

# Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 75 - March 2024



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



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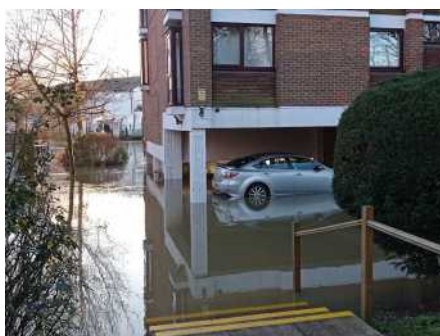


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## UNDER WATER AGAIN



**NOW AND THEN** (clockwise from top left): Thames Side and the tow path, a car stranded in Caversham, Caversham Road in 1894, and again in 1947.  
Historic photos: Reading Museum (Reading Borough Council)

After seeing exceptionally high river levels in recent weeks, we have been preparing an emergency plan for our area and are in touch with council officers for advice. We are endeavouring to provide a simple guide to what we can expect to happen in an emergency so that we can all be better prepared.

We would welcome support from local residents to make sure we are well-prepared for the (hopefully unlikely) event of an emergency – ideally at least one contact per street who is willing to take the time to understand the emergency plan and can offer help if a serious flood or other emergency arises.

In mid January river levels in our area exceeded the height recorded in 2003, when a handful of properties in Caversham flooded, and we have been fortunate this winter not to suffer serious property inundation. We believe that the maximum level recorded at Reading Bridge, the nearest monitoring station, was the highest since March 1947.

The current Environment Agency flood map shows most of our area as 'low risk', meaning that flooding is expected less than once in 100 years but the area would be affected in an extreme flood. Even if the area itself escapes serious flooding there is a chance of being cut off from the rest

of Reading because parts of Caversham Road, particularly under the railway bridge, are lower.

The floods of 1947 that affected our area were estimated as a 1 in 60 year event, so worse is possible – for example, there are well-known pictures of floods in Caversham Road in 1894 and accounts of a flood in 1852 that was probably higher. So even though our immediate area has been unaffected by flooding in recent years we should still be prepared.

If you would like to support us please do get in touch with us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk).

**TEN YEARS AGO: the front page headline from *Neighbourhood News* in March 2014.**

**WILL THIS AREA FLOOD?**



**UNDER WATER:** The current Environment Agency flood map with our area outlined in red, and the towpath at the end of Thames Avenue in January 2014.

**DO YOU NEED HELP TO GET ONLINE?**



Whatever you need help with – internet, email, a new smartphone or tablet... we can help you get going.

**2nd & 4th Monday each month, 11am-1pm at Launchpad 135, Cardiff Road RG1 8JF**  
Also Tuesdays & Thursdays 2-4pm, Saturdays 10am-12pm at Reading Central Library

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READING VOLUNTARY ACTION

GET online READING

Reading Borough Council

# Show us your blooms and win prizes!



Our gardening competition is back! This is an opportunity to beautify your home and possibly win a prize – all you need to do is cultivate your front garden and let us know.



Details will be published in the next few weeks – and we hope to be able to provide free seeds to help you get started! Judging will take place during July.

## News in brief

• Our quiz at New Hope in January was well attended and received. Quizmaster Richard Chandler put participants' general knowledge to the test. Brain food was provided by Paprika all the way from Caversham Road to fortify people for the second half.

Team "Near and Far" were crowned the victors, winning the £50 cash prize. Many thanks to Richard for leading the organisation of the event as well as to Paprika for the catering.

We hope to be organising another quiz this year, probably in the autumn, so keep an eye out for details.



• We were saddened to hear of the death of Bet Tickner in January. Bet was well known to many of us as a local activist and former mayor and Labour councillor for Abbey Ward. After retiring as a councillor Bet moved to the Bell Tower area and was a regular supporter of the Bell Tower Community Association and its activities.

• After 18 years with no increase, the committee has reluctantly voted to increase the Bell Tower annual membership fee to £2 per person. We hope you will feel able to continue to give us your valuable support.

## RIVER ACADEMY

An introduction to the new school and  
a chance to meet the headteacher,  
Andrew Hartley.



**Tuesday 26 March 7.30pm  
at the New Hope Centre**

ALL WELCOME. The talk will be followed by the Bell Tower Community Association's Annual General Meeting.



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