

# Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

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[www.bell-tower.org.uk](http://www.bell-tower.org.uk)



[info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk)



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Season's greetings to all our readers

## Dancing again!



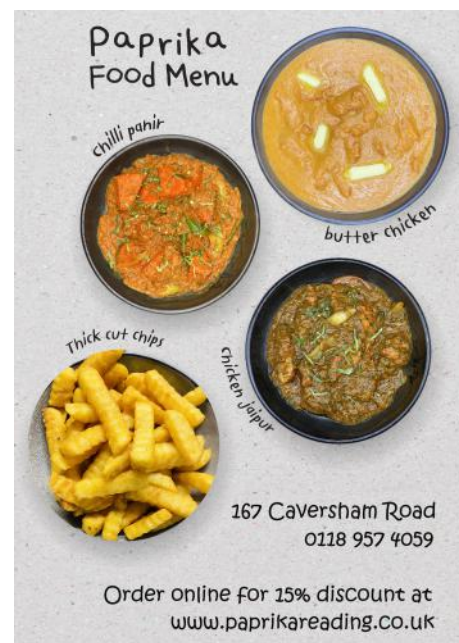
**LET'S ALL DO THE CONGA...BRETON STYLE!** Participants enjoying fun and dancing at the Bell Tower ceilidh

Participants in our ceilidh at New Hope on Saturday 14 October threw themselves and, in some cases their partners, around the floor with gusto.

The music and choreography were provided by the highly accomplished "Left Foot Forward". The dancers' proficiency varied widely, with one or two experienced in ceilidh dancing and able to show everyone how it should be done, while others were surprised to discover that here a promenade was not where you

walked alongside the sea. Other skills to be mastered included stripping the willow as well as polkaing, galloping and waltzing.

Fate was tempted by a dance called "Flying Scotsman" but fortunately there were no shunting accidents, and all the participants maintained a good head of steam. In the course of the evening, there was only one minor tumble, with a close relative of the tripper hoping someone had captured the moment.



While all the attendees thoroughly enjoyed the event and the band provided first-class accompaniment, the low number of dancers means we are unsure whether we can repeat the event. To make it financially viable attendance would need to be around twice the number who put on their dancing shoes and turned out.

As with all our events, Bell Tower would welcome feedback on this. We can be contacted by email at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk).

Jonathan Dart



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# Bringing local history to life



**DEVASTATION:** Recue workers at 77-81 Cardiff Road after the bomb blast, 1940  
Photo: Reading Museum (Reading Borough Council)

My dog has marched me along Cardiff Road countless times on our daily strolls, but until a recent Heritage Open Days walk I'd barely looked up, let alone noticed a small but significant anomaly in our neighbourhood.

Just a few houses down from the intersection of Addison Road and Cardiff, an unassuming pair of houses interrupts the neat flow of red-brick terrace homes. Breaking away from the row, and standing back from the road, they're slightly smaller and one is detached. These houses, it turns out, were rebuilt following a rogue bombing during World War 2, when a German Luftwaffe plane likely targeted the Great Western Railway tracks running parallel – and missed.

In the near-century since, this neighbourhood – once populated by the families who worked at the malt houses, paper mills and auto shops nearby – is vastly changed. And with only one blue plaque and few other such reminders of the past, it seems

that such seminal history has, much like those houses, taken a step back, too. That's why, having moved here last autumn and keen to understand my new home, I eagerly signed up to September's Heritage Open Days.

Kicking off at the Moderation, the walk continued down Caversham Road before turning into Northfield Road and winding into Swansea, Cardiff, Addison and York Roads. And the streets came alive. The quirks of these old Victorian terraces were elucidated, and their delicate design features were suddenly rendered meaningful. The little sculpted faces above our bay windows? Potentially the portrait of a builder's family. That house in Addison Road with its front door on the corner? Once a shop, with its signage panel still visible above the window.

Since September, the dog walks have continued, soggy and damp as ever. But now they tend to be a happy reminder of everything that came before us.

*Manori Ravindran*

## 'G Team' kept busy

The Bell Tower 'G Team' of community graffiti cleaners has had plenty of work in the past few months. We have been making frequent outings to clean up tags, particularly in Caversham Road.



We have managed to get a further stock of chemicals and graffiti wipes from the council, and have been using black spray paint to cover graffiti on the shutters on the former Drews building. Some recent tags on the railway bridge are too large for us to tackle ourselves so have been reported to the council.

*If you see any new graffiti please email us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk).*

Bell Tower Community Association  

**QUIZ NIGHT**  

**THURSDAY 18 JANUARY**  
**7.30PM**  
**NEW HOPE CENTRE**  
95 YORK ROAD, READING RG1 8DU

Including a selection of food from 

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**Richard Chandler**  
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