

From the Lookout Post

Prospect Street

Changes continue up Prospect Street with the retirement of both Evelyn Burt at the Cristal Dragon and Ara Genjelian at Caversham Kebab House. Podiatrist Evelyn Burt founded the Crystal Dragon as the Caversham Clinic in 2000 but expanded due to her interest in alternative medicine and healing crystals. Over time, facilities expanded to include different therapies, including massage, tarot card readings, yoga and meditation with a meditation garden. Its services have been very popular and have received many nominations for Reading Retail Awards. When the Caversham Festivals were held on the Westfield Triangle, Evelyn was the driving force for several events. She did a lot for Caversham folk and we wish her well for the future.

Ara Genjelian set up the Caversham Kebab House 27 years ago. He and his wife Nora have served countless hungry folk and made a lot of friends. They now have decided to retire and the business closed in November. We wish Ara and Nora well for the future.

We hope there will soon be news of which parts of the redevelopment of the Church Street precinct can proceed, ending the uncertainty which is so difficult for local independent businesses.

WEA

Some years ago Reading University announced the closure of its School of Continuing Education. A campaign including many Caversham residents began to try to persuade the University to change its mind, but to no avail. So a group of volunteers contacted the regional office of the WEA, and after several meetings, a committee was formed to resurrect the then defunct local Branch. Local residents Paul and Carol Kingston had a central involvement: Paul was appointed Chairman of the branch and Carole took on much of the administration.

A varied programme of short and 1 day courses was established, on both topical and historical subjects, including many of particular local interest. The Reading branch grew steadily and is now one of the largest in the country.

Until recently, many courses were held at Hamilton Road. When this ceased to be available, many transferred to New Directions in Caversham – a boon to Caversham residents who no longer have to cross town, though it adds to the complexity of branch administration. The website, <http://weareadingadulthoodeducation.org.uk/> gives details of the current courses and how to book as well as opportunities to support the branch in its work.

Paul Kingston recently handed over the post of Chair to John Beale, while Carole continues to handle much of the administration. We congratulate both Paul and Carole for their continuing hard work and enthusiasm which has been central to such a popular and successful programme.

Conservation Areas

On 24 November 2015, the Strategic, Environment, Planning and Transport Committee heard a report from Historic England and from the various community groups who have raised concerns about the deterioration in local Conservation Areas. The Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

has experienced very severe problems and our local St Peter's Conservation Area has a range of problems in need of attention. In general, across Reading, there is a need to build awareness and local involvement and to put better measures in place to protect the special character of each area. Historic England are keen to promote community involvement and will be working with the Council and local groups. If you would like to support this process, please email helen.lambert@cadra.org.uk.