

# Neighbourhood News



from the Bell Tower Community Association

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## The long and winding trail that leads to burgers

Quite a few people were spotted in the Bell Tower area on Saturday 5 September bearing pen and paper and staring at buildings and street furniture. This was no tour of

After the competitive part of the event, attendees were able to enjoy the food against a backdrop of the spectacular views of the river afforded by the venue organised by committee member Barbara Kendall.

We are looking to hold a similar event next summer either at the same time of year again or in early July, just before the start of the school summer holidays.

*Jonathan Dart*

## Brain cells teased and taste buds tickled

Who is the patron saint of the Internet? At which club did Kevin Keegan start his professional footballing career? How many bones are there in the human body? These were all among the questions posed to participants in our autumn quiz on 23 October at the Crowne Plaza.

If such intellectual stimulation provided by quizmaster and Bell Tower Secretary Rod Plinston were not enough to entice participants, Barbara Kendall had secured the return of the much loved sandwich buffet to provide sustenance to sorely taxed little grey cells.

Competition was fierce and team Heart to Dart squeaked home by one point to take the £50 cash prize, which was donated to funds for Syrian refugees. Many thanks to Rod and the Crowne Plaza for making the event such an enjoyable experience. We are hoping to stage our next quiz in May so keep an eye out for flyers and posts on our noticeboard, website and social media, as well as in the newsletter.

## Volunteers needed!

We always need more volunteers - in particular, at the moment we could use help with managing our Facebook page and Twitter feed.

Do you use social media regularly? If you'd like to help us get our message across please don't hesitate to contact us at [info@bell-tower.org.uk](mailto:info@bell-tower.org.uk) or on 07778 714989.



**SCENIC SPOT:** The venue for the barbecue has views along the Thames

inspection but the first leg of the Bell Tower Treasure Hunt and Community Barbecue.

The aim of the treasure hunt devised by committee members David Neale and Rod Plinston was to match photographs to points on a map and find their way to a barbecue of burgers and sausages at the Canoe Club cooked by professional chef Chris Madden assisted by Bell Tower Chairman Jonathan Dart.

All participants managed to reach the venue and the standard of entries was so high that the winners had to be decided by a tie-breaker. Len Middleton and Andy Ellis emerged victorious.

## 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

**133 Caversham Road  
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Lodge Guest House upstairs.*

*Season's greetings to all our readers*

# What do you think?

Someone from Bell Tower may have knocked on your door to ask a few questions about what you think of the association. The main aim of the survey is for us to know what we are doing well and where we need to improve to encourage both membership and engagement. The streets we still have to survey are Addison Road, Caversham Road, and Cardiff Road. We'll be surveying these streets as soon as we can do so without getting soaked or frost-bitten.

The first thing we discovered we need to do is to reaffirm that we are an independent organisation. We represent the community and promote cohesion within it through campaigns and social events and have no religious or political affiliation. We work with anyone who can help us promote the interests of local residents, so we are pleased to work with the Abbey Ward councillors and use the New Hope Centre for events and committee meetings, as do many other organisations.

Our activities which received the most positive feedback were this newsletter and the street party, which one part of the area even expressed an interest in hosting should Newport Road residents no longer wish to. However, people did say that we lacked a visible, physical presence and one question raised was how to contact us. Our new noticeboard should help address the physical presence issue,

and you will notice that the banner with our email, web and social media details is now at the top of the newsletter. We now also have a permanent contact telephone number: **07778 714989**.



**OUT AND ABOUT:** our surveyors have been covering the area one house at a time

Overall, people were positive about living in the area, but the chief issue seems to be parking. Most of the area was built before the era of mass motoring so there is little we can do about the lack of parking spaces. However, we can scrutinise planning very thoroughly to ensure that any new developments do not exacerbate any traffic and parking problems.

Other negatives, which seem to be relatively few and isolated, are best tackled by reporting them. Antisocial behaviour can be reported by phoning 101, and litter by phoning the council on

0118 937 3787, via their website at [www.reading.gov.uk](http://www.reading.gov.uk) or using the Love Clean Reading app. Reporting things also makes it easier for us to campaign on an issue because the authorities cannot say they were unaware of the problem.

On how we communicate with the community, the website and flyers came out on top. Electronically, email seemed to be the most favoured medium. Many residents are on social media, but our use of it did not score highly, so if there are any digital marketers out there with experience in social media we would love to hear from you.

You also made many suggestions for things we could do. Many of you would like us to make our events more family-friendly and some favoured more frequent, informal get togethers. Skill shares were also mooted as were hobby-based events. There was also a proposal for an international food festival, tapping into the ethnic diversity of our area. The committee is actively considering all these suggestions, so watch this space.

*Jonathan Dart*



**HAVE YOU SPOTTED IT?** Our new noticeboard in Northfield Road

Season's Greetings from

**DREWS**  
THE IRONMONGERS

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f Drews The Ironmongers

@TheIronmongers