



# CADRA news

Caversham And District Residents' Association

*The voice of Caversham for 40 years*



Volume 7, Issue 2, September 2007

[www.cadra.org.uk](http://www.cadra.org.uk)

## Special Ruby Anniversary Edition

In this special edition, we hope you will enjoy the account of some of the changes and campaigns in Caversham over forty years as well as the usual reports on current issues in Caversham. It is being posted to all CADRA members and our loyal distributors can enjoy a well earned break on this occasion. Copies are also available for £1 from WordPlay in Prospect Street or at the meeting on 17 October. We would like to thank all those who generously donated to the wind vane which you can read about on page 2.

In preparing for the 40th anniversary, we have built on our links with other organisations to put together an evening where you can find out about issues in Caversham, express your views, reminisce about changes or just chat to CADRA committee members and other local people. We have had a very positive response from everyone we approached and it promises to be an excellent evening. Councillor Chris Maskell, Mayor of Reading has kindly agreed to be present. We hope you will join us.

In celebration of its 40th Anniversary  
**CADRA** invites you to an evening on

### Caversham *Past, Present and Future*

**Wednesday 17 October 2007, 7.30pm**  
**At Caversham Primary School**

Slide shows & displays covering:

*Caversham Court Gazebo Trust*  
*Reading's Parks and Open Spaces*  
*Reading Cycle Campaign*  
*Pictures of old Caversham*  
*Safer Caversham Forum*  
*N Reading Youth Project*  
*Caversham Library Centenary*  
*Caversham Globe*  
*Environment Agency*

*Caversham Bridge*  
*Swan Lifeline*  
*RBC – Transport Planning*  
*40 Years of CADRA*  
*Emmer Green Past & Present*  
*Caversham Court Restoration*  
*RBC – Strategic Planning*  
*Churches Together in Caversham*  
*WordPlay, Prospect Street*

*Light refreshments*

All welcome—bring your friends and neighbours  
£1 for non-members

Generously sponsored by **Waitrose**

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# Memorial to Molly Casey



## Dedicating the Wind Vane

**In memory of Molly Casey, founder member and Life President of CADRA, a replica of the 1663 wind vane was commissioned. This will be installed on the Caversham Court gazebo when the restoration is complete.**

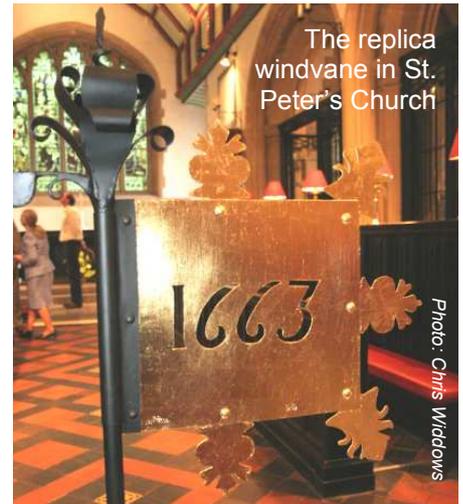
On the evening of Thursday 21 June 2007, about 150 people gathered in St Peter's Church to see the replica wind vane unveiled, blessed by Canon Richard Kingsbury and presented to the Mayor of Reading, Councillor Chris Maskell.

The replica was jointly commissioned by CADRA, Reading Civic Society and the Caversham Court Gazebo Trust, in memory of Molly Casey, Life President of CADRA, who died in November 2006. Councillor Bet Tickner, former Mayor paid tribute to Molly's long years of campaigning.

The original vane, now held in

St Peter's Church, was found to be made of copper and partly gilded, though later covered in a black coating. The replica, made by a specialist in copper weathervanes, has been partly gilded and now awaits the restoration of the gazebo in Caversham Court gardens where it will be installed on the roof. As Molly's daughter, Hester said, it will "look up and down the river and watch the winds of change blow over Caversham."

Both CADRA and the Civic Society had invited their members to contribute to the cost of the project and over £1000 was donated over a short period. Everyone who



The replica windvane in St. Peter's Church

Photo: Chris Widdows



Molly Casey working at her kitchen table



Photo courtesy of Reading Chronicle

(l-r) Reading Mayoress Dorothy Maskell, Civic Society Chairman Richard Bennett, CADRA Chairman Helen Lambert, Rodney Oliver of the Caversham Gazebo Trust and Reading Mayor Chris Maskell

had contributed to the project was invited to the dedication. This had been planned as a midsummer picnic but sadly the weather was against us and we gladly accepted the kind invitation from St Peter's Church.

It was a very happy occasion, serenaded by the Beenham Band, with Molly's family and so many different people with links across Caversham and Reading meeting to pay tribute to Molly's achievements.



## The Beginnings

In the late 1960s Caversham was changing from being a rural village to a suburb of Reading. The heart of Caversham was under threat. Where the precinct now stands there stood a Georgian house. This had been owned in the 19th century by Mr. Frank Knighton. He opened his Caversham House Academy here in 1849 but after the first world war the house reverted to being private property. It gradually fell into a ruinous state of repair and in the 1960's a new shopping centre was planned and became a cause for concern.

The Rev John Grimwade, rector of St. Peter's, writing in the *Caversham Bridge*, feared the arrival of large chain stores, resulting in the closure of independent long established family businesses and the consequent loss of an individual identity for Caversham.

Many Caversham people entertained similar worries. It was in this period of change that a residents' group was founded.

Despite local concerns, the precinct was built. By now the residents' group had become a formalised 'Association'. The campaigning continued. Molly Casey began to write in the *Caversham Bridge*, using the byline 'Watchdog'.

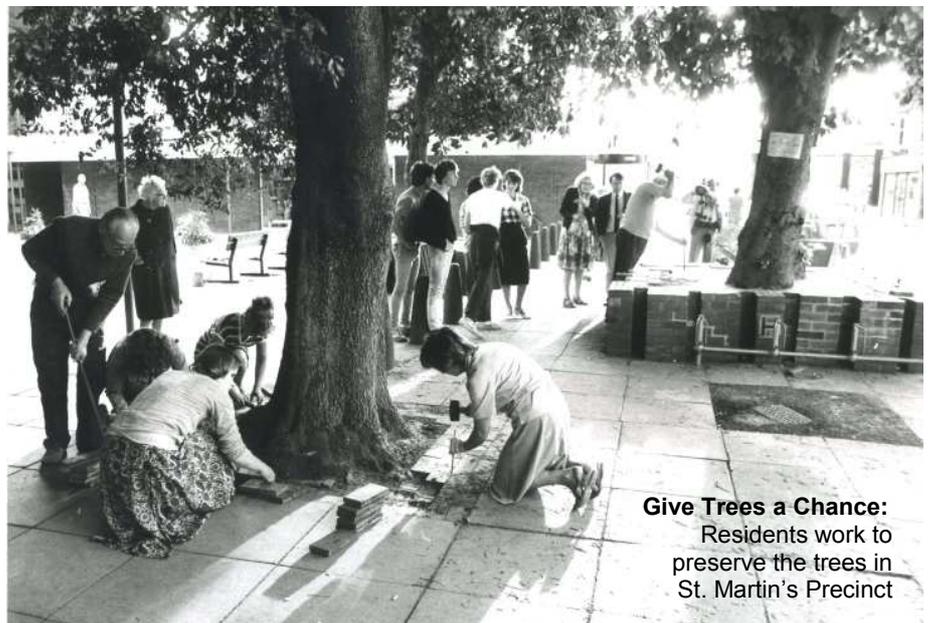
The precinct continued to be a cause for concern. The picture shows CADRA members working to preserve

the trees which had been surrounded by inappropriate materials. The fear was that the trees would die if action was not taken.

Another significant change to Caversham was the development of Caversham Park Village and its associated shops. CADRA was concerned about how this would affect the infrastructure of the area north of the river.

Here was another major campaigning issue!

The result of these, along with smaller developments, was that CADRA found itself gaining expertise. Reading Borough Council recognised the importance of CADRA, which became the Caversham watchdog, looking out for inappropriate developments and presenting the concerns of local residents to the Council.



**Give Trees a Chance:**  
Residents work to preserve the trees in St. Martin's Precinct



## The Battle of Bugs Bottom

**Shipnells's Farm, known locally as Bugs Bottom, is part of a long dry valley leading from the Chiltern Hills, through the golf course, flanked at first by Highdown Hill. It then winds along Hemdean Bottom and Hemdean Road, right into the centre of Caversham.**

Despite some development, most of Bugs Bottom was essentially undeveloped farmland. This all changed in the 1980s with the Higgs and Hill plans to build a housing estate along the valley. In spite of a lengthy campaign, permission was finally granted although much reduced from the original plans.

At first it appeared to be a defeat. Having been heavily involved in opposing the development, CADRA could take some comfort in the consequences of their campaign. It brought the community even closer together and moreover introduced the new younger population of Caversham to the village spirit. Here was an ecological and environmental issue which united all sections of the community.

Bugs Bottom today is, if anything, more environmentally friendly than before. It is also open for all to wander over, whereas

previously it was fenced off, except for the main pathway, for much of its length.

It would be nice to think that the careful landscaping and the open access area that is now available resulted from of the campaigning done by CADRA and others at the time.

### Spot The Difference

*Campaign meetings were always packed out and the picture of the march along the Bottom shows the extent of the support for the action. In the second photo the roofs of the new houses can be seen peaking over the trees.*



Now



**Bugs Bunny:** Protestors highlight the environmental consequences of the development.





## The Granary

Caversham boasts some ancient and historic buildings. Unfortunately several have been demolished or otherwise lost. Caversham Court was knocked down by Reading Borough Council in the first half of the 20th Century. The Granary, a 17th century flint building in Darrell

Rd, was another link with Caversham's early history which was destroyed when the owner claimed that it had fallen into disrepair to such an extent that it had become a public danger. The picture below shows the Granary before its demolition.

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE, MAY, 1981

### SAVE THE GRANARY

Sheer disbelief, followed rapidly by anger and a sense of bitter disappointment, greeted the news that Reading's Planning Committee had given permission for the demolition of the old Granary in Caversham.

Those who knew it well felt, rightly or wrongly, that a decision had been made above their heads and with complete disregard for clearly expressed public feelings, by people who had probably never even seen it before and cared little for its significance as a reminder of Caversham's rural and historic past.

It seemed odd, to say the least, that a building which only weeks previously had been considered safe enough to convert into a flat in which to place someone's granny, should suddenly become a dangerous structure.

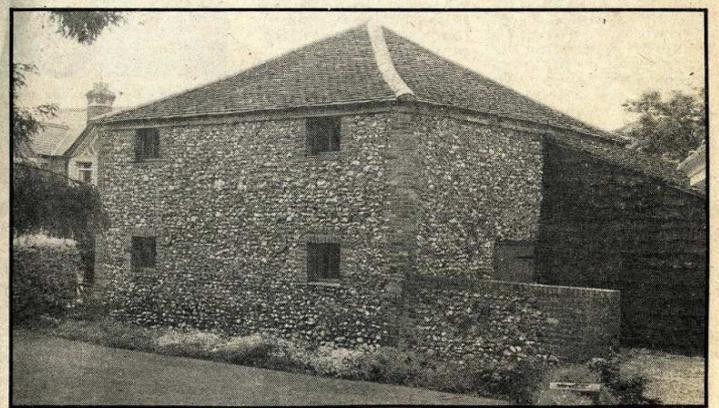
It is (and let us hope that by the time this appears in print the present tense is still applicable) in a much better condition than the Council's own property. The Gazebo, was, and that did not fall down, neither did the old cottages at Church Street which appeared to be beyond saving.

As the building is used neither as a residence, nor by the public, there seems no reason why it should not remain to be used as a store place, for which it was more or less built, until such a time as the economy improves and a more enlightened climate prevails.

Caversham people have no intention of letting this little building go without a battle. The opinion of the vast majority of all those who know it has been clearly expressed through letters and a

petition and if it is ignored the Council will have only itself to blame if it has cause to complain later of the electorate's apathy and indifference.

#### RESIDENTS' VIEWPOINT by WATCHDOG



If you want to see one more piece of old Caversham pulled down, do nothing. If you want to save it — write to your local Councillors.

Writing in 1981, Molly Casey expressed the outrage felt by many at the plans for its demolition. Here is an extract from Molly's article in the May 1981 issue of *Caversham Bridge*:

## Caversham: the Vital Statistics

Statistics are notoriously unreliable, even when they are not lies, damned or otherwise. They do, however, hold a mirror to the changing face of Caversham. County and Ward boundaries have moved and other factors have to be considered but, as a snapshot, it is interesting to take a glance at the following chart and perhaps you would like to draw your own conclusions.

Population figures	1961 census	2001 census
Thames Ward	9,221	9,370
Caversham Ward	7,609	9,265
Mapledurham	not in the Reading census	3,050
Peppard	not in the Reading census	9,280
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>16,830</b>	<b>30,965</b>



## Policing

John Roach

Two Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAG) have been established in Caversham, one for Lower Caversham, including the central business area and the other for Upper Caversham - Caversham Park Village, Emmer Green and Caversham Heights. They help guide the action on issues which residents feel need attention. They include representatives from the police, residents' associations, neighbourhood watch, RBC departments such as Youth Services, Street Care and the Parks Dept as well as interested residents. Both groups have focused on

concerns about anti-social behaviour, mainly in parks or open areas. Action includes the Youth Services providing alternative positive activities, greater police patrolling of these areas and efforts to reduce the availability of alcohol to young people. To participate in a Caversham NAG, contact Insp Graham Dix, on 0845 8 505 505.

Four Police Community Support Officers (listed on back page) have been appointed and have been getting about the community on their bikes or on foot making themselves known to everyone and making an

impact on anti-social behaviour. Their enthusiasm and younger age profile allows them to engage the younger members of the community

Crime figures are used by the NAGs and community police to direct resources and also to allocate Caversham's share of police manpower. Please do report all crime on the non-emergency crime number of 0845 8 505 505. The cumbersome telephone reporting procedure can be a deterrent for reporting crime and a trial is being conducted of reporting crime via a web site. Watch this space!

## Licensing

John Mullaney

In the implementation of the new legislation, Reading adopted a common sense attitude to the new act, demanding that in mainly residential areas the applicant should 'demonstrate clearly that public nuisance would not result from later operation.' Generally the Council did not permit weekday opening beyond 11pm and a bit later at weekends and on special occasions.

At first it appeared these fears of an increase in anti social behaviour were unjustified but, as time has gone on, we are all aware of the increase in drink related problems. The recent smoking ban has created new issues as more patrons outside the pub buildings can result in more noise and disturbance.

If you believe you have grounds for complaint, keep a detailed log of events and register these with the authorities. The best way to provide proof is to report

each event to the Council's environmental officer and to the police and keep the reference number.

The license granted in 2006 continued to apply for the Reading Festival this year. Helped by wonderful weather and an impressive line up, the festival enjoyed an excellent few days. Initial reports are that crime was down as were reports of noise and disturbance. The wet conditions under foot posed huge challenges and late changes to car parking may have contributed to greater problems this year with festival goers parking in residential streets. As before, CADRA will meet with other local residents' associations, Ward Councillors, RBC Licensing staff and Festival Republic to review comments received and take stock to see what lessons can be learned for future years.

## Consultations

Helen Lambert

Reading Council undertakes formal consultation on a range of issues and you can register through their website to be notified by email of new consultations. Recent issues include a consultation asking for comments on the location, facilities and coverage area of polling stations. Another was about Kings Meadow, seeking views on

landscaping, planting and the location of a proposed children's play area.

CADRA also seeks to follow issues in South Oxfordshire which could affect Caversham. Oxfordshire is investigating new sites for mineral extraction. One potential site is an area to the south of Chazey Woods

at the end of the Warren. The plan is to extract sand and gravel and transport it by barge to the existing site in Sonning Eye for processing. Several organisations as well as CADRA have expressed concerns. We will monitor further developments.



## Transport

John Lee

Reading Council proposed a commission to consider the future IDR and town centre transport strategy. A Commissioner is to be appointed this autumn and the Council has committed to be bound by the Commission's findings. CADRA will have early discussions with the Council about the process for us to make our views known and are seeking information on the process.

The traffic congestion at Cow Lane bridges has long been a source of complaint by Caversham and other motorists. The latest proposals, which tie in with the major proposals for Reading station, are to link Rich-

field Avenue to Scours Lane without a link at Cow Lane, although a pedestrian and cycle link through Cow Lane is still, we understand, being considered. The effects of this new road on Caversham traffic are unclear. This extended by-pass to both Portman Road and Oxford Road could drop more Tilehurst and Purley traffic onto Caversham Road (and Caversham Bridge), as it would in future be unable to access the Oxford Road via Cow Lane. CADRA are trying to obtain further details of predicted traffic movements from the Council.

## Planning

Helen Lambert

Every month we produce a summary of applications of wider concern and their progress through the planning system. You can see this on the CADRA website with links to the Council's website where it should be possible to view plans on line. The summary forms the basis of our regular monitoring of applications of significance to Caversham.

Appeals are still a major issue. CADRA was represented at the appeal against the refusal for plans for 76 units on the site of Whitenights Laundry. The Council considered that the height and scale was excessive on the edge of a local residential area. This was supported by local residents, Ward Councillors and CADRA. Bewley Homes argued that the blocks would be screened by the row of poplars and would not unduly dominate the area. The Inspector concluded that the plans would detract from the character and

appearance of the locality and dismissed the appeal. However, the site is deteriorating and does need a solution which will fit well with the locality and be attractive both from George Street and from Christchurch Meadows.

The appeal on the initial application for sheltered housing on School Lane, next to Waitrose car park was withdrawn. A slightly smaller application has been refused by the Planning Committee on the grounds of flooding.

More recent appeals include one against refusal for 14 new units at 241-251 Henley Road and also an appeal against an enforcement notice regarding change of use at 4 South View Avenue. Appeals and enforcement are both issues covered by the Planning White Paper.

Nationally, appeals are expected to

double between 1997 and 2010 and changes are proposed in the White Paper which recognises that enforcement needs a "higher profile and better funding". Locally enforcement continues to be poorly resourced. A new Planning Enforcement Policy has just been approved for Reading.

Two other sections of the Planning White Paper have received greater publicity. 'Development Rights for Householders' proposes that householders wanting to do small extensions or changes do not need to apply for planning permission if their neighbours are amenable to the changes. 'Planning for a Sustainable Future (Major Infra-Structure Projects)' has caused concern to many organisations who fear that the government is removing community voices from the planning process for major developments. CADRA submitted comments.

## Flooding

Jennifer Millest

CADRA would like to commend the Environment Agency for the efficient identification of people in Caversham living within the flood plain. A telephone message was sent to all residents, giving a flood warning and advising them to move to a place of safety. Day and night updates were available through Radio Berkshire and from the Environment Agency's radio reports and help line. The Borough Council delivered

sand bags to the area at risk as well as advisory leaflets.

In the event, much of the water was absorbed by the meadows and open spaces upstream and in many respects the worst effects of the flooding turned out to be the anxiety felt by local people.

# About CADRA



## The Committee

**Chairman:** Helen Lambert,  
5 Derby Road, RG4 5HE  
Tel: 947 3165  
**Treasurer:** Stewart Bolton  
11 Graveney Drive, RG4 7EG  
Tel: 948 2687  
**Secretary:** Linda Watsham  
159 Kidmore Road, RG4 7NJ  
Tel: 947 8744  
**Voluntary Liaison:** James Frost  
12b Gurney Drive, RG4 7TJ  
**Footpaths & Traffic:** John Lee  
316 Hemdean Road, RG4 7QS  
**Planning:** Jennifer Millett  
40 Mill Green, RG4 8EX  
**Licensing & Transport:** John Mullaney  
29 Derby Road, RG4 5HE  
**Web-site & Link to Committee Support:**  
Ruth Perkins  
61 Woodcote Road, RG4 7EX  
**Safer Caversham:** John Roach  
3 Courtlands, St. Peter's Avenue, RG4  
7DH

## Committee Support

**Membership:** Mick Simmons  
84 Kidmore Road, RG4 7NA  
**Newsletter Distribution:** Jo Munday  
46 South View Ave, RG4 5AJ  
**Planning Research:** Liz Killick  
153 Upper Woodcote Rd,  
**Website Support:** Linda Barlow  
11 Shepherds Lane, RG4 7JJ

## The Purpose of CADRA

### Our aim is to:

*"preserve and enhance the quality of life in Caversham and the surrounding District."*

We follow planned changes relevant to Caversham and look for opportunities to protect or improve our shared environment.

We avoid party political bias, working closely with Reading Councillors and Officers, other local groups, the Police, companies and individuals. We issue two newsletters a year, hold two public meetings, write columns for the Caversham Bridge local newspaper and maintain a website with a wide range of information on local and current issues.

### CADRA Membership

Membership of CADRA is just £2 per year per household. Membership leaflets are available in Caversham Library, Wordplay and Bangles or from the Membership Secretary, tel. 0118 9543537. The stronger our voice, the more impact we can have on local decisions. Do join!

## Contacting CADRA

We prefer you to contact us in writing, so that we can give proper attention to your comments and make a considered response. Please write to the Secretary, or better still, use e-mail. Our e-mail address is [info@CADRA.org.uk](mailto:info@CADRA.org.uk) For urgent matters only, officers' telephone numbers are given on the left, but please use them with consideration.

## Can you help?

Would you like to take part in the general running of the association and perhaps develop a particular area in line with your skills and interests? We would like to co-opt new members

on to the committee which meets once a month on a Monday evening. Business between meetings is conducted primarily by email.

# Useful Information

### Ward Councillors

Contact via: 0118 939 0287  
**Mapledurham**  
Fred Pugh

### Caversham

Andrew Cumpsty  
Tom Stanway  
Steve Waite

### Peppard

Bob Green  
Richard Willis  
Mark Ralph

### Thames

Isobel Ballsdon  
Jeanette Skeats  
David Stevens

### Caversham Neighbourhood Police

Inspector Graham Dix, Sergeant Nigel Scarratt  
Police Constables: Stuart Murdoch and Chris Manetta  
Police Community Support Officers: John Hendy, Jenni Williams, Callum Bushall and Layla Cannings.

Web-site [www.thamesvalley.police.uk](http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk)

Police 'Surgeries' at Church House, 1st Monday of the month 5pm - 8pm.

To report crime, suspicious incidents and to contact individual officers call 0845 8 505 5050 or email: [police@thamesvalley.pnnn.police.uk](mailto:police@thamesvalley.pnnn.police.uk)  
**In an emergency or if a crime is being committed call 999**

### Reading Borough Council

Switchboard	0118 939 0900
Call Centre including Refuse Collection, Graffiti Removal	0800 834 035
Planning permission & enquiries, Licensing, Road Safety	0800 626 540

[www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk), gives information on a wide range of issues including planning applications. Links to specific parts of the Council web-site can be found on the CADRA website: [www.cadra.org.uk](http://www.cadra.org.uk)