

A Welcome from CADRA in 2003

Volume 3, Issue 2, August 2003



CADRA news

Caversham And District Residents' Association

With this, my first contribution to CADRA NEWS as Chairman of the Association, I send greetings to all CADRA members. Succeeding a predecessor of the calibre of Bruce Manning is a challenge. In attempting to rise to it, I have the comfort of knowing that a team of very experienced and dedicated committee colleagues is there to offer support and guidance. I am very grateful to them.

My first task has been to launch a massive recruitment drive. By the end of the campaign (we will not tempt fate by publishing a date) we will have distributed a special leaflet to all, or nearly all households in the district that have not already joined us. It is not our intention to poach actual or potential members from the more localised associations, with all of which we have excellent and close ties, but it is our intention to increase the size of our membership substantially. At a time when large public projects are on the horizon and

local authorities are struggling to establish effective ways of meeting their statutory obligations to consult the people, we believe there is a greater need than ever for an organisation, like CADRA, that can offer a means of presenting to the authorities the views of residents from all parts of the district.

...Communication should be a two-way exercise....

Information is the first tool of effective representation. Through CADRA NEWS we will continue to inform members of matters of importance to us all as residents of Caversham and neighbouring districts. Happily we have now added a web site to our communication facilities. For this we are greatly indebted to Sylvia Chumbley. Sylvia was one of a number of members who responded

to the plea in the last issue of CADRA NEWS. We are grateful to each of them and very appreciative of their willingness to help.

Communication should be a two-way exercise. As opportunities occur (and as our income grows with increasing membership), we will actively canvas your views. In 2001, we tried large scale canvassing for the first time in many years when we sought the opinions of over 500 residents living on Kidmore Road and in its immediate vicinity on the subject of traffic speeds. Building on the lessons learned from that project, we expect to use mass canvassing more extensively in the future, but with improved techniques. However, we continue to urge members not to wait to be asked, but to contact the committee whenever a matter arises that they think the committee should know about.

As CADRA's membership is drawn from all the wards north of the Thames and the

composition of our present committee fully reflects this geographical spread, I have asked certain members of the committee to become special contact points for members living in the areas in which they themselves live. It is my belief that localising the face of the committee in this way will improve both access to the committee and the quality of the information available to it. Of course, as before, the ear of any officer of the association will remain available to any member who cares to whisper or shout into it.

Full details of the developments mentioned above can be found in the pages of this edition of CADRA NEWS.

Derek Bartlett

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In response to public demand!

THE CAVERSHAM FESTIVAL

Will be held again this year on Westfield Road Park

On SATURDAY 13th SEPTEMBER 1pm till 6pm

CADRA will be there - will you?

Changes Imposed at Safer Caversham Forum

In his final article for CADRA NEWS (March 2003), retiring Chairman Bruce Manning lamented the summary termination by Reading Borough Council of the North Area Consultative Committee, the only general consultation vehicle available to residents. All the district's residents' groups expressed fears that the Council might attempt to fill the gap it had created by stretching the scope of the Safer Caversham Forum (SCF) to suit a new agenda. Alas, this has now happened.

Six years ago the SCF was established by the council, in partnership with the police, to engage the local community in the fight against crime and the fear of crime. Representatives from seven residents' groups met council officers, the police and councillors from each of the area's three wards every five weeks. Debates were full and uninhibited. Lay members and the professionals were able to understand each others' problems and to seek solutions, help and advice from each other. The frequency of meetings and the fact that the Chairman was chosen by the lay members from among their own number meant that they had a real involvement. This sustained their

enthusiasm and maintained their high attendance levels, which, in turn, led them to initiate, manage and staff three major campaigns that had a measurable impact on crime figures, and to develop within the Forum an organisational structure which the council tried to adopt for use in other parts of the Borough. Unfortunately for the residents of Caversham and Emmer Green, the success of their Forum was not replicated across the Borough. The council has, therefore, decided that the SCF must be made to conform.

For the first time in six years, written Terms of Reference have been imposed. An undefined concept of "community safety" has been added to crime and the fear of crime as subject matter for the Forum. Under the new concept, the SCF will consider major planning applications, traffic issues, social matters and other subjects previously taken to the axed North Area Consultative Committee. The Forum's extended scope will be covered at meetings illogically reduced from ten to four per year. Between the quarterly meetings, a special subgroup will meet, "as necessary" and under the chairmanship of staff from the council's community

unit, to examine particular problems and report back to the Forum. The subgroup will consist mainly of relevant professionals and councillors who are happy to meet during normal daytime office hours. Lay Forum members and relevant local residents will be invited but, obviously, their ability to attend depends on their employment situation. Although the SCF will be permitted to continue its practice of appointing its Chairman from among the residents' groups, the Vice-chairman will be a councillor appointed from the ruling group. No credible explanation for politicising this appointment has been given. There are no present plans to give ward councillors from Thames or Peppard a turn, despite the fact that the ruling party is the minority party this side of the Thames.

Along with other residents' groups, CADRA has protested loudly. Whether or not the changes have merit, residents' representatives feel frustrated and saddened that, yet again, decisions have been foisted upon them without warning and without consultation. We try very hard to co-operate with our council and wonder why it seems determined to reject us.

Planning Update

Southern Electricity has entered a revised application for outline approval for 180 homes on their redundant depot in Amersham Road. Notwithstanding the generous contribution the company is prepared to make towards the development of local schools and roads, CADRA is opposing the proposal. We maintain that the social history and layout of the present Amersham Road estates make it imperative that improvements to the infrastructure are carried out *before* such another large development is squeezed into the area. In this the Association is supporting the local residents' associations as well as individual CADRA members.

Kingsoak Homes have won their appeal against a decision to refuse an application to build 96 homes behind Henley Road and Lower Henley Road. As expected, the Council's Licensing Committee rejected the application for a Public Entertainment Licence in respect of **2 Bridge Street**, Caversham. Without such a licence, the proposed nightclub cannot operate. Predictably, the applicant has lodged an appeal against the decision. It is anticipated that Magistrates will hear the appeal in the latter part of this year. CADRA will attend the hearing and give evidence in support of the original decision.

In response to a plea for help in

CADRA NEWS, **Lin Godfrey** offered to assist in carrying out the duties of the Association's Planning Representative. Lin has ferreted with enthusiasm among the planning papers held at Civic Centre, and her efforts are greatly appreciated. Members will also be interested to know that **Jennifer Millest** was elected to the CADRA committee at the last AGM. Jennifer has been the planning officer for the Lower Caversham Community Association for some time and continues in that post. It is good to have her considerable experience in the planning field available to augment the knowledge of CADRA's home-grown planning representative.

Thanks to all of you who renewed your subscriptions this year, and especially to the many who were kind enough to include a donation over and above the annual membership fee.

Recruitment Drive

In June CADRA embarked on a determined attempt to increase its membership. Currently the recruitment drive takes the form of a leaflet being delivered to every non-member household in the district. We have tried not to annoy existing Association members by delivering leaflets to them. However, if we have

delivered a leaflet to you, an existing member, please excuse us. When we trudge around the streets with lists of addresses, mistakes can happen, particularly when tiredness sets in.

As the campaign develops, other means may well be used to augment the leaflets. One other method springs to mind now. If you, as a

member, can sign up a friend before we rattle his or her letterbox, our task will be considerably eased. The only qualifications for membership are residence within the Borough north of the Thames and payment of the annual subscription of £2. A call to **Marian Fallowfield** on 9546899 will secure an Application Form.

Neighbourhood Watch Report

In the last issue of CADRA NEWS we were able to supply reported crime figures for the district down to 31st December 2002. It was hoped to bring you a similar report for the period 1st January 2003 to 30th June 2003 in this issue. Unfortunately this is not possible. However, we are able to offer information covering the months of April and May 2003 with the comparative figures for April and May 2002 in brackets.

The total of all reported crime in Caversham Ward was 224 (275). Within the total, house burglaries accounted for 22 (18) reports and thefts of vehicles accounted for 5 (40). Criminal damage to vehicles resulted in 10 (10) reports. For Thames Ward the total of all crimes reported was 101 (117). House burglaries made up 16 (22), thefts of vehicles 8 (3) and criminal damage to vehicles 7 (10). Peppard Ward had 122 (112) reported crimes, which included house burglaries 13 (9), thefts of vehicles 8

(15) and criminal damage to vehicles 13 (3). Drawing meaningful conclusions from these figures is difficult because of a change in which certain crimes are now recorded and the fact that one category, for example criminal damage to vehicles, could have arisen from the activities of just one individual on the rampage in a single night.

When the new police office is opened in Church House, Prospect Street, having been relocated from Emmer Green, the sector police team available to use it will again have been depleted after barely twelve months of being up to strength. The sector inspector has been moved to another post in Reading, the sector sergeant **Dave Griffiths** has been promoted to acting inspector and necessarily allocates most of his time to his West Reading responsibilities. PCs **Chris Manetta** (Emmer Green and Caversham Park) and **Peter Stratton** (Caversham Heights) stay in post but,

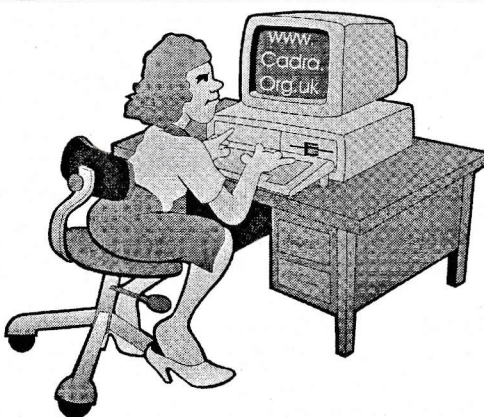
between them, also cover Central and Lower Caversham following the temporary transfer of PC (acting sergeant) **Rob Pitman** to Loddon Valley.

The opening of the Church House office has proved to be a highly moveable feast. The latest target time is mid-August. It is expected that Thames Valley **Chief Constable Peter Neyroud** will perform the ceremony, with the Police Chaplain and the Rector of Caversham attending.

Sad to say the co-ordinators' meetings planned for April (see the March CADRA NEWS) did not take place. **Liz Herbert** has not yet been able to reschedule them. Liz is currently hunting for a new Sector Co-ordinator, as Derek Bartlett has found it necessary to surrender that post on being appointed CADRA's Chairman. He says that there is nothing incompatible in holding both jobs, it is simply a case of trying to allocate a scarce resource, time, among a number of competing demands.

www.cadra.org.uk

Our web site is now up and running, mainly thanks to the invaluable work of **Sylvia Chumbley**. Apart from the fun of using the cursor to reveal what lies behind the arrows on the Home Page and watching the canoeist race across the screen, hotly pursued by "two little fishes and a mommy fishy too", the site contains a copy of the CADRA Constitution, extracts from the last issue of CADRA NEWS (now to be replaced by this



one), a copy of the recruitment leaflet and details of current committee members. The site also has links to the Reading Borough Council, Caversham Library and Caversham Life sites. The address is **www.cadra.org.uk**. Why not pay us a visit and at the same time have a look at Sylvia's own site, either by clicking on the link or by going directly to:

www.cavershamlife.org.uk ?

Members' Letters

This feature has been held over until the next issue

Caversham And District Residents' Association

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The Purpose of CADRA

CADRA has been in continuous existence for over 35 years. A lot has been achieved, and CADRA is widely respected as a voice for Caversham.

We resolutely avoid party political bias. Our aim, quoted in the Constitution, is "to preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding district." In practice, this means to try to keep the good parts, improve the undesirable parts and prevent detrimental change. Most of this inevitably relates to planning and environmental issues, which absorb most of our time and effort. We work with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups, the Police, companies and individuals. To be effective, we have to be able to hear members' opinions, and represent their views. These Newsletters are an indication of our commitment to this process, but our effectiveness will greatly increase with more members. At just two pounds per year per household, membership of CADRA represents amazing value.

Please pass this on to anyone you know who might like to join CADRA
Membership forms can be obtained from Marian Fallowfield, tel 0118 954 6899

Contacting CADRA

We prefer you to contact us in writing, so that we can give proper attention to your requirements, and a considered response. We are all busy people, and we may need to discuss your points before responding.

In general, please write to the Secretary, or better still, use e-mail. Our e-mail address is CADRA2001@aol.com. Letters for publication can be sent by e-mail, or by post to Tom Chadwick, 14 The Ridings, Emmer Green RG4 8XL. For urgent matters only, Officers' telephone numbers are given above, but please use them with consideration.

USEFUL NUMBERS

Graffiti, Litter & Environment Helpline (Free) 0800 626 540
RBC Call Centre 0800 626 540
RBC After School Clubs 0118 939 0636
Refuse Collection & Wheelie Bins Helpline 0800 834 035

Police Sector Acting Inspector Dave Griffiths 953 6351
Sector Beat Office: 948 1290 for:
PC Peter Stratton, Caversham Heights
PC Chris Manetta, Emmer Green, Caversham Park Village

One of the hazards of a beautiful summer is new growth overhanging footpaths and obscuring road sight lines. A call to 0800 626540 should bring assistance where required.

Your Local Committee Contacts

CADRA members have always been encouraged to contact any officer or committee member at any time. On occasion it can be an advantage to talk over a local problem with someone who lives in or close to the area concerned. Local knowledge is often the key to understanding members' concerns and the ability to provide appropriate assistance. As a service to members, to be used at members'

discretion, the following committee members have volunteered to act as a first link between CADRA members and their committee:

Central Caversham – Helen Lambert, 5 Derby Road, 9473165

Lower Caversham – Jennifer Millest, 40 Mill Green, 9482279

Caversham Heights – Marian Fallowfield, 40 Matlock Road, 9546899

Caversham West of the A4074 – Jim Frost, 3 Grass Hill, 9474220

Emmer Green/Caversham Park – Tom Chadwick, 14 The Ridings, 9475465

CADRA Profile - Mrs Molly Casey

As a way of making committee members better known to all of us, CADRA NEWS will print a series of personal-ity profiles. The subject of the first is **Molly Casey**, whose name for many is synonymous with the Association itself.

Molly was born in Reading but spent her childhood near Oxford. As an adult, she returned to the Borough in 1953 when she made her home in Caversham. A teacher by profession, Molly held appointments in a number of Reading schools until her retirement in 1987. She did not wait until retirement before using her talents in the service of the community. Molly had already become a well-known activist through her opposition to a proposal to drive a link road through the heart of Caversham to serve a third Thames Bridge. She was also in her 23rd year as the columnist "Watchdog" for "Caversham Bridge", a role she was destined to fill for a further 14 years. Last year, she served on the organising committee for the first ever Caversham Festival. Nowadays she remains an active member of the Civic Society as well as continuing her involvement with CADRA.

Molly's CADRA career began in 1967 when she and others founded the Association, which grew out of the ad hoc committee

set up to oppose the proposed siting of the link road to the third Thames bridge. Always a member of the committee, she also served as the Secretary for very many years, bringing to that post a natural authority, clarity of thought and determination, which endowed CADRA with a respect and influence that has endured to this day. Although she laid down the burden of executive office in CADRA when she accepted the post of Honorary Life President, she has regularly exercised her constitutional right to be present at committee meetings where her experience and knowledge is frequently sought, freely given and gratefully accepted.

For Molly, CADRA's greatest achievement so far has been the part it has played through the years to ensure that Caversham has retained its own recognisable identity, rather than becoming known only as a suburb of Reading. Her greatest regret is that CADRA and its allies, after a long and punishing fight, were not able to prevent the loss of Bugs Bottom to developers. Looking to the future, Molly hopes for such a great increase in CADRA membership that the Association is generally acknowledged as able to represent the views of the majority of the residents of Caversham and the surrounding districts.