

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 11 - March 2008



The Moderation's back!

Our local pub has reopened after a refurbishment. Andy Ellis tried it out.

As we're sure most of the readers of this newsletter will have noticed, the Moderation pub (at the corner of Caversham Road and Randolph Road) has recently reopened. We must admit that, as non-smokers, we never used to go to pubs that often in the past - the old Moderation was no exception. If we wanted to eat out we were (and still are) spoilt for choice, with so many venues within easy walking distance. But being lazy, and greedy, we were pleased to see that the Moderation - the closest of

all venues to our house - is now offering a rather tempting food menu. It also seemed to have undergone a major refit after being shut for a couple of months, and looked quite smart. So last Sunday we decided to give it a go for lunch, and were happy that we did.

The décor is a bit of a mix of modern restaurant and pub styles, with a few old-fashioned elements thrown in - lots of brown and beige, comfy chairs and sofas, some vaguely oriental decorations, a variety of light fittings and what seemed to be a new small extension at the back, overlooking some decking.

The service was fine and the staff pleasant, and there were newspapers to read if you didn't want to chat, or if you came alone. There was

background music, but not too loud, and no sign of any big TV screens or gaming machines.

There was a reasonable range of alcohol available (though, as always in pubs, the wines were rather expensive - for example, £4.95 for a large glass of Chianti).

Most importantly (as we were hungry and had brought a friend along as a fellow 'guinea pig') the food was good, and the portions were decent. Prices averaged £4 for starters, £8 for main courses and £4 for puddings. We just had main courses - roast lamb, fish and chips, and fish pie - and that was plenty. The menu is apparently updated weekly, and mentions that the food is sourced locally where possible. For example, meat is purchased from Jennings butchers in Caversham and

fish from Frosts in Reading (where the pub buys sustainable alternatives to cod, to maintain fish stocks). It was obvious that the food was not ready made or microwaved, and it was served fairly quickly (but

enough time passed to suggest proper cooking, not defrosting and reheating), and hot. Our only criticism was that there was no vegetarian option included among the 11 different main courses available when we visited.

So it's a thumbs-up to the new-look Moderation. Let's hope they can keep up the standard, and build up the number of customers (it was about a third full at 1.45pm, when we arrived - maybe it was busier earlier), as it's good to have a decent venue so close by. We shall be going back soon.



PLEASED TO SERVE US: The new-look Moderation

News in brief

● March 15-16 is the borough-wide 'Reading Rescue' weekend. The Bell Tower Community Association is teaming up with the Caversham GLOBE group to clean the Thames towpath area and paint over the graffiti around Caversham Bridge. We will be working in the afternoons from 2pm onwards. Interested in spending a fun day doing something really worthwhile? Contact David on 07890 118167 for details.

● The proposed date for our 'Big Bell Tower' event is Wednesday 21 May 2008. It will be an all-day visit to London, with the opportunity to visit the House of Commons and optionally climb to the top of the 'Big Bell Tower'. If you are interested please contact Phil or Sandie at 81 Addison Road, telephone 0118 967 7767.

● E P Collier School is busy collecting old Yellow Pages again this year. The school came second in last year's competition, so the challenge is on! The winning school will win £600 this year, double last year's first prize. Please support your local school by taking the *front cover only* to the school or posting it through Barbara's letterbox at 77 Addison Road. You can put the remainder of the old directory into your red recycling bin.

● There has been a noticeable increase in fly-tipping in the area in recent months, particularly in Randolph Road and outside the Cox & Wyman works in Addison Road and Cardiff Road. Fortunately the council's streetcare team have been removing dumped goods promptly after they have been reported - if you see any rubbish dumped in the street please call their helpline on 0800 834035.

● The Bell Tower Community Association is now a full member of the Reading Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

Continued overleaf

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

The Bell Tower Community Association's Annual General Meeting will be on Thursday 3 April 2008 at 7.30pm at the New Hope Centre. See you there!

Casino update

The application for conversion of the Dawson's music and adjacent former Kingdom of Leather stores into a casino is still going on. Both the planning and licence applications were turned down in the past three months, but the applicants are persevering.

The latest news is that the applicants are intending to appeal against both these decisions. The planning appeal will be heard by an officer from the Planning Inspectorate, and the Bell Tower Community Association has made a written submission reiterating the reasons why local residents objected to the original application - the main causes for complaint are the extra traffic using Swansea Road and Northfield Road as a rat-run during the night and the night time disturbance to residents of houses and flats backing on to the car park.

The Association hopes to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of residents at the planning appeal, and at the licensing appeal later in the year.

Prizewinners meet the Mayor

The Bell Tower Community Association and children of E P Collier Primary School have enjoyed a visit to the Mayor's Parlour to celebrate their win in the recent Pride of Reading Awards.

Councillor Chris Maskell, Mayor of Reading, invited the two winning groups on a tour of the Mayor's Parlour at the Civic Centre when he heard of their awards. He explained the history of the mayoralty and its regalia and practices, and talked about notable events during his term of office, including the Düsseldorf twinning's 60th anniversary.



Bell Tower Community Association members with Mayor Chris Maskell

Children from E P Collier School enjoyed acting as the Mayor's Assistants for the evening, escorting the Mayor as he outlined his duties and led a tour of the Council Chamber. They also enjoyed sitting in the Mayor's chair and trying on the dress robes.

The Bell Tower Community Association received a Pride of Reading Award in the Environmental projects category for its work on graffiti cleaning, while EP Collier School won the Healthy Lifestyle category.

Association chair Teresa Colliass said: "We're very grateful to Councillor Maskell for inviting us. Not many people get to visit the Mayor's Parlour and we all enjoyed having a look around and finding out about its history."

Councillor Maskell said that he was very pleased with the effort that Bell Tower had put in to cleaning up graffiti and that it was a good example of a partnership between the Council and local communities.

Continued from front page

(RFTRA). Details on RFTRA and its activities can be found on the web at www.rftra.org.uk.

- There is a new bottle bank in the riverside car park next to the Crowne Plaza hotel.

- We are pleased to announce that we now have permission to cultivate the land around the electricity substation in Randolph Road, and hope to plant some shrubs on it in the spring. We also have a new planter on one of the traffic islands in Addison Road, which should start blooming in the coming months.

- At our public meeting on February 26 there was plenty of lively discussion. Local councillor Tony Page was there, along with streetcare and highways representatives from the council. Topics included the increase in the rat population around Caversham Road, lorries passing through the area and recycling facilities.

- Don't forget our local police officers and PCSOs are holding a regular surgery on the first Monday of each month at 7.00pm in the New Hope Centre. Even if you don't have any specific issues, it's a good opportunity to get up to date on what's going on in our area and what to keep looking out for.

FIVE STAR WINES

133 Caversham Road



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

Ask in our shop about the Caversham Lodge Guest House upstairs!

Fanny's
ANTIQUES

A wide range of Antiques, curios and collectables at very reasonable prices.

Why not come and see for yourself!

You can find us behind Reading station at 1-5 Lynmouth Road off the Vastern Road Caversham

0118 950 8261

HOUSE CLEARANCES UNDERTAKEN

OPEN EVERYDAY
10.30 - 4.00
SUNDAY
12.00 - 4.00



Neighbourhood News is kindly sponsored by BT's Community Champions scheme.