grateful that she and many others willingly give up their time in helping to maintain the quality of life that Caversham affords.

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'Life in Old Caversham' revised

For over 30 years Mary Kift has delighted readers of the Bridge with her stories of old Caversham and she has spent many hours visiting and interviewing local residents to collect material and record their earliest memories. Canon John Grimwade, then the Rector of Caversham and founder of this newspaper, had an instinct for finding the right person for the right job! In 1977 he decided that Mary was the obvious choice to be in charge of a committee to prepare an exhibition on the history of Caversham to be part of a Grand Festival to celebrate the centenary of the renovation of the church of St Peter's which was due to take place in the following year.

'You ought to write a book'

The exhibition, held in Church House, was a huge success. It was visited by 4,000 people over four days and then kept open for another day so that children from local schools could attend. Mary remembers what hard work it was, but the outcome was that more and more people were saying to her 'You ought to write a book'. Modestly she declines to describe herself as a historian but thankfully for the rest of us she realised that now she had enough material from her local interviews and the research she had already done. So she embarked on the project and 'Life in Old Caversham' was published in 1980, illustrated by photographs generously lent or given. Incidentally there is a Mary Kift collection of photographs archived in the Berkshire Record Office.

Early History

As well as talking to local residents, Mary researched the earlier history of Caversham and discovered much of interest to add to her book. She was intrigued to find that the Regent for Henry III died in his manor at Caversham. There were many royal visitors to Caversham including Catherine of Aragon, Elizabeth I and Charles I. A day of fighting took place during the Civil War. Many fine buildings with historical connections have existed in Caversham over the years, some now converted to modern use, others lost forever. All these and many more fascinating events are chronicled in Mary's book as well as delightful anecdotes of more recent times. As she says in her foreword, she has discovered the truth of the words of William Wing, a Caversham architect and amateur local historian: 'Caversham is far from being without a history'.

3000 copies sold

By great good fortune in 1979 Lindsay and John Mullaney had opened Caversham Bookshop in Prospect Street. They marketed Mary's book and it was received with great interest, for no-one else had produced a history of Caversham in such an accessible form. Soon the first 2,000 copies printed had been sold and a reprint of a further thousand ordered and again soon sold.

Same family for over 100 years

Mary herself remembers coming to live in Caversham in 1924 at the age of 3, accompanied by her parents and brother Peter.



Mary Kift when young.

The house she lives in was bought new by her grandparents in 1903 and has been lived in by the family ever since. Her grandmother's best friend bought the house next door and Mary remembers when that lady came to tea she carefully took out a clean handkerchief from her bag and spread it on the table next to her plate. The children watched, mesmerised, as she then removed her false teeth from her mouth, placed them on the hanky and proceeded to tuck into the spread before her!

A Happy Childhood

Mary has fond memories of her childhood: picnics, parties, being given rides by the gardener in a wheelbarrow up and down the unmade road, flying kites in Chazey Road fields now covered by housing, kind neighbours and happy schooldays. She attended St Peter's Hill School (where Scholars Close is now situated), and recalls story-time sitting under a large and beautiful cherry tree. She always made sure to sit on the edge of the group where she could surreptitiously sample the delicious fruits.

Happy Days Teaching

After attending the Abbey School Mary returned to St Peter's Hill School to teach. Then World War II came and she joined the Land Army where she was billeted with a lady who lived in the Lambourn countryside. There she bathed in an old-fashioned hip bath or, in warm weather, in the icy waters of the Lambourn, a chalk stream which flowed at the bottom of the garden.

She returned to teaching after the war and then studied for two years at the Froebel Institute in London to become qualified. She taught in Checkendon and Wallingford and in 1960 was delighted to be appointed head teacher of the school in the village of Mapledurham, despite the fact that the schoolhouse lacked any modern conveniences! Here she was able to put into practice all her theories of education. It was a very rewarding and happy time, and there are pupils who still keep in touch with her nearly half a century later.

Revising the Book

Owing to family commitments Mary retired from teaching in 1969 and this was when she was able to spend more time on her interest in local history and her writing, as well as her hobbies of gardening, bird-watching, painting and archaeology, and her work for the church. Mary has always been very active but last year she began to feel that she'd like to 'start winding down a bit'. However, her niece Catherine persuaded her that it was time for a reprint of 'Life in Old Caversham' so that those who have come to the area during the past twenty years would have the opportunity to share an awareness of the history of the place. Catherine and Mary have been working since January last year, making additions and amendments and putting in more photographs.

A Great Christmas Gift

The great news is that the revised edition is being printed and should be available in time for Christmas. Sadly, Caversham Bookshop is now closed but Bangles in Prospect Street, an excellent place to search for handmade and unusual gifts, will, hopefully, be selling copies very soon.

Mary's articles still appear occasionally in the *Caversham Bridge* and continue to generate a lot of interest among readers. So many changes have taken place in everyday life that stories of what happened in days gone by are a source of fascination. That is why history programmes are so popular on TV, why museums run such interesting history projects and why you might like to buy Mary's book 'Life in Old Caversham'.



Mary Kift.



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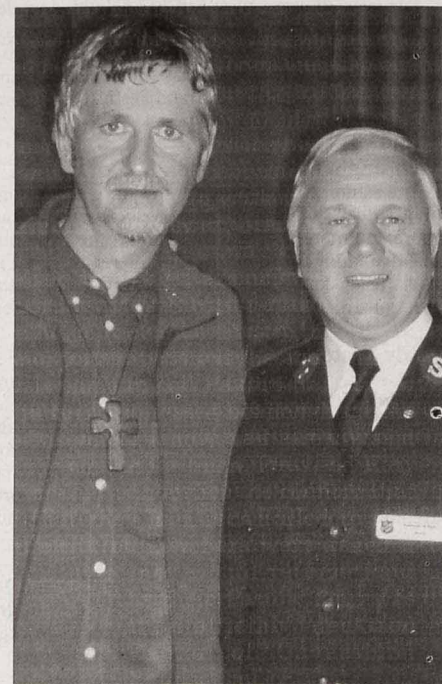
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John Bell leads the Big Sing

Many people from Caversham and Emmer Green were among the vast number that filled Greyfriars Church to overflowing on a Sunday in mid-September for an evening led by the Revd John Bell, the Church of Scotland Minister who is music director of the Iona Community and one of two resource workers of the community's semi-autonomous project, The Wild Goose Resource Group. This Group exists to enable and equip congregations and clergy in the shaping and creation of new forms of relevant, participative worship.

Writing about John Bell, GIA Publications Chicago, one of the publishers of his music and songs, sums up his ability as being able to transform a disparate gathering of people and shape them into one body, one voice, one song. It is John Bell's belief that everyone has the capacity to sing, a fact that he proved over more than one and a half hours when he got the congregation to sing a range of hymns and chants in four or more parts. This tour de force of musicology he achieved merely by the unaccompanied use of his own voice, indicating the course of the music with his hands. Only once did he use the keyboard.

It was a remarkable evening that followed another evening two days earlier specifically designed for choirs. John Bell came to Reading through the good offices of the Revd Dr Sheppey of Abbey Baptist Church in events organised by Churches Together in Reading. All of the retiring collection, of around £1,300, received on the Greyfriars evening has been donated to the work of the Churches in Reading Drop-in-Centre, which is most grateful for the support.



The Revd John Bell in Greyfriars Church with Major Samuel Edgar, Chairman of Churches Together in Reading.

News from Our Lady and St Anne's Parish

Archbishop Nichols' Visitation to the South Oxfordshire Deanery

On the 15th September, about 200 members of the South Oxfordshire Deanery in the Archdiocese of Birmingham met for the inaugural meeting for the Visitation of Archbishop Vincent Nichols to the deanery. Clergy and parishioners from the seven parishes which make up the deanery attended the meeting, which took place in the chapel of the Oratory School at Woodcote. During the months before this meeting, each parish had prepared a booklet or Parish Profile which detailed the life of each parish and these were available at the meeting.

The evening started with vespers which all joined in, and then the Chaplain of the Oratory School, Fr Anthony Conlon, spoke a few words of welcome. He mentioned that the Oratory was founded by Cardinal John Newman with the aim of educating young men to be good Christians and also to be leaders in the world about them.

Father Tony Jones, in his capacity as Dean, welcomed the Archbishop, his auxiliary Bishop, Philip Pargeter, and all those who had come to the meeting. He then introduced the representatives of each parish in turn to give a five-minute presentation of their own parish. These were widely different in form but each was designed to give the Archbishop an overview of the strengths and even the weaknesses of each parish and to express some of the problems that the Archbishop might be able to address.

The Archbishop listened attentively to all that was said and took notes as the evening progressed.

He then spoke to the meeting. Firstly, he thanked all the representatives for their presentations, saying that all showed the work of God behind them, and then he went on to talk about the philosophy behind the visitation. He had a duty to ensure that every Catholic had the attention of a priest known to them but there soon might not be

enough priests for a resident priest everywhere. He was glad to hear that there was attention to the needs of the sick and that the needs of the church abroad also featured in many parish profiles.

This was the seventeenth of nineteen deaneries that the Archbishop was visiting and he hoped that at the end he would be able to help strengthen each parish and encourage cooperation in sharing problems on both a local and an Archdiocesan level.

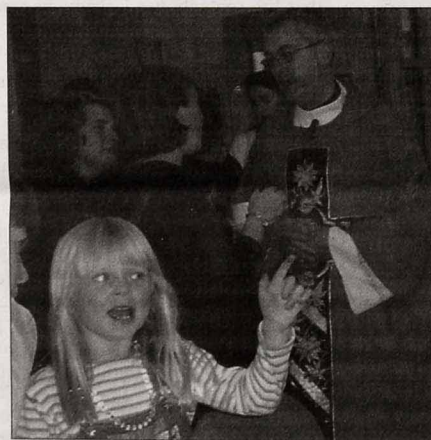
Canon Tom Farrell, the Episcopal Vicar, visited Our Lady and St Anne's Parish over the first weekend of October. He celebrated and preached at all three Masses and met parishioners after each service. On Saturday afternoon, he met members of the parish teams, groups and organisations. On Sunday, he went to visit some of the sick and housebound of the parish and had tea in the Visitation convent.

At Mass, Canon Farrell spoke about the visitation, saying that he did not see it as an Ecclesiastical Ofsted, consisting of interviews and inspection of books, but rather as a chance to meet the people and encourage their sense of communion within the parish and between parishes. If there is change for the better to be made in the parish then it must start with individuals looking at themselves and changing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

He thanked all who had in any way helped to make the parish what it was, identifying many of the groups by name, and specially mentioned the way in which

Father Tony and parishioners had welcomed him over the weekend.

It will be interesting to see how the outcome of this series of visits will shape the life of the Archdiocese in the years to come.



Pic: Jane Shaw

Canon Tom Farrell with parishioners after Mass.

Jane Shaw

CAVERSHAM BAPTIST CHURCH

The Induction Service of Paul Rhodes - 18th September 2004

The day finally arrived when we formally welcomed Paul, Katy, Sally and David Rhodes into the fellowship at Caversham Baptist Church. Paul Rhodes was inducted as pastor of Caversham Baptist on Saturday 18th September. The church was packed with well-wishers from Paul's sending church (Cairns Road Baptist Church, Bristol), local Christian organisations and churches, and Caversham Baptist members and friends.

Jeremy Hopkins, who had been our moderator during the interregnum, opened the service with a welcome and prayers. Paul's good friend Nicholas Taylor read a passage from Mark chapter 1. The Worship Group was in good form and led us in a number of powerful worship songs.

In his sermon Mike Pears, the pastor at Cairns Road, congratulated us on grabbing Paul and Katy. It was with real sincerity that Cairns Road members commended Paul and Katy to us. Mike reminded us that not only was today a day of celebration, with typically Baptist sandwiches and quiche after, but also a challenging day to take courageous steps forward, to be outward looking and know more about the world, while seeking God's presence in our midst. Mike hoped that Paul's enthusiasm for this would be contagious. Mike encouraged Paul and Katy to say "the call on us is not to run the church but

to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and all the other stuff will be added to us", for as we push out for God, God will push in for us. He asked the church members to encourage Paul to make the church relevant for this generation. Lastly Mike told us that Paul and Katy are not the answer for the church, they have come to work with us and help us experience the answer, Jesus. Ministry belongs to all.

Rev. Dr. Rodger Standing, Regional Minister for the Southern Counties Baptist Association, performed the Act of Induction. Firstly the church was given the opportunity to tell the story of how we unanimously came to call Paul to be our new pastor. Paul, in turn, expressed his delight at the invitation, as his whole family had already said that this was the church for them. Paul and Katy were asked a number of questions to confirm that they did feel that they had been called to this church and the church members were asked if

they would receive Paul as their Pastor. Paul was then officially declared Pastor of Caversham Baptist Church.

After the service a wonderful spread was laid out for all (without a quiche in sight!). As there were so many people, instructions were given as to which serving table to go to. Paul announced that he would not be following these instructions. So watch out, we have a rebel in our midst and, worse, a Man United supporter.

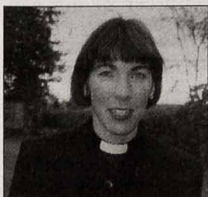


From left to right are: Norman Ide (Church secretary), Nicholas Taylor, Katy Rhodes, Paul Rhodes, Mike Pears (Pastor of Cairns Road), Stuart Mathers (Caversham Baptist's Youth worker), Jeremy Hopkins, Rev Dr Rodger Standing (Regional Minister - Southern Counties Baptist Association).

Preferment for Former Caversham Clergy

On behalf of its readers *Caversham Bridge* congratulates two former curates in Caversham on recent appointments to senior positions. The Revd Jo Loveridge, who was curate at St John's between 1997 and 1998, has been appointed as Area Dean of the Bradford Deanery, the first woman Area Dean in Berkshire. Jo Loveridge is Vicar of St Mary's Burghfield. Canon Christine Allsop, who was curate at St Peter's and St Margaret's between 1989 and 1994 and who is currently Team Rector of the Bourne Valley and Rural Dean of Alderbury in the Salisbury Diocese, has been appointed as Archdeacon of Northampton in the Peterborough Diocese.

The picture of the Revd Jo Loveridge was taken just prior to her appointment at St John's. Canon Christine Allsop was photographed in Reading earlier this year at a service at the Minster Church of St Mary to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the ordination of women to the priesthood in the Church of England.



ST PETER'S CHOIR

St Peter's Choir is having a busy couple of months. On Saturday 16th October they joined forces with the choir of St John, Mortimer to sing Choral Evensong at Portsmouth Cathedral. They are now preparing for two forthcoming events, in addition to their normal routine of services, before the build up to Advent and Christmas.

On Sunday 7th November at 6.30pm they are presenting a Choral service of music, readings and

prayers for the period of All Souls and Remembrance. This is to include Purcell's 'Funeral Music for Queen Mary' complete with instrumentalists.

On Saturday 13th November at 7.30pm they are presenting a concert of sacred and secular music along with the Henley Wind Ensemble. Tickets available from Parish Office, Church House, 59 Church Street (947 1703) or Ian Westley (966 1087).

GOSBROOK ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

So a new Methodist year has begun. We have a new minister, and we hope and pray that the Revd Dermot Thornberry and his wife Charlene will be happy with us.

All the weekly activities have sprung into action. The Boys Brigade, who meet on a Tuesday evening, would always be delighted to welcome new boys. The Crawshay Playgroup is going well and has a few vacancies. The Toddler group is overwhelmed with little ones. Coffee Companions on Wednesdays from 10am to 12 noon is always a good time of fellowship. The Women's Fellowship has been busy planting bulbs to sell at the Christmas Fair and collecting items to go in the shoe boxes for 'Operation Christmas Child'. The Churches Together in Caversham Youth and Family Initiative team are working hard and are always on hand for young people and parents alike. There is also a slimming club and yoga evening taking place, plus, of course, Cadence Cadet Band. Please call in for details of any of these activities.

Fund raising events are planned for the next few months. The first is a Grand Fashion Show on November 12th at 7.30pm; tickets priced £3 are available from Eunice Cooper on Reading 947 8607. Our Christmas Fair will be on Saturday December 4th from 12noon to 3pm. Come and join us for bargain gifts and very good refreshments.

Our thanks go to Mary Prior for arranging a coffee evening at her home; £245 was raised with £100 going to CTCYFI and £145 to the church development fund.

AROUND THE CHURCHES

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SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2004

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GOSBROOK ROAD METHODIST CHURCH

Saturday December 4th

CHRISTMAS FAIR

From 12 noon to 3pm

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Tombola, Books, Raffle, Games, Light Lunches

CAVERSHAM HEIGHTS METHODIST CHURCH

Saturday 4th December

CHRISTMAS FAIR

11am-2pm

In aid of Chiltern Centre for
Disabled Children

ST JOHN'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS FAIR

SATURDAY 20TH NOVEMBER

From 2pm

In Caversham Hall, St John's Road, Caversham

Stalls include decorations, 'Carol's Cakes',
Preserves, Books, Videos, Raffle.

OTHER FORTHCOMING EVENTS

GOSPEL CONCERT

Tuesday 16th November
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New Testament Church of God
Doors open 7.30pm

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MEXICO

by Ellen Wilson

Young Leader 2nd Caversham Park Brownies

I was invited to go to Mexico with Berkshire Guides this summer following an international selection process I took part in a couple of years ago. Chris Francis, the guider organising the trip, visited Mexico in 1997 and was keen to return with a new group of girls. We came from all over Berkshire

Caversham, Finchampstead, Thatcham, Woodley – and we also took a girl from Bucks and one from Bedford. Overall, eleven girls (Guides, Rangers and Young Leaders) and twelve Guiders went.

Our trip split into two very distinct parts: the time we spent in Mexico City at the beginning and end of our trip and the time spent at Our Cabana, the World Guide Centre. The few days we spent at Ticalli, a Mexican Guide hostel in the centre of Mexico City, were an opportunity for the travel group to get to know each other and experience the capital city. This included visits to the cathedral, the national palace, the shrine of the Virgin of Guadalupe and to the sun and moon pyramids in Teotihuacan. These Aztec ruins were especially impressive and we were able to climb both pyramids. Whilst we were in Mexico City we also ate out many times, sampling Mexican food.

However, the main point of our trip was to attend a friendship session at the World Guide Centre in Cuernavaca, a city two hours drive south from Mexico City. Our Cabana was opened in July 1957 and since then has welcomed over 65,000 Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from all over the world. Our session was the seventh and busiest this summer with ninety participants including groups from Japan, Colorado, California, Buffalo, Quebec, Newfoundland and elsewhere in Canada.

The sessions are designed to encourage international friendship and team building and are therefore a mixture of service, education and fun. All the activities brought us closer to each other, be it demonstrating traditions from our own country, the many trips to nearby towns and historic sites, mad games in the evening or a campfire. One of the most special moments of the whole trip was a peace ceremony held one evening in the garden of Our Cabana. The word 'peace' in many languages was written on a mural, together with all our handprints

and our countries' flags. It was incredible to think that representatives of places all over the world were gathered together in one place for one common cause.

This feeling was again highlighted in our service project. Mexico has the worst distribution of wealth in the world: the richest 10% of its population use 38.7% of the nation's GNP whilst the poorest 10% use only 1.52%. Many rich people live near Our Cabana and yet in downtown Cuernavaca there are hundreds living under bridges earning a pittance selling things in the street. VAMOS is a charity that works to

help these people in and around Cuernavaca and at present has 81 projects running. For one day in each session, VAMOS brings the poorest, most disadvantaged children into Our Cabana for a day of activities and fun.

In the morning the children, aged 3-14, moved around different stations doing different activities. Our travel group had brought crafts such as making masks and friendship bracelets and dyeing bandanas. After a big picnic lunch together, the afternoon was devoted to free play, whether that was more craft, a football match or parachute games with the little ones. It was an often difficult but rewarding experience and we were very sad to see the children go at the end of the day!

Mexico is an amazing country. It is, in some respects, totally what you'd expect, especially in the busy centre of Mexico City – the noise, the traffic, the bustling markets, the beggars outside the shrine, the countless numbers of people in the street selling everything from hand-woven bracelets to chunks of melon and mango to packs of chewing gum. However, it is also the most interesting, surprising and enjoyable place I've been to. Passing the miles and miles of shanty towns on the outskirts of Mexico City was heart-breaking but the time I spent at Our Cabana with the children and with the Guides from across the world was fantastic and I was sad to say goodbye to all the friends I made. I am very grateful to everyone who supported me in my fund-raising and preparation for this trip and I hope to return to Our Cabana as a volunteer in my gap year.

OBITUARY MAY LEACH 1908 – 2004

May Leach was a familiar figure around Caversham. Few people have lived long enough to remember a time when May was not to be seen for she had lived in Hemdean Hill for many years, only spending the last few years of her long life at Summerfield in Kidmore Road, where she settled very happily. She had been a widow ever since the premature death of her beloved husband Frank.

She occasionally said she felt lonely, but usually, rather than bemoan her lot, she was out and about and doing. She belonged to many organisations, notably Caversham and District Residents' Association, where she proved to be a useful committee member. This was particularly because she was out and about when most people were elsewhere at work, and could see what was

going on, and anyone who tried to get away with putting notices on lamp posts to advertise such things as new housing developments needed to beware her sharp eyes.

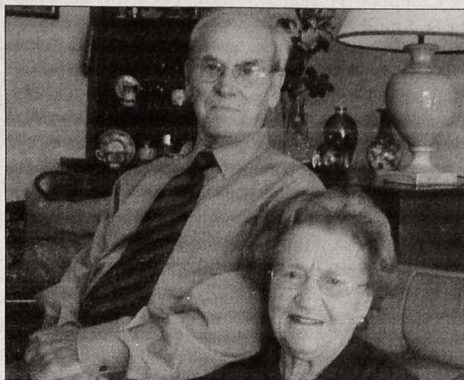
In her youth, when women did this far more often, May rode a motor bike and moreover rode it fast. She was also a demon on the tennis court.

Although she had few relations, the crematorium was full for her funeral. It was unfortunate that St Peter's Church, where she was a regular worshipper, was unavailable, as interior building was going on there. Canon Richard Kingsbury paid tribute to her and afterwards the congregation adjourned to the Travellers' Rest for refreshments and reminiscences of May. She had lived a good life and is already missed.

M. C.

Emmer Green couple celebrate their Diamond Wedding Anniversary

We congratulate Roy and Edna Barnes on their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Married on 30 September 1944 at St Bartholomew's Church, this Reading couple's romance started in pre-Second World War days while commuting as young civil servants to London on the Great Western Railway. They have lived in Courtenay Drive since 1951, longer than any other resident in the road, and have been members of St Barnabas' Church for over 50 years, which is among the longest associations with the Church. Roy spent his war years in the Fleet Air Arm rising through the ranks from Ordinary Telegraphist to a Lieutenant and, like so many at that time, married in uniform. While Roy was serving in the Royal Navy Edna continued working in the Civil Service; after her office in London was destroyed by bombing she served in the Regional Commissioner's Office in Reading.



Roy and Edna Barnes were photographed a few days after their anniversary.

Both are well known locally through their involvement in St Barnabas' Church and the community. For 35 years Edna was involved with, and subsequently responsible for, the flower arrangements at St Barnabas' Church, through which her talents have brought joy at many weddings. Her love of flowers is depicted in her

excellent artwork; she continues to attend the art classes at the Adult Education Centre in Caversham. Edna has also had a major role with the soft furnishings within the St Barnabas' Church, including kneelers, curtains and altar cloths. She also has a long association with the Townswomen's Guild.

In addition to Roy's church involvement, which includes 35 years as a Sidesman, serving on the Caversham Parochial Church Council when the area was all within one parish, a period as Church Treasurer at St Barnabas' and the Christian Aid representative for Emmer Green, he has been a Troop Scout Leader and Quartermaster for the 89th Reading Scouts. Latterly, until retirement, Roy worked for the Post Office at their Headquarters in London.

In these days when marriages often fail the Barnes attribute their enduring relationship to a "pretty good working partnership". They also have a strong family association with a married son, Graham, and a daughter, Jill, who live within easy travelling distance, and two grown-up grandsons. Edna and Roy are good role models for the community and we wish them many more happy years together.

POST BAG

Hall for Highdown

Dear Editors,

It was good to read the letter from Trevor Keable on the thorny question of the sale of Highdown School playing fields. However, he still doesn't answer the question 'Why is the school so short of cash at this point in time, that they need even to consider selling playing fields?' The Government has been in power for seven years, and continually reports on the extra money (our money) it has spent on education. So what has happened to it? Why, in 2004, do the governors calmly propose selling off school land – the property of the community – with all the attendant negative effects on the community, rather than explain to us why the School hasn't received any benefit from the expansion of the Education Budget over the past seven years? This is not a minor matter to be settled under any other business at a Governors' meeting, but is a major local issue with extensive implications. It seems that the community is being taken for granted.

William Deller

Thanks

Dear Editors,

I should like through your columns to thank all those who sent their good wishes and offered prayers for my recovery after my accident back in the summer. I am now much better, thanks no doubt to the lovely box of chocolates sent to me by the Residents' Association.

Molly Casey
Former Watchdog

Forthcoming Events in and around Caversham

The Caversham Theatre are presenting 'Anyone for Breakfast', a farce by Derek Benfield over three nights from Thursday 11th to Saturday 13th November at St Anne's Hall, Washington Road, Caversham. The performances start at 7.30pm and tickets are available from Waltons the Jewellers in Prospect Street, or by phoning 0118 947 7372.

The Langtree Sinfonia are holding their autumn concert on Saturday 27th November at Christ Church, Reading Road, Henley, starting at 7.00pm. The programme includes Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture (op 26), Mozart's Concerto for flute in G (K313) with soloist Jay Wilkinson and ends with Haydn's 'Drumroll' Symphony (No 103 in E flat). The conductor is Paul Cox. Tickets cost £7 (children under 16, £3.50) and can be obtained at the door, from 'Inspiration', 1 The Arcade, Goring or by phoning 0118 941 5498.

There is a Traidcraft Sale on Friday 12th November from 9.00am to 9.00pm and on Saturday 13th November from 10.00am to 1.00pm at 97 Southview Avenue Caversham. This sale gives you the opportunity to shop at leisure for gifts, jewellery, cards, wrapping paper and fairly-traded foods and chocolate. Further information can be obtained from Pam and Phil Chatfield on 0118 947 2444.

An Oxfam Fashion Show is taking place on Saturday 23rd November at 7.30pm at Church House, 59 Church Street, Caversham. Tickets at £5 (to include refreshments) are available from Oxfam, Prospect Street. The proceeds of the show will go towards the Oxfam Sudan Appeal.

Caversham Charity Folk Festival is holding its Second Winter Warmer from Wednesday 17th November to Monday 22nd November in and around Caversham and Reading. The Festival includes Folk, Blues, Skiffle. Irish and Bluegrass. For times and venues visit the festival website at www.ccff.org.uk or contact Mike Tierne on 0118 975 1016 or tierne.mike@btopenworld.com

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Scops Owl

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Blackbirds, Song Thrush, Wood Pigeons, Robins, Pheasants and Red-legged Partridge may be seen in tree bordered fields. Look aloft for Red Kite, soaring Sparrowhawk or hovering Kestrel. All these species may be found in Caversham or adjacent - a sound start for any check list.

Size, shape, call and flight are important guides to identity. Sometimes a small, unidentified bird will fly quickly into a nearby bush. Go for Dunnock, Robin or Wren. Experience will gradually confirm.

One day a rarity may arrive. Caversham's claim to fame - still discussed - was a successful breeding pair of uncommon, Red-backed Shrike alongside Kidmore Road. Twitchers came from near and far. The species has since become a very rare visitor, proving the ornithological importance of older as well as current records.

The singing Golden Oriole in Clayfield Copse will no doubt have been seen by some sages as NOT strictly being in Caversham. True - but missing the point! The magnificently coloured, onomatopaeic male rarity - on our own doorstep - was conveying its own sad story. "HOW?" because this migrant's Black Poplar Plantation,

BIRD-WATCHING FOR ALL

one of the very FEW breeding sites in Britain, has been decimated! A singular songster, "Said it all!" With conservation so vital for ALL wildlife, the Oriole's significance was painfully obvious.

Mr Lee Evans, organiser of Britain's "Four-hundred Club" had travelled far to confirm this record. Mrs Baily, ex Editor of the "Bridge", also witnessed a male Golden Oriole flying eastwards, across her windscreen, near Mapledurham. Lee was very pleased to accept THAT record too.

Bird sightings become ever more important as species decline.

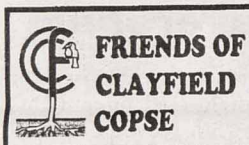
When learning ANY subject, are we not blessed with essentially sound knowledge?

The Science of Ornithology is no exception. Efforts to provide interesting guides, experience and information for ALL readers have always been included herein.

A very rare Great Knot, a bulky wader, length 24-27cms, arrived on the Wyre estuary, Lancashire, only the third in Britain. Unbelievably the species migrates from Siberia to Australia, via the Pacific coastline.

This one appeared lost, probably migrating along the Atlantic coast each year. It stayed for only eighty minutes during which time it was "Digiscoped", televised, placed on Internet and viewed by some thirty twitchers. It then flew South-westwards.

Scops Owl



Red Kites and Friends at Clayfield Copse

The Friends held their AGM at St Barnabas' Hall, Emmer Green on Tuesday 28 September. A review was given of the work carried out in the last year, which included improving footpaths and bridleways, putting native pond plants in the ditch alongside the car park and wild flowers in the adjoining grass patch, beginning clearance of an invasive garden escape plant from the Marchwood entrance, [this will take years!] coppicing a hazel area, building dead hedging around the bluebell woods and general maintenance of bramble clearance etc.

Acknowledgement and thanks were given to the volunteers (Friends of Clayfield Copse, Berkshire Conservation Volunteers, Conserve Reading on a

Wednesday and Green Gym) who carry out the work and to RBC for their support.

Next year The Friends are planning a third Woodlands Day in June, and are looking for volunteers.

Meanwhile the work continues on the first Sunday of the month when we meet at 10am in the car park.

The formal meeting over, David Lovegrove of Red Kites in the Chilterns Society gave an informative talk with beautiful slides. Over 70 people attended the meeting and were rewarded by the uplifting story of the Red Kite, its history, lifestyle and hopefully now, assured future.

JO

GOOD NEIGHBOURS

John Frew, District Secretary of the Mission in Business, Industry and Commerce committee of the Southampton District of the Methodist Church writes:

I expect most, if not all, readers are aware of the amount of stress that so many people now experience at work. Indeed, younger readers still at work may have had personal experience of it. The Health and Safety Executive have been checking its extent since the late nineties and in their 2001/2 survey reported that over half a million workers had experienced it. There were 7500 new cases each year and over 13 million workdays were lost in a year. The latest figures can be found on their website www.hse.gov.uk/statistics/causdis/stress.htm

It is known that this stress aggravates, if not causes, marital and other domestic problems. There is a saying that a problem shared is a problem halved, and although this may not be mathematically accurate, there is much evidence that it is considerably valued. So, "listening ears" are important - indeed, they are the prime function of chaplains in workplaces. I would like to invite all readers to be 'good neighbours' and tell those of their friends and neighbours who suffer stress in their workplaces of the existence of these chaplains.

They offer a confidential, independent, sympathetic and understanding 'listening ear'. Workplace chaplains are available to everyone in the workplace from cleaner to chief executive, and also offer pastoral care if needed. They aim to attend at the same time on the same day, each week or fortnight, so that people wishing to talk will know when to expect them. Should anyone have doubts about talking to a chaplain, he or she will abide by an agreement made with both the CBI and the TUC that these chaplains will not seek to evangelise anyone. There are some 400 in the UK and they are much valued in all the workplaces they are invited to visit.

If you or anyone you know would like more information about the benefits of having a chaplain or, indeed, would like me to organise one in a workplace, I can be contacted on 0118 947 2140 or by email on john.frew@virgin.net I'll be happy to deal with enquiries from anywhere in the UK - those from outside the Methodist Southampton District, where my responsibilities are, will be passed on to the appropriate chaplain.

the CLUBS

Caversham Community Association

September is traditionally associated with harvest time so, after the informal games evening, the month continued with a harvest theme bingo session. The following week was arts and crafts evening with entries and the winners were:

Flower arranging: Margaret Briggs and Wendy Colton.

Cookery: Ruby Morgan, Betty Colton, June Goddard.

Photography: Margaret Briggs, Betty Petherbridge, Wendy Colton; Betty Petherbridge won the Ted Howard Cup for best photo.

Knitting: Wendy Colton, Joyce Roddy.

Miscellaneous: Brenda Strong.

The month ended with a harvest supper which followed the usual pattern with readings, hymns, a delicious supper and an auction of produce. The proceeds will help the club funds.

Caversham Women's Institute

Members were welcomed back in September, following the Summer break and were immediately swept off to America. The speaker, Mr Goodman, showed slides and told the story of himself and his wife going on a trip to Colorado and Utah. We learned the story of the setting up of Salt Lake City and the spectacular scenery, canyons and mountains. Even more impressive was that Mrs Goodman did the navigating!

The President, Miss M Cameron, reported that the money raised at members' garden parties had been sent to the National Kidney Research Fund in memory of Muriel Cardle. Reminders of the Autumn Fair on November 6th were given and the competition – an American Souvenir – was judged with Miss Cameron being the winner.

Caversham Ladies Club

The Chairman, Mrs Brenda Strong, welcomed all to the September meeting and thanked everyone for contributions brought for the Harvest Sale. Pat Cox was crowned Harvest Queen and two members received Birthday cards.

This was followed by a very entertaining illustrated talk by Mr Philip Staines entitled Mediterranean Medley. This was part one of a cruise that he and his wife had enjoyed on the Saga Rose and many of the slides showed us the delights enjoyed on a cruise ship. First port of call was Lisbon, followed by Tangiers and Rome, all places with interesting histories. Mr Staines is returning in December to talk about part two of the cruise.

After a cup of tea, the meeting finished with an auction of the Harvest produce which raised £13.

Emmer Green Townswomen's Guild

With no formal meeting to attend in August, members enjoyed a convivial afternoon at the Annual Garden Party. Once again Mr and Mrs Davies opened their beautiful garden in Emmer Green to members and non members alike. Games, quizzes, stalls and refreshments, plus sunshine, made it a memorable occasion and the Guild was grateful for their generosity.

The September meeting opened on a sad note with the announcement of the death of Vera Graham. A one minute silence paid tribute to the long time member whose funeral had been attended by numerous friends. The Guild had sent a cheque to Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Formal business was swiftly dealt with, including Federation information and notification of booking for events in the new year.

Specialist groups reports focused on forthcoming meetings and programme planning, including the Guild Party on 12th October.

A collector of postcards and cigarette cards for 20 years, Mr Brian Eighteen brought exhibits mostly from the early years of the 20th Century. Large display boards enabled members to inspect subjects in detail, following Mr Eighteen's original comments. Photographs of early Reading were followed by trade cards such as Sutton's Seeds and Huntley & Palmers. History gave us military regiments, country seats and Arms, counties and their industries, and World Products in 1908. Some sets of cards dated from the end of the 19th Century.

Many questions arose until time ran out and Mrs Ida Moore gave the Vote of Thanks.

St Peter's Wives' Group

We had a most interesting September meeting when Mr Adrian Lawson, Reading Borough Council's Parks and Open Spaces Development Manager, gave an illustrated talk on his work and that of his department.

He told us about 150 footpaths in Reading, which are all maintained by his department, and his interest in biodiversity. This is being encouraged by the use of coppicing in woodland areas and by hay meadows, where many wild flowers are reappearing. We were amazed at the number of projects which have been carried out to reinstate footpaths, parks and wooded areas, with others still in the pipeline. A particularly heart-warming account was the restoration of the Wildlife Heritage Site at Edenham Crescent, Coley. Young offenders and probationers from Reading Remand Centre were used as the manpower for this project and they entered into it with enthusiasm and commitment. The work to clear and re-surface a footpath and thin out the surrounding woodland had been scheduled to take three months, but the young enthusiasts completed the work within a month; this included filling nine industrial skips with rubbish from the area. Whilst on the project, they learned new skills which enabled them to find permanent employment on returning to the community.

Other areas being improved are Waterloo Meadows and Lousehill Copse near Dee Park. Caversham Court is part of the long term Thames Parks Plan and View Island (previously Caversham Marina) is now well worth a visit. This had been a derelict site and huge amounts of rubbish, including 150 oil drums, had to be removed before work could begin to transform it into a wildlife haven. We were glad to hear that the towpath from Caversham Bridge to Scours Lane is due to be tarmaced shortly, mainly to improve access for wheelchair users, but the surface will be more comfortable for everyone. Mr Lawson's dedication and commitment to his work were obvious and our thanks go to him for making the evening most enjoyable and informative.

Our next meeting will be our AGM on Tuesday 16 November at Church House at 8.00pm. This will be followed by some readings from Julie Roberts.

New members always welcome.

PROBUS Wet Wet Wet!!

So this year the Reading and District Probus Club held their Garden Party inside. Plan 2 was put into operation – Indoor Bowls (with Rubber Balls) gave a lucky chance for everyone and a 'Memory Test', guessing advert, overcame 'bums on seats' which is always a problem when indoors. The Air Ambulance had a stall which attracted more attention as did the Raffle. Turn-out from members and friends was good considering the weather.

The regular meeting was enlightened with an insight into Arts and Theatre given by Mr Chris Smith, the Director of the Hexagon, covering the Concert Hall and South Street as well. 21 years ago, the Hexagon was a major venue for Touring Artists and Shows; however, the closure for 3 months to remove asbestos affected bookings considerably and Reading lost out to Woking and High Wycombe. Reading Council is a deciding factor in running the Theatre and Marketing and retaining patrons the biggest problem, running parallel with future bookings; also, Artists demands must be met, particularly dressing room comfort.

And – the future? Redevelopment of the site, together with the Civic Centre, could be the future. This raised a few questions and observations (including the smelly entrance and stairs to the car park etc. etc.).

PROBUS'S FUTURE IS YOU. If you are retired and would like a day off unpaid work then find out about the Club, we meet in Caversham; it could be just what you've been looking for. Ring Ray Head, the Secretary, on 0118 941 1445 and he will tell you; 'Wise-up' as they say.

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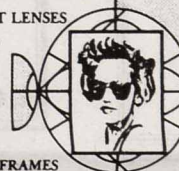
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