

# Neighbourhood News



from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 37 - September 2014

## Bell Tower tidies up again

We learnt a great deal about our fellow residents at the Big Skip, sponsored by Festival Republic on Saturday 16 August. Items disposed of included two baths and three toilets so we are obviously all a clean bunch. But it seems that many New Year resolutions may have fallen by the wayside, judging by the amount of exercise equipment that found its way into the skip.

The skip marshals, Bell Tower secretary Rod Plinston and vice-chairman Jonathan Dart, were able to enjoy a full workout lifting lumps of concrete, bags of rubble, hurling mattresses into the skip and smashing up furniture to maximise the space for items like a water tank.

Cycle wizard Steve Bale was working magic with his can of WD40 and managed to find new homes for some of the many bikes brought in. For those impressed with this hive of industry, Bell Tower chairman David Neale and his wife Mary were on hand to recruit new members, while those who needed refreshment were able to get free tea, coffee and biscuits kindly provided by the Crowne Plaza and organised by committee member Barbara Kendall.

Unfortunately we were not able to accept electrical items this year because the skip company now charges per item to take them, but we are hoping to find a recycler who will take them next year. If you have any suggestions please let us know.

Many thanks to all those who helped make this event so successful, especially Festival Republic for their sponsorship and the Crowne Plaza for the free refreshments.

*Jonathan Dart*

### FORTHCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday 13 September, 6.30pm - BARBECUE** at the Crowne Plaza. Tickets £10 from Barbara at 77 Addison Road

**Friday 17 October, 7.30pm - QUIZ EVENING** at the Crowne Plaza. Come along and join us for a fun evening in luxurious surroundings. Tickets £5 including food and refreshments from Barbara at 77 Addison Road, telephone 0118 950 7685.



**CLEANING UP:** (clockwise from top left) plenty of takers for the skip, a satisfied customer with his recycled bike, the Crowne Plaza's free coffee stall, and members of the Bell Tower team with another full skip



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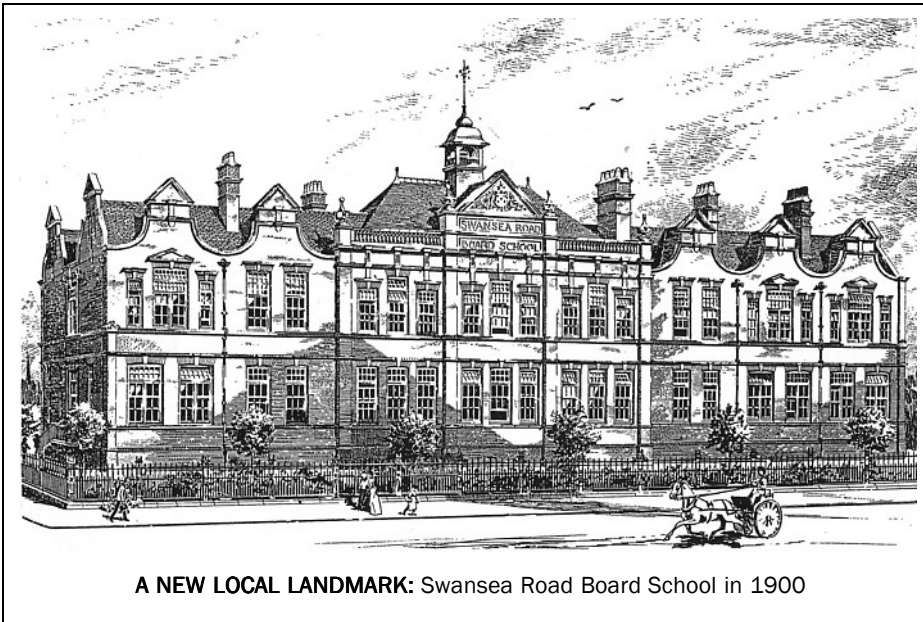


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# Our school's history

In a two-part series *Steve Bale* looks at the story of a local institution.

Balfour Education Action Act 1902, which abolished local Education Boards, the school took on the name of Councillor E P Collier, whose family had supplied the specialist bricks for the school's construction and who had been pivotal in the education system in Reading.



A NEW LOCAL LANDMARK: Swansea Road Board School in 1900

The 1870 Education Act meant that local authorities were tasked with ensuring all children aged 5–13 received an elementary education. For Reading the shortage of school places meant new schools were required under the management of local Education Boards, and Swansea Road Board School was commissioned.

The architect for the school was George William Webb (1853 - 1936), and Swansea Road Board School was designed in the ornate Victorian style that typifies Reading and gives the town its very specific architectural character. Webb was the architect of a large number of Reading's celebrated works including the Jubilee Fountain at St Mary's Butts and the pedestal of the Maiwand Lion, along with some of the grander buildings of Friar Street and Broad Street. But it was public buildings and hotels that he specialised in, and he was the architect for George Palmer School, the Roebuck in Tilehurst and the original Caversham Bridge Hotel amongst others. In our area the Cox and Wyman building is one of his functional designs. Webb was also a celebrated councillor in Reading and made a Fellow of RIBA in 1890.

Swansea Road Board School was opened in 1899. Consequent to the

The Collier brothers' brickworks in Coley was famous for its distinctive hand-made bricks, and examples of its decorated brickwork adorn many buildings around the town. The facade of E P Collier's bricks is bespoke and unique with an impressive motif of cherubs and leaves carved above the embossed school name, while on the west side of the building the date of 1898 is richly engraved. The two ancillary buildings were separate cookery and manual instruction blocks.

While the school buildings have undergone relatively little change over their history, there have been difficulties to overcome. By 1908 registrations had reached 649 pupils and to accommodate classes constant nature walks had to be organised so that not all the pupils were in the school at the same time.

Being on the floodplain also caused regular trouble with the drains, and the school was forced to close for an extended period in December 1910 due to high groundwater levels. In 1938 a serious fire, taking the fire brigade two and a half hours to bring under control, gutted a large area of the west end of the building.

*In Part 2 we continue the history of the school up to the present day and look at the school's future expansion plans.*

## News in brief

- Do you have any comments on this year's Reading Festival? We now have a regular meeting after the festival with representatives from organisers Festival Republic, the council and other local associations, so there will be a chance to present your views. Please send your comments by email to [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk) or drop a note into 24 Addison Road.

- Our health walks are now taking place every month, on the second Saturday. Meet at 11.00am outside the Crown on the Bridge, just across Caversham Bridge, for an easy stroll. The next two walks will be on 13 September and 11 October.

- We have been talking to residents of Cardiff Road and understand that some households are still experiencing excessive noise, vibration and pollution from the new train depot despite the new fencing that was put up at the end of last year. Because of this we are considering making the train depot the subject of a public meeting, probably some time in the autumn.

Are you being disturbed by the train depot? We are keen to have your views - please let us know by email to [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk) or drop a note into 24 Addison Road.

- Finally, don't forget our barbecue on 13 September and quiz on 17 October. Keep up to date with what's happening on the web at [www.bell-tower.org.uk/events.htm](http://www.bell-tower.org.uk/events.htm).

## FIVE STAR WINES

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

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