# CAVERSHAM AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

## 30th Anniversary

The Thirtieth ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on Monday 30th March, 1998 at the Baptist Free Church Centre (corner of Prospect St/Gosbrook Road) at 8.00pm

## AGENDA

- Minutes and Matters Arising
- Annual Report
- Statement of Accounts
- Election of Committee
- Any Other Business

After the business of the AGM, Reading Film and Video Makers will show their recently issued video 'Caversham Remembered', and follow it with a discussion about its making.

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT/NEWSLETTER MARCH 1998

The past year has seen various developments in Caversham that we can feel very positive about. These include progress on some environmental issues, success in opposing further supermarket development, and support for measures to reduce crime and make us all feel more secure. Local environmental issues are discussed by the GLOBE group (Go Local On a Better Environment) with whom this Committee has established links.

One environmental issue in which we have been involved is the plan to provide a footpath and cycle track across Balmore Park. Adrian Lawson from the Environmental Department of Reading Borough Council recently spoke to the Committee about their plan to create a permanent cycle track and place an orientation table at a vantage point on the hill. These improvements will be partly funded by money donated to the campaign to prevent housing development in Bugs Bottom. Although that campaign was lost, it is perhaps some consolation that remaining funds can be used to improve amenities for local walkers and cyclists.

Another opportunity to open up more 'green space' for local residents has come with the Council's recent acquisition of View Island, adjacent to Heron Island. This has long been privately leased, but the Borough Council has set aside money to clear it of rubbish and make it a safe and attractive area which can be open to the public. The Committee intend to liaise with the Caversham GLOBE group and with the Council's Leisure Committee chaired by a CADRA Member, Cllr. Steve Waite, to ensure that the available money is well spent.

In November 1997, this organisation made its own small contribution to the environment by the planting of a Liquidambar styraciflua tree by the riverside near Wolsey Road. This was to mark the 30th Anniversary of the founding of CADRA and we were very pleased to welcome Reading's Mayor, Cllr. Rose Williams, to plant our tree. (The fact that the official silver spade had been left behind did not prevent her from doing an excellent job with a 'snow shovel' borrowed from a Committee member's car!)

Over a year ago, after considerable local pressure, the Council agreed that the Elliott's site should be used for housing and a playing field for Thameside School, not for another large supermarket. Despite this, the supermarket chain Morbain continued to appeal against this planning decision: it was only at the end of 1997 that they withdrew their application. I am sure that this was at least in part because they became aware of the local feeling against them, the close liaison between local Councillors and all the relevant Residents' Associations also helped tremendously.

A relatively new initiative in Caversham, which is building on community links, is the 'Safer Reading Campaign', with its drive to reduce crime and the fear of crime. You will probably have received the first Newsletter of the Caversham Crime

Reduction Forum, whose Chairman, Bruce Manning, is a member of the CADRA Committee. That Newsletter showed a reduction in reported crime of 27% since 1994, and CADRA is giving full support to the local forum in the hope that this improvement will continue. There are still crime 'black spots', often in the area of central Caversham where so many licensed premises have opened up in recent years. CADRA continues to point out to the Council that Caversham is a residential area and that extended opening hours which may be appropriate in non-residential areas cannot be justified in Caversham.

Our main Public Meeting during the past year was on the theme of 'Traffic and Planning in Caversham'. Two Officers from Reading Borough Council, Lesley Punter and Pat Baxter, dealt with questions from the large number of people who attended, showing that traffic continues to pose the most intransigent problem in this area. An outline plan for 'Caversham Lakes' has been submitted which would add to the traffic congestion, but we feel that CADRA should defer comment until details of a full planning application are made available.

In the centre of Caversham, matters have not been helped by the two new sets of traffic lights, which simply make the lines of cars back up further during busy periods. It is worth noting that these lights were installed without local consultation, which might have prevented a great deal of money being spent to no obvious advantage. No doubt decisions were made at County Council level by Councillors who do not know the situation in Caversham. In this respect we welcome the setting up of the new Unitary Authority of Reading, because decisions on local planning, including highways management will all be made in Reading. We wish the new Authority all success in the future, and look forward to continuing to work with our local Councillors.

Finally, I turn to news about the Committee and the AGM. During the past year most of our correspondence with the Council Officers and other groups has been carried out by Tom Chadwick, who joined us three years ago. Tom has now agreed to become the official Secretary to the Association, a post for which he is eminently suited. If you wish to write to him on any topic his address is 14 The Ridings, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8XL.

If your membership is due for renewal, please contact our Membership Secretary, Marian Fallowfield at 40 Matlock Road, Caversham, RG4 7BS.

We have an active, hard working Committee, which meets on the third Monday of each month. Our Committee members inspect planning applications and serve on other Committees connected with local affairs, including the Reading Borough Council Transport Forum. We can always make room for two or three new Members, so please speak to one of us at the AGM if you would like to become more involved. Most important however, is that we continue to have large membership throughout the whole of Caversham, who can report to us issues of local concern. Currently we represent 627 households and liaise with eight other local Residents' Associations. We thank all those people who assist in the distribution of these Newsletters.

We hope to see you at the AGM.

**Annette Hendry**
Chair, Caversham and District Residents' Association