

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 41 - September 2015



SPECIAL EDITION CELEBRATING 10 YEARS 2005 - 2015

SIZZLING IN THE STREET

The Bell Tower Community Association lit up the start of the barbecue season with its street party in Newport Road on Saturday 6 June.

More than 120 people turned out to enjoy the sun and mingle with their fellow Bell Tower residents. To get the party sizzling the Bell Tower team borrowed the Moderation's barbecue to dish up just under 100 servings of barbecue staples cooked by professional chef and local resident Chris Madden. To whet the appetite the Mod also provided some free Thai salad and green curry.

After lunch it was time to exercise the little grey cells in Bell Tower secretary Rod Plinston's quiz, with the prize for the winner provided by the Standard Tandoori Nepalese restaurant.

While the adults racked their brains over Rod's questions, the children too had an opportunity to test their skills in a colouring competition organised by New Hope Community Church. Local convenience store Five Star Wines provided sweets to keep them going. New Hope also offered a face painting team led by vicar Joy Atkins. So finely honed were their artistic skills that even some adults took advantage of the service. New Hope was also providing an opportunity for party-goers to donate to those affected by the earthquake in Nepal.

Bell Tower chairman Jonathan Dart said: 'What impresses me every year about this event is the commitment of all those who turn out to help organise and run it, as well as the



HAVING FUN (clockwise from top left): playing in the sand, delicious curry from the Moderation, barbecue chef Chris in action, and a taste of the party atmosphere

support from the church and local businesses. I would particularly like to thank Chris for taking a busman's holiday and doing the barbecue. The collection for Nepal also shows the wider sense of community involved in the party. We hope to see you all next year!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Saturday 5 September
5.00 - 9.00pm: **Community
barbecue & Treasure hunt**
(barbecue starts at 6.30)

Friday 23 October 7.30pm -
Quiz at the Crowne Plaza

Details on the back page

FIVE STAR WINES

- ★ 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

133 Caversham Road
Reading
Tel: 0118 961 2110

*Ask in our shop about the Caversham
Lodge Guest House upstairs.*



Happy Birthday, Bell Tower!

This year we celebrate the Bell Tower Community Association's 10th anniversary. *Neighbourhood News* asked Barbara Kendall, who was one of those who helped found Bell Tower, how the organisation was set up, and takes a look back at its achievements since then.

Barbara said the idea came about as a way of complementing a recently started Neighbourhood Watch group by trying to engender a feeling of community. The next step was to involve other people. Those initially approached included local councillors, Reading Borough Council's Community Manager Chris Bloomfield and the then vicar of New Hope, Jon Westall. A public meeting was called, with the flyers paid for by New Hope as part of

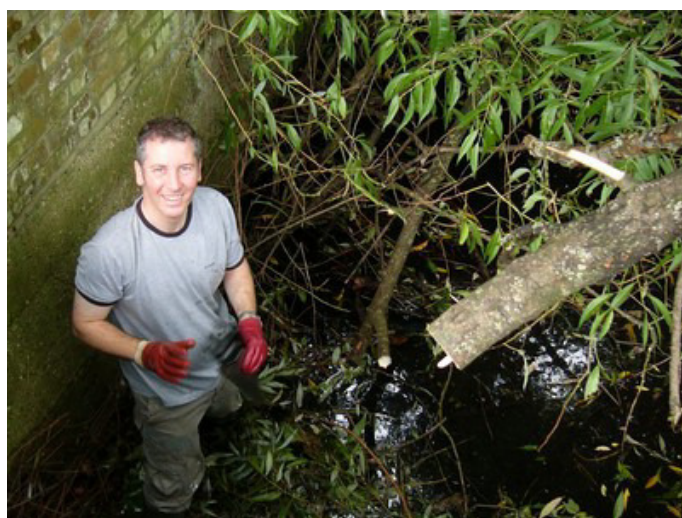
help given by its then Community Development Manager Claire Srodowa.

As a result of the public meeting an action group was formed. The group received two grants to help set up Bell Tower, one from the council and the other from the Berkshire Community Foundation. Local resident Simon Bolton drew up a constitution, and so Bell Tower was born.

One of its first areas of community engagement was with E P Collier School. Then headmistress Jenny Gladwell provided a shopping list, including help with the library, someone to teach and provide materials for knitting and percussion instruments.

Asked whether she thought back in 2005 that Bell Tower still would be alive and kicking in 2015, Barbara said she did not give it a thought at the time but that she was warned by Chris Bloomfield that many community associations only last about about two or three years. Chris now holds Bell Tower up as a shining example.

How does Barbara think the association has done over the past 10 years? Measured against the founding motto 'for a friendly, safe and clean environment', on cleanliness and safety she cites Bell Tower's award-winning anti-graffiti campaign, and thinks the area has become much friendlier, with more people knowing their neighbours than they did back in 2005.



(Clockwise from top left): the first Big Skip day (2006), cleaning graffiti in Randolph Road (2007), clearing Vastern Ditch behind the Crowne Plaza (2008), and our first Big Lunch in the school playground (2010)

Here is a quick year-by-year review of Bell Tower's achievements:

2005: First *Neighbourhood News* is published in September, advertising the inaugural meeting of the association on 11 October. One of the articles asks readers to think up a name for the group.

2006: The first Community Tidy-up Day, better known as 'The Big Skip'. Bell Tower campaigns for and achieves improvements to safety at the pedestrian crossings on the part of Caversham Road which runs through our area.

2007: Bell Tower wins a 'Pride of Reading' award for its 'G Team' anti-graffiti campaign. A graffiti cleaning kit is provided by the council and sponsorship for other materials provided by Drews.

2008: Plans to turn the Dawson's Music and Kingdom of Leather shop

sites on Caversham Road into a casino are withdrawn after a successful campaign by Bell Tower on behalf of local residents.



2009: After a campaign by Bell Tower, entrance gates are fitted to two alleys in the area to prevent them being used for antisocial behaviour and crime.

2010: The group wins third place in Reading Borough Council's Community Empowerment Awards. Plans to close the Denbeigh Place play area are dropped after a long fight by Bell Tower.

2011: Bell Tower draws up an emergency flood plan for our area with advice from the Environment Agency and National Flood Forum.

2012: Bell Tower helps organise its first street party in Newport Road. It is so successful that it becomes an annual event.

2013: Bell Tower is awarded a Community First grant for a front-garden competition to help improve the local environment.

2014: Bell Tower helps Cardiff Road residents campaign against noise and pollution from the new train depot.

2015: With the help of a Community First grant, Bell Tower purchases and receives planning permission for a new community noticeboard.

2016-2025: Watch this space!

Jonathan Dart



(Clockwise from top left): helping plant trees in Richfield Avenue (2011), fun and games at our first street party (2012), recycling old bicycles (2013), and everything and the kitchen sink at our recent Big Skip day (2015)



www.bell-tower.org.uk

bringing local
people together

BARBECUE & TREASURE HUNT

Saturday 5 September 5.00-9.00pm



BARBECUE 6.30pm - Reading
Canoe Club, The Warren,
Caversham RG4 7TH

£5 including food and soft drinks,
bring your own alcoholic drinks

TREASURE HUNT 5.00pm - meet at New
Hope Community Centre, 95 York Road,
Reading RG1 8DU. £1 entry, free for
barbecue ticket holders. First prize £20
plus a bottle of bubbly!



The treasure hunt will eventually lead to the barbecue at 6.30.
Bring your bottles to the start of the treasure hunt and we'll
transport them to the barbecue venue for you! There is a
covered terrace at the barbecue venue.

Tickets from David at 24 Addison Road 07890 118167

News in brief

● After months of waiting we finally have planning permission to put up our new noticeboard. The site for the board is the small area of grass to the right of Monmouth Court in Northfield Road. We have the noticeboard already, and are in the process of getting final confirmation from the housing association that manages Monmouth Court - so we hope to be able to put it up in the next few weeks.

● We understand from a recent conversation with local councillors that the site of the former Cox & Wyman printing works in Cardiff Road has been sold to a company called Berkshire Estates. At this stage we are not aware of any future plans for the site but this might mean that a proposal for a residential development will be put forward. More information, of course, as we hear it.

you're invited to join us for a

Girls Night In

Saturday 19 September from 7pm

At **new hope community centre**

95 York Road, Reading RG1 8DU

Raising money for Macmillan Cancer
Support

- ★ Make-Over Demonstrations
- ★ Summertime Hair Care Tips
- ★ Foot Spa and nail painting
- ★ Face masks and hand lotions
- ★ 10 Minute Shoulder Massage
- ★ Snacks and non-alcoholic cocktails
- ★ Auction of pampering vouchers

£5 donation on the door

**Other donations welcome
for further pampering**



THE QUIZ IS BACK!

Friday 23 October

7.30pm

Crowne Plaza Caversham Bridge

Tickets £6 including a sandwich buffet
(yes, we're back to our original catering!)
from David at 24 Addison Road 07890 118167



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Dark Oak

Red Cedar

Harvest Gold

Tudor Black Oak

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