



EMMER GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

serving the local community

WINTER NEWSLETTER
December 2011

www.egra.co.uk

The EGRA committee wishes all its members a healthy and Happy New Year. 2012 promises to be eventful for a number of reasons. We have an outing arranged in April, a talk on the Emmer Green caves in May, and our very own party at the beginning of June. And that's all before the Olympic flame reaches Reading in July.

DIAMOND PICNIC IN THE PARK

Let the party begin! Following consultations and positive responses from local community groups, EGRA is able to confirm that the plans to hold a 'Picnic in the Park' are now able to proceed. The chosen day is **Monday June 4th 2012**.

We have already held a meeting with RBC's Parks Department who have offered encouragement. The event promises to be an historic landmark and we already have promises of a local jazz band and an offer to provide a bbq and other refreshments. We hope in due course even more community groups or individuals will come forward with ideas of their own to participate or showcase local talent. The focus will be on celebration but we have been given the option for community groups to fund raise too. If you have not already been contacted by us and have any ideas you wish to be considered, please submit these. We would also like to hear from anyone who attended the Coronation celebrations here in 1953 and their recollections of the day.

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/DG_197517

CAVERSHAM 100 YEARS ON

On 9th November EGRA was joint host with CADRA and WADRA, at an open evening at the Baptist Church, Prospect Street to mark the centenary of Reading Borough's expansion to include Caversham. In 1911 Emmer Green was still very much an agricultural community and parts of it remained in Oxfordshire until the latter 20th century. Local historian Margaret Simons gave a fascinating illustrated talk. EGRA republished its local history leaflet (free copies still available) and created two of the many history panels, which were on display. www.caversham100yearson.org.uk



Photo courtesy of Vickie Abel



Photo courtesy of Reading Chronicle

OUTINGS

EGRA's Barry Prior is organising a rescheduled outing to the Thames Valley Police Museum at Sulhampstead <http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/aboutus/aboutus-museum.htm>. This is now scheduled for Thursday 19th April, so if you are interested, please email barry.prior@backhouses.co.uk or phone 0118 9461150 to add your name to the list.

TRAVEL

Bus Changes

Due to the station redevelopment the town centre is enduring a transition period. Bus services have undergone a radical change and, Reading Buses and RBC have been listening to your concerns. Some problems relating to bus stops in the town centre have been addressed and drivers instructed to ensure destinations are clear prior to reaching departure points. EGRA members had the chance to comment on the proposals affecting local bus routes before they came into effect in September. Despite the fact that any change will not suit all, generally Emmer Green has fared well, with the Courtenay Drive loop we campaigned for in 2009 being reinstated.

POLICE MATTERS

The next **Upper Caversham Neighbourhood Action Group** meeting is on 19th January, 7.00pm at Highdown School. Results have been collated from the survey forms that were sent out in July. A public meeting was held on Monday 17th October 2011, where the new priorities were set for the coming year. These priorities are: 1.Speeding 2.Burglary 3.Parking. At the next meeting in January it is hoped to get a speaker from the Council on parking issues, which will hopefully be followed up with the publication of leaflets.

From Monday 14th November The Thames Valley Police non-emergency number changed to a new national number **101**. It will run alongside 0845 8 505 505 until the end of March 2012.

<http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/yournh-tvp-pol-area-N130> This is the direct link to the Caversham North neighbourhood section of the Thames Valley Police website.

LICENSING LAWS

EGRA and Local Councillors worked closely with residents living near the Gardeners' Arms, Surley Row, when Greene King, the new owners sought to extend the licensing hours to unreasonable times and introduce loud outside entertainment. It was due to go to a public hearing, but the brewery withdrew its requests before that happened. The pub has now been refurbished and from all accounts has a much more welcoming interior.

NOISE POLLUTION

No-one likes to complain, particularly if it involves neighbours. Sometimes people are thoughtless, but often folk do not realise how far sound carries. Whether it's a barking dog, loud music, or general nuisance, please try and have a friendly word with your neighbour first. They may not be at home when things are bad, and be unaware of the situation. From time to time, many of us need to use the services of builders. However good they are, it's always something to be endured – mess, disruption and noise. Please warn your neighbours of impending works and ask them to let you know if things become intolerable. As a last resort the Council can be contacted:

Noise Pollution: Environmental Health Section on FREEPHONE **0800 626540**.

Remember the contractors will be moving on; your neighbours will be there for a lot longer.

SHOPPING PRECINCT CAR PARK

The car park at the main shopping precinct in Emmer Green has always been private. There is one notice on entry stating this and a few less clear ones warning of clamping practices. The main purpose of this, we presume, is to deter would be park and ride vehicles. However the clampers do not discriminate between this and more innocent short-term use. EGRA hopes to campaign once again for improvements to the surface, the lighting and signage, but this will probably take an enormous amount of effort. All suggestions welcome.

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S 'WE NEED TO TALK'

Following on from a Peppard Ward meeting in October, participants together with others from throughout the borough were invited to a Consultation Roadshow feedback meeting at the Town Hall on 24th November. The purpose was to exchange views and priorities in the light of major budget cuts in the coming years. The results of discussions that took place would be fed into the development of future services.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



Clayfield Copse

The waymarks project is well underway, and Berkshire and Mid-Thames Woodcarvers are busy in their workshop at Highdown School. EGRA has funded six plaques. Come and look at the finished products at our Jubilee event on 4th June, before they are installed in the woods.

Friends of Clayfield Copse continue to meet for active conservation work on the first Sunday of each month. They also arrange guided walks through the woods. Contact Anne Latto on 0118 9484454 or email anne_latto@yahoo.co.uk

Trees

An EGRA representative attended the Trees and Reading Borough Council Workshop in November, to learn how the various departments operated. The annual budget has not been cut, but with many trees reaching the end of their natural life, money is tight and the Tree Warden Scheme, involving volunteers, has been invaluable. Trees are due to be planted on the green along Rotherfield Way, an oak replaced on the old Peppard Road.

The biggest headache involves Highways. An increasing number of utility services have used grass verges, both affecting the use of existing trees and hindering the planting of new ones. This is directly affecting areas in Emmer Green, such as Buckingham Drive.

Many cherry trees have been removed from Courtenay Drive and EGRA has been supporting an initiative by local residents to replace them. They are working in partnership with Reading Borough Council on a rolling programme, and it is hoped this may act as a template for neighbouring streets.

Caversham Lakes

Gravel extraction company Lafarge have announced plans to give permitted access to former working areas. There will be marked pathways and interpretation boards on the wildlife. It will be a rolling programme and some areas currently active will be incorporated in the future. It will be for local people to enjoy, rather than a wider scheme.

REMEMBERED

We have lost two valued members of our community in recent months. Peggy Goodworth of St Barnabas Road and Owen Jewiss from The Ridings. Peggy's late husband Bill was a founding member of the Residents' Association and they both gave invaluable support over the years. In 1964 they allowed part of their house to serve as the doctors' surgery; an arrangement which

continued for 16 years. Owen Jewiss was a very active member of St Barnabas Church, who did a lot to help the wider community. He also took photographs and wrote reports of the EGRA AGMs.

SNIPPETS

True Food Community Co-operative

Congratulations to this volunteer supported enterprise on winning 'Best Retail Initiative' in the BBC Food and Farming Awards 2011. <http://www.truefood.coop/News.cfm?NewsId=24>

Notice Board Revamp

In August, Jane Handley and a team of a dozen volunteers stripped the notice board, removed redundant staples and gave it a lick of paint, before replacing current notices. Many thanks to all.

Basic Computer Skills

Earlier this year we publicised a possible opportunity for computing classes at the SureStart Centre. A few people expressed an interest and this was conveyed to the centre. No news as yet.

Caversham Good Neighbours.

This voluntary organisation helps local residents in need by offering vital transport and home visits. They would like to both recruit volunteers and promote their services. Leave a message at the office on 0118 9483466, or ring Pat Rawlings on 0118 9477778.

Graffiti

Bob Cruickshank currently heads our graffiti clean up team. Please report any 'damage' to him on 0118 9482900 or email deecbee@talktalk.net. On Thursday January 12th at 7.00pm the Council are offering Graffiti Cleaning Training – venue to be decided. Please contact Joanne Anderson Joanne.Anderson@reading.gov.uk by 16th December, or let the EGRA team know.

Tradesmen's List

The next complete overhaul will be 2012. Please continue to submit recommendations to Jane Handley at lukdan@hotmail.co.uk or 0118 9484775.

Email Address

If you have an email address and have not yet given it to us, then please do consider doing so. Otherwise you may well miss out on the latest news.

Website Delays

The Emmer Green history website formally hosted by Highdown School is waiting to be reconfigured and incorporated into the EGRA site. We will let you know when that is done.

COMMITTEE

We have seen a bit of shake up on the committee – Jill Verran has been Membership Secretary for as long as the role has existed and we can't thank her enough for her dedication and hard work. Richard Hammond has kindly agreed to take over from Jill. We also welcome Jasmine Waters to the committee. Thanks go to our teams of volunteers who help deliver the newsletters and keep an eye on the notice board, clean graffiti and water trees.

WE VALUE ALL HELP AND SUPPORT. THERE ARE VACANCIES ON THE COMMITTEE. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO FIND OUT MORE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Some of our members' subscriptions will be up for renewal in 2012. Those due will be sent reminders. We really appreciate those who pay on time and for five years in advance. Details will be on the renewal form. Let us know if you do not wish to renew and we will remove your details from our database. The Membership Secretary can be contacted at egra.members@gmail.com.

Margaret Ormonde, Chair. Tel: 0118 9470922 email: egramargaret@googlemail.com

