

Neighbourhood News



from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 25 - September 2011

We've cleared another load of rubbish!

Saturday 13 August saw the Bell Tower Community Association's fifth community tidy-up day. As in previous years we provided a huge skip in E P Collier school playground to help local residents dispose of their unwanted goods. The skip is kindly sponsored by Reading Festival organisers Festival Republic.

The event also gave us the chance to help residents clear rubbish from front gardens, and to remove fly-tipped rubbish from street corners and alleys. Plenty of unwanted but usable items were left out for recycling and found a new home - these included bikes, toys and a rowing machine.

Event organiser David Neale said: 'We are delighted to be able to put on another tidy-up day. As well as being our most popular event and providing a useful service to the community it gives neighbours a great opportunity to get together and make a contribution to the environment of our area.'



CLEANING UP AGAIN: some satisfied customers bring their rubbish, and (right) the Bell Tower tidy-up team with a full skip and some recycled goods



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Caversham celebrates in style

This year Caversham is celebrating the centenary of its incorporation into the Borough of Reading. As part of the anniversary celebrations there will be a garden party with an Edwardian theme at Caversham Court Gardens on Saturday 10 September between 12 noon and 9pm.

There will be a free ferry from Thames Side Promenade, the Caversham Horticultural Society annual show, music, activities for children, Brickwork Poets, Progress Theatre strolling players, cream teas, and Pimms at 5pm. Visitors are asked to bring a picnic - and a large hat or parasol will also be perfect for the occasion.

FIVE STAR WINES

133 Caversham Road



- ★ National Lottery (Lotto) ★ Pay point ★ Gas and electric meter cards & keys ★ Bill payments
- ★ Bus tickets ★ Phone top-up ★ TV licensing
- ★ Thames Water bill payments ★ ATM ★ Wines, beers and spirits ★ Sandwiches, snacks and groceries
- ★ Newspapers and magazines
- ★ Western Union money transfer

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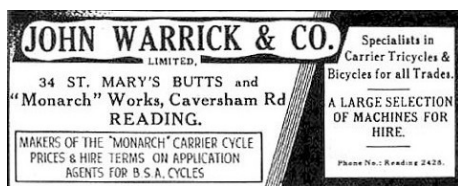
Visit www.bell-tower.org.uk or email us at info@bell-tower.org.uk

Cornets, Concorde and court cases

Jonathan Dart looks at the fascinating history of one corner of Caversham Road

Looking at the unprepossessing Shurgard storage building on the corner of Caversham and Northfield Roads, nothing now indicates that the site links our area to an innovative late 19th/early 20th century engineer, ice cream vendors, a legal precedent and the prototype Concorde. However, the building's name, Monarch House, is a clue, recalling the Monarch Works that once stood there.

The works were home from 1910 to John Warrick & Co. which built and hired carrier bicycles and tricycles, like the ones used by stop-me-and-buy-one ice-cream sellers. Pictures of these vehicles can be seen at the 'John Warrick Online Museum' <http://1914warrick.wordpress.com>. One of these is also exhibited at Blake's Lock museum.



The origin of this vehicle goes back to 1883 when Reading-born John Warrick designed a carrier tricycle for transporting his tools. Warrick was in partnership with Pitt of Birmingham for the manufacture of rifles during which he obtained the trademark 'Monarch'. Warrick himself was a member of the Berkshire Volunteers and was a superb marksman, which proved invaluable in promoting the company as he won many medals and competitions. The military link served Warrick well, because when the British army's first cycling regiment was formed in 1888 he was awarded the contract to supply carrier tricycles, according to the online museum.

When the age of the motor car began in the early 20th century, the Monarch Works produced motorised versions of its carrier tricycles. However, these very soon became obsolete due to

improvements in four-wheel vehicle design and manufacture, and Warrick eventually ceased production in 1924/25 after making around 2,000 of the three-wheeled motor carriers, pictures of which can be seen on the Warrick web site.

In addition to the engineering works there was a Monarch Cycle Shop at 34 St Mary's Butts as well as service centres in London on Edgware Road and in Brixton and Kensington.

Warrick died in 1925, but the company continued to manufacture and hire trade bicycles and tricycles until the 1950s. A case involving Warrick and Co. in 1953 set a legal precedent, used as an example in law textbooks. The company stated in its contract that it accepted no liability for any injury when using one of its cycles. A hirer was injured while riding one of its tricycles when the saddle broke, and the court ruled that the exclusion clause did not prevent the hirer from suing for negligence.

By the mid-1960s bicycle manufacturing at the plant had ceased, according to a former employee writing on the Reading Forum website. Whether this was connected with the court case is unclear. The former employee writes that when he worked there the Monarch Works was solely involved in stove enamelling, electroplating and contract engineering, and that some parts for the prototype Concorde were made there. They also did stove enamelling and electroplating for another engineering company at 67 Caversham Road, Bucklers, who among other things made sports cars. The only manufacturing Warrick did at that time was a collapsible golf trolley to hire out to golf clubs.

The works extended along Caversham Road to the corner of Northfield Road, and between the main entrance and Northfield Road were about three terraced houses that were owned by the company and rented out to some of the managerial staff. The works eventually closed in the early 1970s, and the site was bought by a property developer who built Monarch House, originally as an office block.

News in brief

● Take a look at your paperback collection, and you will be surprised how many of them were printed by Cox & Wyman in Cardiff Road. We are hoping to organise a tour of the their printing works in the next few weeks. The tour will be free and open to everyone - to give us an idea of numbers please contact Barbara at 77 Addison Road or on 0118 950 7685 if you are interested.

● We held our 'little lunch' in the school playground in July. Attendance was reduced because of heavy showers but it was a pleasant sociable event. We hope to organise a much larger event, possibly a street party, for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee next year - please contact Barbara at 77 Addison Road if you are interested in helping.

● A team of golf professionals recently played 99 holes in a day including the Leaderboard course at the Rivermead, raising £10,000 for charity.

● Reading Borough Council has started a consultation entitled 'We Need to Talk', to get views on how our money should be spent in the future. Leaflets are available at the Civic Centre and libraries and online at www.reading.gov.uk/weneedtotalk. There will also be consultation meetings - the nearest will be at Battle Library on 29 September at 7pm and 30 September at 1pm, and at the Civic Centre on 4 October at 1pm. Please register your interest at www.reading.gov.uk/letstalkevents or by phone on 0118 937 3787.

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