

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 39 - March 2015



END OF AN ERA

Our area's oldest business - and probably the UK's oldest surviving printer - is closing.

To residents of our area the Cox & Wyman printing works in Cardiff Road has always seemed to be a permanent feature, a constant while everything else changed around it.

In the past, one of its big contracts was to print national railway timetables at a small Reading train station shop.

In more recent years the workers were proud to admit that they have printed every single copy of E L James's bestseller, *Fifty Shades of*

estate at peak times. Changing the Cox & Wyman site to residential use might make it possible to close Meadow Road and isolate our area from the industrial estate traffic.

Do you have any memories of the Cox & Wyman works - perhaps you worked there or know someone who did? We would like to put together a feature for a future edition and would be delighted to hear from you. Please drop a note into 24 Addison Road or email us at info@bell-tower.org.uk.

David Neale



PRESSES ROLLING: the Bell Tower tour of the Cox & Wyman works in 2011, when it was printing two Dan Brown books per second (Photos: Rod Plinston)

However, with the recent loss of a major printing contract its French-based owner CPI Books has announced the closure of the plant and redundancy for its remaining 41 workers. CPI owns several other sites in the UK including Mackays of Chatham and Bookmarque in Croydon, and plans to concentrate its investment elsewhere.

"We have been living with the threat of being shut down for years now but I suppose we just never really thought it would ever happen," printer Phil Winchcombe told the *Reading Chronicle*. Mr Winchcombe began as an apprentice and has worked for the company for 43 years. He added: "We've still got a job to do at the end of the day and we're still getting paid to get things done, so the news hasn't really kicked in just yet, but I think when the redundancy negotiations are all over it will sink in a little more."

Cox & Wyman has been operating in Reading since 1777 after being founded by Edward Cox.

Grey, which has now been made into a feature film. The author remembers some mild amusement at seeing a few pages of *Fifty Shades* blowing around in the wind in Addison Road.

The future of the site is not yet known; although another business could perhaps use it, the land would no doubt be valuable for housing if planning permission could be obtained for change of use. Reading's Local Plan from 2006 suggests that the residential area around Addison Road could be extended westwards; although this statement does not feature in more recent versions, residential use of the land might be a possibility.

Residents have concerns about the effect of the new Cow Lane bridges, due to open in mid-2015, on local traffic. Richfield Avenue will become the main road between north and west Reading, and the Bell Tower Community Association believes this is likely to cause more rat-running through the industrial

**HELP PREVENT
A FIRE IN
YOUR HOME!**

Jane Weller from Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service will be giving a presentation on fire safety in the home and what you can do to prevent a fire.

**Wednesday 25 March
8.15pm
New Hope Centre**

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

ALL WELCOME

**The Big Skip's back
in April!**

Time to clear your house, garden or shed! Because of building work at the school we're holding our tidy-up day early this year. Saturday 25 April, 12.00-3.00pm in the school playground.



News in brief

● Our regular health walks around the area and the river are back. This will be an opportunity for a gentle walk with friends and neighbours and will help keep us fit and healthy. Our next walk will be on Tuesday 28 April, 2.30pm, starting outside the Crown public house just over Caversham Bridge. Details from Barbara at 77 Addison Road, telephone 0118 950 7685.

● We are working with Stonewater Housing, the management company for Monmouth Court, to provide a new community noticeboard - the proposed site is on the grass area to the right of the block. We hope to have submitted a planning application by the time this newsletter has been printed.

● Environmental Visual Audits (EVAs) are regular inspections when residents tour with council officers noting issues such as litter and obstructions on pavements. The next EVA in our area will be on Thursday 16 April, 10.30am, starting at the junction of Randolph Road and Caversham Road.

Join us now!

Membership renewals are due in March, and you can still get great discounts from local businesses!

You can join us for £1 - at any of our events or by leaving a membership form with Steve Bale at 79 York Road. Forms can be downloaded from our web site at www.bell-tower.org.uk.

Train depot latest

Some Cardiff Road residents continue to be affected by noise, vibration and pollution from trains idling in the new sidings on the embankment. At least one has been forced to sell her home as a result.



RIGHT BEHIND US: sidings at the new train depot

We believe it should be possible for First Great Western to manage the new train depot in a way that would cause less disturbance: as an example, we have made aware of a train that regularly arrives around 7.15pm and idles for half an hour before leaving again. This is at a time when the depot will be empty, so it should be possible to leave this train further away from the houses in Cardiff Road.

We are also not sure that the western half of the depot behind the Portman Road industrial area is being used as much as it could be.

We have asked for more detailed information on First Great Western's noise reduction plan for operation of the train depot, through local councillors. A meeting has been scheduled in March, when we hope all parties will be able to have a full discussion on the remaining issues.

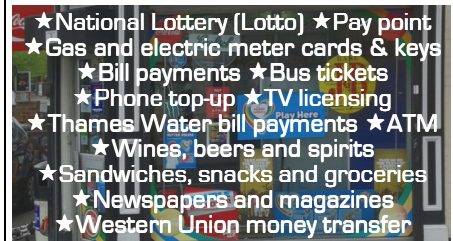
The party's back!



We are pleased to announce the date for our street party this year - Saturday 6 June - and we hope to hold it in Newport Road again if residents agree. As in previous years we are choosing the Big Lunch weekend because this is our opportunity to apply for a street closure without having to pay the usual fee.

If you would like to help or have any suggestions please contact David on 07890 118167 or by email at david@bell-tower.org.uk.

FIVE STAR WINES



**133 Caversham Road
Reading**

Tel: 0118 961 2110

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



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Available colours include:

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