



A Welcome from CADRA in 2002

Volume 2, Issue 2, September 2002



CADRA news

Caversham And District Residents' Association

As this edition of CADRA News was being prepared, Reading and Caversham were reeling from the influx of several thousand visitors to the annual Reading Festival, which seems to have lost the "Rock" from its title. The effects were felt as far away as Paddington Station, where the Editor was forced to wait for a later train on Friday, so that the Festivalites could be helped safely, *en masse*, to their musical weekend.

In the centre of Caversham on the Saturday morning, a fair was packed, the Off Licence was fast selling out. Church Street became a pedestrian zone as the weight of people spilled onto the street. Of course, this event attracts a fair share of criticism, but we were very pleased to note how happy and considerate most of the visitors were.

On 14th September 2002, Caversham will host its own

Festival on a somewhat smaller scale. In this, the first year, it is part of Caversham's contribution to the Queen's Jubilee celebrations, but the organisers hope to make it an annual event. Many Caversham organisations (including CADRA) have provided sponsorship; the main beneficiary will be the very successful Downs Syndrome swimming group, the Reading Cygnets. All profits will go to this and other local projects.

AGM REPORT

On the 15th April the Chairman, Bruce Manning, welcomed members to the Annual General Meeting. In his review of the year, he highlighted the very successful public meeting held by CADRA on the subject of vandalism in Caversham Heights, and the research conducted following members' concerns about speeding traffic in Kidmore Road. The Chairman paid tribute to the efforts of the many

members who had delivered CADRA material during the year. Their efforts had helped an increase in membership, which now stood at some 500 households including almost 1200 adults. He emphasised the importance of a growing membership to CADRA's ability to bring members' views to bear on matters affecting the quality of life in the district. He stressed CADRA's commitment to work with all other local groups in the implementation of shared aims. In particular, he cited the work of Committee members in representing CADRA on the North Area Consultative Committee, The Safer Caversham Forum, The Caversham Festival Steering Group, The Transport Users' Forum and The Civic Society. The Honorary President, Mrs Molly Casey, paid tribute to the work of Mrs Doris Thomas, who had been a Committee member from the earliest days. Until three years ago she served

CADRA as an extremely enthusiastic and effective Planning Officer. Although Doris will continue to serve on the Committee, ill health had prevented her playing as full a part in the work as she would have wished. In appreciation of her dedication, help and continuing support in the face of adversity, CADRA conferred on her, with acclamation from all present, Honorary Life Membership of the Association. The meeting re-elected Marian Fallowfield, Stewart Bolton and Tom Chadwick to serve on the Committee and elected Sylvia Warman as a new member. The Chairman expressed his regret that Ian Brown had decided to stand down from the Committee after many years' service as Chairman

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CAVERSHAM JUBILEE FESTIVAL, SATURDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER

AT WESTFIELD GREEN, GOSBROOK ROAD, FROM MIDDAY TILL LATE.

Over 40 separate attractions, providing fun for all the family. Continuous music on two stages, displays, dancing, competitions and sideshows throughout the day. Car parking nearby.

ADVANCE PROGRAMMES AVAILABLE FROM CAVERSHAM BOOKSHOP & THE LIBRARY

Litter and Graffiti

Molly Casey

Our must rank as one of the most litter-strewn countries in Western Europe. Time was when one could return from European travels and feel proud that the Brits did *not* strew their litter about the streets, but this is no longer the case. You get out of the coach from Heathrow to be greeted by bits of paper, cigarette packets, fast food containers, you name it, drifting about in Station Square. It is not for want of litter bins; there are plenty about; neither is it for want of sweeping; Broad Street for instance is swept six times a day. McDonald's clean the pavement fifty yards each side of their premises. Union Street refuse is not pretty to look at, but at least it is

bagged up. There is no doubt, Joe Public is the culprit.

In Caversham, this pattern is repeated on a smaller scale. Caversham Bridge gets more than its fair share of graffiti, and there are several newly painted walls which graffitiists see as an open invitation to cover them with their ugly, meaningless scrawls. Experience shows that if left, graffiti attracts more graffiti. If the Borough is notified, they have pledged to remove obscene or racist graffiti within 24 hours and others within 48. However, if you are unfortunate enough to suffer graffiti on your own property, you alas are responsible for removing it.

The removal of graffiti is an expensive

business, paid for by the Council Tax payer. It is difficult to catch offenders as they usually work under cover of darkness. If they are caught and hauled up before the beaks, it will usually be a long time ahead and the penalties are relatively light.

Whilst not advocating some 19th century harsh kind of penalty, it should be such as to reflect the severity of an action that debases the standard of the whole area. Similarly, the litter-dropping laws should be more often enforced. To make the punishment fit the crime, perpetrators should be required to repair the damage at their own expense, which would be likely to change their attitude.

Planning Update (August)

Derek Bartlett

Since the last issue of CADRA NEWS, there have been several developments on the Planning front. After a 15 months battle by residents, an application to build an additional 34 flats on Patrick Road was withdrawn. Ominously, the building company has claimed that the withdrawal was not the result of local objections and has hinted that it will be back. It is to be hoped that any fresh application will be on a more modest scale.

By contrast, the developer of the Richmond Road site formerly occupied by the Church of Our Lady of Caversham, has conceded that he was surprised by the strength of the opposition to his plans to build a block of 9 flats. That, and the probability of rejection by the Council, has caused him to withdraw the application. Again, it is anticipated that revised proposals will be forthcoming.

Also notable among a spate of applications withdrawn was that for outline planning permission by the Southern

Electric Company which wanted its redundant depot in Amersham Road to be re-categorised for residential use. Although we consider the building of homes on a "brown field" site to be desirable, it would be sheer folly to place a further 200 or so families in an area where the physical infrastructure and support services have proved to be inadequate for the 500 families already there.

The proposal for a nightclub and restaurant at 2 Bridge Street is a seemingly immovable cloud hovering over us. Repeated postponements of the hearing for a Public Entertainment Licence have been caused by the applicant's failure to provide some required information. Surprisingly, there appears to be no means of terminating the application because of such non-compliance.

Following the rejection by the Planning Committee of the application by Kingsoak to build 96 homes on the floodplain behind Lower Henley

Road, the developer's appeal was heard and rejected by the Government Inspector. Kingsoak have taken the case to the High Court on a point of law. In the meantime, the company has made a fresh application for 77 flats on a piece of land that it considers to be sufficiently higher than the rest of the site to avoid the floodplain problems which bedevilled its earlier application.

CADRA has made representations in respect of all of these proposals, and many more. The critical scrutiny of planning applications is an important and major part of your Committee's work, but it is also work with which the Committee needs help urgently. If you are able to offer assistance, perhaps by taking up the role of CADRA's Planning Officer or taking scrutiny responsibility for a defined area (CADRA covers all of Reading north of the Thames), please contact us. See back page for contact numbers.

Gosbrook Road Methodist Church Developments

James Rowley

Gosbrook Road Methodists are developing their property. The work will result in a new entrance area, two new meeting rooms, new toilets and a new kitchen. The much-used hall will receive a new floor and get a coat of paint, and there will be extra off-street parking. The aim of all this activity is to help strengthen the Church's role as a friendly and trusted partner in the local community. The

Church already employs a full-time youth worker in Lower Caversham and a large number of Church and community activities take place in the buildings. The budget for the project exceeds £300,000 and they still have to raise more money, so any contributions in cash or kind are very welcome. Please write to: James Rowley, 72 Highmoor Road Caversham RG4 7BG, or telephone 0118 947 2223

Letters We welcome letters from members; we will only publish them at the writer's request

Sir,
While welcoming the provision by the Council of the red boxes for the collection of paper for re-cycling, I do feel that a little more thought could have been given to their design. I am a senior citizen, living alone and suffering from a heart complaint and back trouble. Consequently I find it painful and at times impossible to lift the box and carry it down the drive. Had the box been fitted with a wheel at either side at one end, rather like a shopping trolley, my task would have been made much easier. I realise that an extra cost would be involved, but the "mobile" boxes could be made available only to those who really need them and ask for them. I feel that an approach from CADRA would have more chance of success than I might expect acting alone.

CADRA Member, Woodcote Road

Sir,

I am writing to ask if you could ascertain from the Council when the bus shelters in Hemdean Road will be sorted out. After various attempts, the shelter for bus passengers on the outward journey has been installed, but it doesn't offer much shelter if the wind is coming from the wrong direction. However, the shelter on the Library side has disappeared completely—does the Council expect us to rely on friendly trees for protection from the elements?

CADRA Member, Hemdean Road

These two issues, and others, are the subject of on-going discussions between CADRA and Reading Borough Council. The at-source separation and re-cycling experiment has proved popular and successful, and has recently been extended to cover a much larger area of Reading. We hope to provide a report in the next edition of CADRA News.

Neighbourhood Watch in the Caversham District

Derek Bartlett

Recently published Government figures show that, nationally, crime is on the increase again. Street crime and burglary are responsible for most of the increase. In our district, members of Neighbourhood Watches have been able to monitor how their areas compare with each other in containing crime levels through the columns of the monthly Neighbourhood Watch newsletter *Caversham Chat*. This article attempts to fill the void left by the loss of that journal.

For the period April to July 2002, the district continues to record by far the lowest number of crimes overall in Reading Borough. 494 were reported for Caversham, 227 for Emmer Green with Caversham Park and 223 for Caversham Heights. The large disparity between Caversham and the rest is accounted for, in part, by the success of police initiatives in the Amersham Road area aimed at restoring residents' willingness to report crimes. Compared with the same period last year, these figures represent an increase of 20% in overall reported crime in the district. Assault was the category showing the largest increase, 98 cases being an increase of 165. Domestic burglary was up by 36. On the good side, criminal

damage, including damage to cars, was down 17.

In an area of some 31,000 souls, a crime rate of about 31 incidents per 1000 of population is far better than in many other areas of the country. One reason for this is the wide coverage of Neighbourhood Watch schemes in the area. If you are not a member of a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, a few words of explanation might be helpful. A Neighbourhood Watch is a group of families, ideally not more than 20, who undertake to look out for each other with the purpose of making their little part of the wider community safer. One of their number acts as the Watch Co-ordinator, with the job of keeping members informed of advice and information emanating from the police, and telling the police about matters of concern to Watch members. Nationally, Neighbourhood Watch has moved on from the days when all that we did was to put a sign on the lamppost, a sticker in the window, bolt the door and ignore the neighbours. Nowadays, none of us can escape the impact of what is happening outside our home and in our street. Recognising this, many Watches in the district have broadened their scope to tackle local problems such as

graffiti, vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Inevitably, as Watches become involved with problems common to the wider community, they find themselves working, not only with the police, but with other agencies, such as the local authority, the Safer Caversham Forum and with Residents' and Community Associations. Modern Watches have, on the whole, become so important in the fight against crime, and in reducing the fear of crime, that the Area Police Commander for Reading has stated publicly that, stretched though his force is, he will not allow the support it gives to Neighbourhood Watch to be diminished.

If you would like to join a Watch that may be operating in your area, but you do not know who the co-ordinator is, or you would like to find out more about setting up a Watch in your area, please give Liz Herbert a call on 0118 953 6250. Liz is the full-time Neighbourhood Watch Manager for the Reading Police Area. A friendly and helpful lady, she works at the Police Station in Reading to promote and support Neighbourhood Watch throughout the Borough. By starting or joining a Watch you can help make our very pleasant community even safer than it already is.

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
Racial Harassment Helpline (Free, anonymous) 0800 174 805
Refuse Collection & Wheelie Bins Helpline 0800 834 035
Liz Herbert, Neighbourhood Watch 953 6250

Police Sector Sergeant Dave Griffiths 953 6351
Sector Beat Office: 948 1290 for:
PC Peter Stratton, Caversham Heights
PC Chris Manetta, Emmer Green / Caversham Park
PC Rob Pitman, Central & Lower Caversham

Reading Borough Council; Local Transport Plan

The Annual Progress Report 2002 on the Local Transport Plan 2001—2006 was published in August. It summarises the strategy and progress achieved on several aspects of the Plan, including plans for developing the following modes: Bus, Rail, Walking, Cycling, Taxis, Motorcycles, and even Inland Waterways. It also describes how the individual strategies link together through partnerships, (eg Bus/Rail) and mentions some of the very large projects including the M4 Junction 11 scheme.

The document highlights some of the other areas which

are under discussion; these include journeys to school, cross-Thames traffic study, sustainable distribution, work-place charging, parking & enforcement, access to airports and rural areas.

Included in the report is a Questionnaire. We urge all CADRA members to obtain a copy of the report from the Civic Centre, so that you can be better informed about these issues which are crucial to Caversham and its hinterland.

Please contact:

Gemma Stern, Senior Transport Planner on 0118 939 9949

Cash for Crime Reduction Schemes

Safer Caversham Forum

The Safer Caversham Forum is able to promote bids for amounts of money to be spent on capital projects that will have the effect of reducing crime or the fear of crime. To date bids have been lodged, successfully, for security lighting at Milestone Centre and additional or improved lighting in various alleyways and at secluded bus stops. Although these bids happen to have involved lighting, the Forum can consider any

proposals that will achieve the crime reduction objective. For example, the Forum has supported a bid for the installation of gates at St Anne's Well, to be locked only at night. The outcome of that bid is awaited. Anyone may suggest a project for consideration by the Safer Caversham Forum, but it is necessary to do so through a Forum member. CADRA is represented on the Forum and any member of the CADRA

Committee will put an Association member in touch with the CADRA representative. However, it should be noted that proposals for schemes which should properly to be paid for by the property owner or a statutory authority, are not normally accepted. This rules out, for example, the house alarm system you thought of treating yourself to and that pair of smart, lockable gates you considered putting on your drive.

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and latterly Vice-Chairman of the Association. Ian was presented with a testimony of CADRA's thanks. After the formal business, Stuart King gave an entertaining illustrated talk on Old Village Life, centred upon the story of his family's 300 years in Buckinghamshire. Stuart also showed some fine examples of his work as a wood turner and carver, for which he is internationally famous and which he will use for the benefit of Caversham when he carves the Village Sign.