

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

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Season's greetings to all our readers

The scarecrows are out!



SCARING THE CROWS? A very hungry caterpillar in York Road, and Iona and Otis with a polar bear outside New Hope



Every year on 31 October New Hope offers an alternative event to Halloween. For most people Halloween is a time of fun and dressing up and getting to eat lots of sweets, but for others especially some of our little ones in the community it is just a little bit too scary.

This year as we still couldn't gather in large numbers we held a completely new event in the community and did a scarecrow trail.

With the environment being top news it seemed like the obvious theme to choose, and so members of the community and EP Collier School set to work on creating some masterpieces made from recycled or repurposed materials. The environmentally-themed scarecrows were on display around the area, in shop windows and on their benches, by front doors and climbing railings, all through half term.

We then finished with a family fun day on 31 October. The day itself included face painting and mini scarecrow making, bug hotels and bamboo wind chimes. We look forward to next year and the new cohort of scarecrows to find.

Abi Ord



A little history...

The Moderation, 213 Caversham Road, was built in the 1860s and rebuilt in 1893. We aren't 100% sure of the exact location of the original Moderation – it may well have been next door to the new one, but some believe it was the other side of Caversham Road.



Early landlords included Edmund Philips, Percy Wesley Tobit, Richard J Webb and Robert Webb, both members of the same family that ran the George. It was a Simonds then Courage pub until 1977 when it was acquired by Bass during the pub-swapping craze. For years the following rhyme was displayed in the pub:

*Let moderation be your guide
Nor ever from its precepts slide.
Take the good things in life and use 'em
With thankful heart, and not abuse 'em.
Some men to vile excesses stray:
They sign a pledge to mend their way.
Be thou to sleeping more inclined
Which humbly sought the noblest find.
Then water for your cleansing take,
But liquor for your stomach's sake
And recommend to all the nation
Your temperance and moderation.*

Research by Julia Wink

Our hidden past...



EXPLORING THE PAST: David Neale from Bell Tower (holding the picture) shows a group of walkers some of the area's hidden history

Did you know that Caversham Road was ankle deep in water in 1894? Or why the end house in Northfield Road (in the photo, on the right) is different from the others in the same terrace?

All this and much more was revealed in our annual local history walk, held as part of Heritage Open Days in September. This year Bell Tower secretary David Neale guided two groups of walkers around the area, stopping to show pictures from the past and exploring some of the area's former industries, architecture and a few bits of quirky history.

Because of Covid restrictions, numbers for last year's walk were much more limited. This prompted us to produce a documentary of the walk, which is still available to watch. So if you prefer not to wait until next year's walk you can watch the video at any time on our website at www.bell-tower.org.uk/watch. We hope to repeat our walks next year.

...and right up to date

Developments in the area continue apace, with the first part of the Printworks estate now finished and the terrace of new houses under construction in Swansea Road.

Bellway Homes has completed the terraced houses in Addison Road, and the houses in Cardiff Road and blocks of flats have been started. We expect the development to be complete in the first half of 2022.

Demolition behind the Carters site in Swansea Road and Northfield

Road is now complete, and the new houses have been started.

Further afield, Berkeley Homes have appealed against refusal for their proposals for the SSE site in Vastern Road, and this has gone to a public inquiry. At the moment there appears to be little progress with the retail park and former post office sites next to the station. We are hoping to attend a meeting with the post office site developers in the near future.

For the latest please visit www.bell-tower.org.uk/developments.



GOING UP: (clockwise from top left): The former Cox & Wyman works, the same view today, demolition in Swansea Road, and plans for the site.

These local businesses support Bell Tower – please give them your support if you can:


THE Moderation
Pub and Kitchen

213 Caversham Road
0118 375 0767

 **READING DRIVE - IN**
0118 957 3649


Richfield's
DELI & GRILL
211 Caversham Road
0118 939 1144

0118 950 3355
RIVER SPICE
Restaurant & Lounge