

From the Lookout Post – October 2011

Changes to bus route 22

Changes to the route and frequency are due for implementation in September despite many protests. Reading Transport is required to remain viable financially and the 22 route is not meeting its costs. This is partly because this route has the highest proportion of concessionary travellers which is made worse by a reduction in the reimbursement to the bus company earlier this year.

The proposed changes are due to remove Route 22 from Priest Hill, The Mount and Albert Road between The Mount and Highmoor Road. The revised route planned is along Hemdean Road, to Oakley Road, Kidmore Road then Albert Road

This leaves three bus stops with no service - The Mount, Blenheim Road, St Anne's Well. Reading Borough Council has made funds available for a limited replacement service. This will be provided using Community Link route 28 which will run between Purley, Chapel Hill, Kentwood Hill, Tilehurst, New Lane Hill, Central Reading, Tesco Napier Road, Caversham centre (Waitrose) and Caversham Heights (Albert Road/The Mount area). Planned departures currently planned are from Albert Road/Highmoor Road at 9.30am, 11.10am, 12.10pm, 1.52pm, 4.32pm, and 7.01pm. Return times from Friar Street (Sainsbury's) will be at 9.02am, 10.50am, 11.51am, 1.33pm, 4.12pm, 6.40pm. On Saturdays a modified service will run on route 18. Timetables were due for printing as this article went to press.

Frequencies are being changed as follows:

- 2/2a 30 minutes
- 22 30 minutes
- 23 15 minutes
- 24 30 minutes

The new shorter double-deck buses on the 22 are to be changed again to more modern double-deckers in September, which have more bell pushes on the lower deck. The layout of stops in Friar Street is due to change from 26th September and will include an extra pick-up for the 9 to the RBH adjacent to the 22 stops from that date.

As we write, correspondence to Reading Transport, Reading Borough Council, Councillors and Rob Wilson MP is still very active. CADRA has raised specific concerns and is waiting for further responses.

Dedication to Mary Kift, author of 'Life in Old Caversham'

The sixth of ten mobile exhibitions on Caversham local history was completed in August and took its turn in the library. This forms part of the project, 'Caversham 100 Years On', supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This exhibition tells the story of the old village and has been dedicated to:

Mary Kift, 1921 - 2010

local head teacher, historian, naturalist, an early founder of
the Caversham Bridge newspaper and author of

'Life in Old Caversham'

Her lifelong work to capture the history of Caversham leaves
us a fascinating glimpse of the past.

Longstanding readers of Caversham Bridge will know that Mary's work started with a series of articles for this paper. Mary was passionate and extraordinarily knowledgeable about local history. Her home in Darell Road was not far from the old Toots Farm, now long since built up. Mary's book recounts the story of a little girl crossing fields and stiles to go to the farm to collect milk from the cow shed at the farm. Her articles about the history of Caversham and Mapledurham combine pictures and memories from local people with extensive original research. Her publication with two friends gives convincing evidence of the location for the lost Shrine of Our Lady of Caversham. An important place of pilgrimage, the shrine dates from before the twelfth century. It was endowed and visited by Kings and Queens as well as the Lords and Ladies of Caversham Manor.

In 1978, Mary and a team of helpers mounted an exhibition on Caversham history which was visited by over 1000 people. In 1980, the first edition of 'Life in Old Caversham' was published followed by a book of local photographs in 1983 called, 'Look back at Caversham.' In 2004, a second revised edition of 'Life in Old Caversham' was published just six years before Mary died in 2010.

This exhibition was completed on behalf of the Caversham and District Residents' Association. Without the extraordinary wealth of material Mary gathered in her books, these exhibitions would not have been possible. Indeed, Mary's writing underpins so much of the work to celebrate Caversham's heritage this year.

This exhibition was sponsored by the Caversham Traders Association. It now forms part of a series of ten exhibitions on different topics. These will be available around Caversham for the rest of the year. They are also available for loan. See www.Caversham100yearson.org.uk.

Policing and related matters

Readers will be aware that two Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGS) have been established in Caversham for about 4 years. These multi-agency groups meet every 6 weeks to plan how to address the issues of concern to the community. However, it is planned to have public meetings, this autumn, of both NAG groups to solicit residents and businesses views on what should be the three main issues to address and gather suggestions on how to deal with these areas of concern. The North and West Caversham NAG public meeting will be at 6.30 pm on Monday 17 October 2011 at Highdown School. The details of the Lower Caversham NAG public meeting will be included in the November Ex Libris article of Caversham Bridge. Residents are reminded that the leaflet "Your Reading" has the contact numbers for 27 different street services. These specialist units are well placed to quickly and efficiently deal with such matters as; abandoned vehicles, pot holes, street lights and litter.

Reading Borough Council

Once again The Council should be commended for the flower hanging baskets on both the Thames bridges. This links to my response to the recent RBC questionnaire "Let's Talk" and in particular the item on Council Services. There have been several experiences of the Council staff in Caversham, including library staff, the gardener in Caversham Court and the refuse and recycling collection team continuing to demonstrate a professional commitment to the Caversham community in spite of uncertain circumstances. To them, a notional floral bouquet.