

EX LIBRIS November 07

SHOW TIME

In contrast with the worst summer on record, September, on the whole, has been a glorious month. This was most fortunate for the many shows that we have been able to enjoy in and around Caversham.

The Caversham Festival once again attracted large numbers and was enjoyed as ever by a wide cross-section of our community. It is heartening to see so many young people and the wide range of our organisations taking part in this event. Perhaps we are too ready to take things for granted, so it was refreshing to hear some newcomers to Caversham commented on the friendly, village like atmosphere of the show. They especially liked its 'non-commercialism.' My favourite was the Horticultural Society tent. I have to admit family pressures didn't allow my wife and me to exhibit. I am sure we would have swept the boards if we had entered! We did however have a go at the Caversham Allotment show the previous week.

Events such as these are so important for any community. They bring people together; they also demonstrate the wide variety of talent around us. As ever their organisation is very often down to a few dedicated souls. My personal thanks to all those who helped with these two events and the many others that so enrich our lives.

KING'S MEADOW

Writing about the Caversham Festival reminded me of the days when the Reading Show was held on Kings Meadow. Mr. And Mrs. Cowlard were the moving force behind this for many years. In some ways it was the inspiration for the new Caversham Festival. It was a much grander event but it too was a place to meet and

catch up with so many people. As many readers will know the future of the Meadow is under review. Many of you will have met Carolyn Jenkins at the Caversham Court refurbishment meetings. Here is a summary of her report on the Kings Meadow consultation.

Thank you for your response to the consultation on improvements to King's Meadow. Forty-two responses were received.

The results are generally positive; most responses support the suggestions made for the park. On the specific questions asked,

- Most would prefer the play area to be located near the Napier Road car park
- There are divergent views on creating a wetland wildflower area. Many respondents are in favour of a wildflower meadow
- There is support for more tree planting, both as an avenue across the park and elsewhere, although some respondents would prefer that views of the river be kept open
- Of those who commented on the willow beds along Napier Road, most want to retain some screening of the park from the road, and several are concerned about reversing a project in which so much volunteer time was involved

Several respondents took the opportunity to comment on the conflict between cyclists and pedestrians on the surfaced paths; vandalism and

antisocial behaviour; travelers; safe road crossings; and the need for good toilet facilities.

More detailed letters dealt with two main issues: the willow beds and biodiversity improvements. The concern about the willow beds revolves around the amount of volunteer effort in creating them as a Millennium project; the variety of different willow that was planted; and a fear that the good-quality raw-material resource will be lost if we attempt to move it. There is support from correspondents for biodiversity improvements, especially the 'dry' wildflower meadow, and suggestions were made about alternative locations for a 'wet' meadow. There is support for more tree planting, especially native trees.

We intend to do the following:

- Implement the landscape plan as resources become available
- Proceed immediately with procuring the children's play area to be located on the site identified near Napier Road
- In response to specific comments received, modify the landscape plan by:
 - planting new trees along the towpath rather than along the river bank
 - taking up the suggestions as to which species of tree respondents would like to see planted

- preserving the willow beds that are special and clearing between these to open up the views from Napier Road into the park
- retaining the ditch along Napier Road, and taking up the offer of volunteer assistance in clearing it
- deciding, together with local wildlife groups, on the most appropriate location for the dry wildflower meadow

Please note that all comments received can be found on the Council website.

FESTIVE TIMES AND NOISE

CADRA works hard with other neighbourhood groups to reduce disturbance especially at night. Generally speaking the situation has improved and Reading Borough Council are to be congratulated on their anti-social behaviour policies.

In fact it was not the effects of one of the big shows or festivals that impelled me to write this. I am not a party pooper but noise from a disco with a DJ booming out at 2am is no joke. Nor is this a matter of being intolerant of the occasional party. We live in a crowded village. If everyone within a two or three hundred yards of each of us were to say 'well it's only once a year', and acted with such disregard for their neighbours, it is more than likely that no weekday, let alone weekend, would pass without severe disturbance. This is what happened at the end of September near us. Now this is where Reading's anti-social behaviour policy kicks in. Do you know that the Council has a dedicated out of hours phone line? Moreover it is manned by a real person. The number is 9390900. All they need are three separate complaints; don't use your landline and mobile to make two calls, that's cheating. If three different

people do complain, however, then obviously there is a general problem. We are all rather prone to 'let things go', not make a fuss, grin and bear it etc etc. Well no! Inconsiderate behaviour is never acceptable. The work of CADRA in the public domain is well recorded and along with the Council we have reduced disturbance from such events as the Reading Festival. But disturbance from private houses can be, and often is, far more disturbing. CADRA is dedicated to working for the good of all the community at all times. The council takes the issue seriously; seriously enough to man a dedicated out of hours number. It is there to be used. Make a note of that number and don't be intimidated into silence by noise bullies.

THE CADRA SHOW

There will be no question of such problems at the CADRA SHOW! I am writing this before the actual show but I am sure it will prove to be a very special occasion with many interesting displays of Caversham past, present and future. For those of you that came I hope you enjoyed it and that you met friends old and new. And most important of all a big thank you for all who helped out.