

## From the Lookout Post Feb 2011

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### **'Caversham 100 years on'**

Plans to celebrate Caversham's heritage during 2011 are moving apace. Offers to produce mobile exhibitions are growing, many of the local schools, museums and libraries are involved, a grand picnic in Caversham Court is planned for 10 September and 'Readipop' has plans for a big event in July. A website, <http://www.caversham100years.org.uk> will be operational soon. In the meantime, you can contact [friends@fccg.org.uk](mailto:friends@fccg.org.uk), [Frances.Hill@CavershamRotary.org.uk](mailto:Frances.Hill@CavershamRotary.org.uk) or [Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk](mailto:Helen.Lambert@cadra.org.uk).

### **Reading Station**

Government funding of £9.6 million has been confirmed, for changes to the road system around the station. The money is less than the £15m originally hoped for and the council and private funders will contribute another £3.6m to the scheme, which has been scaled down from the original plans. This will pay for bus and taxi interchanges and a pedestrian piazza outside the two new entrances. It will provide access to the widened and refurbished subway under the station, and eventually help fund improvements at the Norcot Road roundabout and for a bus lane nearby. This is aimed at making Portman Road and Richfield Avenue the main transport corridor in the west to take the pressure off Oxford Road once the Cow Lane bridges have been rebuilt by 2016.

At the time of writing, it is not yet clear what has changed from the earlier plans. However Pat Baxter, Head of Transport is outlining details at a meeting for CADRA members on 26 January 2011.

### **Nominate your favourite tree**

Reading Borough Council has invited people to nominate their favourite tree. It does not have to be the biggest or the oldest, but one with an interesting story to tell. It could be a rare specimen, one that supports rare wildlife, is an outstanding landmark or linked to a significant event or a famous person. Nominations are open until June and should include pictures, ideally representing all four seasons. Send to Reading's Favourite Tree, Natural Environment Team, Reading Borough Council, Civic Centre, RG1 7AE, online at [www.reading.gov.uk/treestrategy](http://www.reading.gov.uk/treestrategy) or email to [planning.naturalenvironment@reading.gov.uk](mailto:planning.naturalenvironment@reading.gov.uk). At the end of the process the council will name the 12 trees with the highest number of nominations.

The Tree Council's Tree Warden Scheme celebrated its 20th anniversary at a special reception at the House of Lords and tree champions from Reading joined some of the 8,000 Tree Wardens working across the U.K. The Borough Council hopes to have a network of volunteer Tree Wardens in Reading to keep an eye on trees in their neighbourhoods and report any changes to the council.

### **Car Park Charges**

Following the annual review of car parking charges, short stay car park charges in the town centre at Broad Street Mall, Queens Road and the public 'car park B' of the Civic Offices have been frozen. Long stay charges in Hills Meadow car park have been cut from £12 a day to £5 a day and in Kings Meadow car park from £12 to £7. The Cattle Market car park has been cut from £12 to £4 a day. Some medium stay charges will increase and some charging bands are abolished. Parking at Chester Street, remains at 2010 prices.

Compared to the station car park, over seven hours at Broad Street Mall car park is £20, The Oracle is £20 for more than eight hours but Queens Road is £10 for over six hours and 24 hours at the Q car park in Chatham Place is £14.

### **Christchurch Meadows**

Government funding from 'New Growth Points' and 'Playbuilder' combined with from developers' contributions (section 106) is providing investment in the Meadows following on from a public consultation. Improvements aim to benefit the large number of people who walk or cycle across the park, those who enjoy spending time by the river and the very popular play area. Currently, the footpaths through the meadows are in a poor state of repair in certain patches and make it difficult for disabled people to use. Lighting of the path from Reading Bridge to Patrick Road/Gosbrook Road will be enhanced, repairs made to the river bank and new signs provided at the entrances to the Meadows. New benches and waste bins and more picnic benches are being installed. There will also be additional hedgerow and trees alongside general landscape improvements. The new funding will also allow an increase in the size of the play area and more play equipment. Overall, there will be a saving on maintenance costs for play equipment, benches and pathways.

### **Cultural Partnership**

The Borough Council has so far had a limited impact with its launch of the new 'Cultural Partnership' covering the six themes of Arts, Sport, Health, Heritage, Learning and Sustainability. The process of community nominations and votes to fill the six community seats on the Cultural Partnership Board is now complete. With fewer than 200 people registering as a member, it is difficult to argue the strength of their mandate but the list includes individuals with a strong track record who can act as a critical friend.

There are interesting projects being launched under the banner of the Cultural Partnership. For more information see:

<http://readingarts.com/artsdevelopment/yourculturalvoice/>

#### **Caversham Police Team**

PCSO Ian Chastin joins the team this month, based in Lower Caversham. Ian worked for 10 years in the Reading CCTV centre before completing his PCSO training. There have been a number of residential burglaries in Caversham, many through 'fishing' for keys through the letter box and some left on the inside of the door. Even more disturbing is the success of conmen in obtaining money from vulnerable older residents. We all need to be observant and report suspicious activity to the police, or if appropriate provide guidance to at risk neighbours.

#### **St Peter's Church**

In previous years, some people were disappointed in not gaining admission to a single Christingle service as the church was full, with the children holding lit candles. This year, two services were held allowing a record 573 people to take part, including many proud grandparents. £800.00 was donated to The Children's Society, much of it Gift Aided. Total attendance at all the services at St Peter's on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day was close to 1,000.

#### **Serving the wider Caversham Community**

Previous articles have acknowledged the need to connect with and serve those who are not comfortable with the traditional church services. The Reverend Jeremy Tear, based at St John's, is heading up a group from several churches to identify members of the Caversham community that could benefit from support and to find innovative ways to assist individuals and groups in achieving their objectives. At present Jeremy is engaged in a twofold activity of identifying those who can contribute to this mission and also gathering of information to focus in on suitable community projects. If you are can help, please contact him on e-m [jeremy@ctparish.org.uk](mailto:jeremy@ctparish.org.uk) or phone 946 2884.

#### **The Twelve Days of Christmas**

The winners of this competition, run by Caversham Traders Association from 6th November to 13th December, were awarded their prizes by Father Christmas on Saturday, 18th December in St Martin's Precinct. Max Munro was the winner of the family ticket for four to see Sleeping Beauty and Susan Alexander won the deluxe Christmas hamper and turkey.