

Neighbourhood News

from the Bell Tower Community Association

Issue 34 - December 2013



Season's greetings to all our readers

On the road again

Local bike wizards help get children back on their bikes at the Bell Tower annual tidy-up day

The Bell Tower Community Association's 'Big Skip' tidy-up event featured a new attraction this year, with previously unwanted children's bicycles finding new homes after being given some loving care and attention by bike doctors Neil Hart and Gabriel Diaz. Many

out an accumulation of garden waste from the alley between York and Addison Roads. Volunteers also helped break up items, including a small shed, and load the skip, making sure its capacity was used as effectively as possible.

This was important because, as in previous years, the skip proved so popular it was full nearly an hour before the event was due to close, leaving a couple of latecomers disappointed despite the Bell Tower helpers' efforts to squeeze in as much as possible.

A fun quiz

If you didn't get to our quiz in October where were you? You would have missed a great evening of laughter, chat, bottomless tea and coffee (and drinks available from the bar), loads of sandwiches and cookies - and of course an opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of history, geography, famous people, food and a lot more. We really enjoyed ourselves at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in a room overlooking the Thames.

We are planning another quiz evening in the new year - so get your grey cells practising and ready for another fun challenge!

* * *

We have invited two of the winners from this year's gardening competition to share their advice on planning, designing and planting a beautiful front garden, window box or hanging basket.

This event will hopefully take place in March 2014 - and attendees will be able to claim free plants, bulbs and seeds. More details to follow.

Barbara Kendall

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RE-CYCLING DAY: Local bike experts Neil Hart and Gabriel Diaz show how it's done and (right) Bell Tower volunteers help to load the big skip



of the children's bicycles brought to the association's annual community tidy-up day, which features an industrial-sized skip sponsored by Festival Republic, ended up being recycled. This delighted children as well as their parents, who made a small donation to the association for the bikes.

Event organiser David Neale said: 'The bike repair shop is a great addition to our tidy-up day: we're always looking for new ways to reuse and recycle and this one really worked well. It's great to see neighbours getting together and bringing some community spirit to the area.'

This spirit was also reflected in a group of volunteers, led by neighbour Steve Bale, who cleared

News in brief

- New Hope's community carol singing evening will be on Tuesday 17 December. Come to the New Hope Centre at 6.30pm for a tour of the area, with mince pies and hot drinks afterwards.
- Congratulations to Andy Becalick, landlord of the Moderation pub in Caversham Road, who has won the Entrepreneur of the Year award at this year's Pride of Reading awards. Andy's company Spirit House Ltd has transformed four of Reading's pubs into popular venues for eating and drinking, including the Moderation and its latest acquisition, the Queen's Head in Christchurch Road.



Nice to see you...



GOOD GAME: the Generation Game is on!

No prizes for guessing the catch phrase - and although Bruce Forsyth was unable to come along to the New Hope Community Church Fun Day many people still had lots of fun! Four families from the community were eager to participate in the Generation Game and much hilarity ensued when they grappled with the set tasks - some more difficult than others!



GOOD GUESS: Cake winner Jane with her prize

Icing a cake was a huge challenge for Daniel Freeman, with more icing spread all over the table than the cake! Bob Murrant and Henry Murtagh were in their element when they took to the stage and scored 9 out of 10 with their interpretation of Salsa dancing.

Overall winner Steve Jewell successfully remembered all the items on the conveyor belt and proudly wore one of his prizes for the remainder of the afternoon - a Cliff Richard T-shirt!

As usual there was a barbecue which everyone enjoyed. No Fun Day is complete without face painting, guess the weight of the cake (with Jane Madden making the nearest estimate and so taking home a delicious home-made cake) name the teddy, bouncy castle, table tennis tournament, wiggle-waggle, football games, coconut shy, circus skills, puppet making, street dancing, tea, tea and more tea and scones.

Another important aspect of the Fun Day is the Community Art Project - this year Ellen Jewell designed and supervised the wall hanging which will soon be added to the other two now in splendour on the wall of the ground floor hall. All in all, a successful afternoon - we can't wait for next year!

For further events run by New Hope Community Church remember to take a look at www.nhccreading.org.uk on a regular basis.

Lesley Brown

Blooming good!

Top award for Cardiff Road garden

Congratulations to local residents Bob and Pat Murrant, who after winning a top prize in our gardening competition have gone on to win gold in this year's Reading in Bloom competition.

Their garden has attracted plenty of attention with its colourful display this summer, and has won the prize for the best small garden in Reading.



GOLD AWARD: Cardiff Road resident Bob Murrant (left) receives the award from Hilton Reading manager Stephane Weit (photo courtesy of the Reading Post)

The annual competition, which helps Reading to compete in the Royal Horticultural Society's Britain in Bloom contest, has categories for businesses, pubs, allotment holders and private gardens.

Chair of the Reading in Bloom committee Councillor Jeanette Skeats hosted the award ceremony at the Reading Hilton Hotel.

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