

CLUB WELCOMES NEW STEWARD

After six months waiting Birchanger Club has at last welcomed their new Steward and Stewardess. They are Chris and Sue James who arrived at the club on March 18th. The new stewards took control on Thursday March 20th.

Chris and Sue have two years of experience in the licenced trade and come from the Luton and Northampton areas respectively. They have grown up children who live independantly. Chris has a background in electrical engineering and avionics, he also spent significant time serving in the army. He speaks enthusiastically about the challenges ahead but is confident that he and Sue will be able to maintain the standards that the membership enjoy, and are rapidly getting to know the more regular members. At present Sue is spending much of her time working in the kitchen as catering is now an important part of the services offered to members.

The main responsibility of any club steward is the staffing of the Bar and kitchen areas and to that end there is an advert in the pages of this issue for additional staff. Please contact the club if you are interested.



The new club steward
Chris James



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Junction 8b remains the preferred option!

Despite our objections to the siting of Junction 8b so close to Junction 8a it seems this still remains the preferred option! The Highways Agency have acknowledged the needs of the residents at Burton End, but have ignored the larger community of Birchanger which already suffers from the affects of Junction 8a. It seems traffic madness to site these two junctions so close together. There is already a great deal of confusion seen daily amongst those who are trying to access the airport with last minute lane changes. A further junction within a half mile will bring complete chaos.

Once again Birchanger has seemed to be invisible, despite all the efforts of the Parish Council and myself to avoid this, with some very good but sparse support from the community. The Highways Agency and BAA did not even bother to have an exhibition in Birchanger, despite our requests that they do so. We are the village which will be most affected. They did not draw our houses on the map, although Burton End is shown to be well populated and it seems that we did not exist. They claim that exhibitions in the past have not been that well attended. There are times when more voices are needed and this is largely up to you. We will keep protesting, but it seems the more people who do so, the better the likelihood of success.

The next stage in the scheme's development will be the publication of detailed proposals as draught orders. There will be a further opportunity to comment then. Meanwhile please do not wait. Send your representations or a request for copies of the report to Stansted Generation2, The Airport Access and the A120 Team, Highways Agency, Woodlands, Manton Lane, Bedford, MK41 7LW

NATS Consultation

Birchanger is unlikely to perceive too much change in the new flight path proposals which feature in the latest NATS Consultation on flight paths. News that the South East of England is already seriously over flown will be of little surprise to most people. Sadly instead of simply moving air traffic elsewhere NATS have created new stacking areas, the nearest being over Saffron Walden, with the use of continuous descent where possible over Noise Preferential Routes. As always there are winners and losers, but overall in our area some 220 people will experience higher aircraft noise levels, mainly around

Saffron Walden, and south west Bishops Stortford when planes take off to the south west. This could result in planes flying closer to Duck End and is the change that could affect Birchanger .

Birchanger is currently overflowed by 17 aircraft routes, mainly coming from the different runways at Luton, Heathrow, Gatwick and City airports. These routes should be 6000ft and above by the time they reach Stansted and these routes will have little impact on Birchanger.

What is apparent that is Stansted has the noisiest fleet of aircraft. The noises from the average planes using Stansted are shown in the NATS consultation to be mainly noisier than those using the other London airports at 1000ft. It is this noise which affects Birchanger the most, and is exacerbated by the very noisy cargo planes we hear so frequently both by day and night. None of this will change with the proposed new routes.

The consultation is an interesting document. It is not clear how Runway 2 proposals will affect this, as only routes for Runway 1 are shown. It can be viewed on www.nats.co.uk/TCNconsultation Comments are invited, but changing any of the stacking areas will have a knock on affect, and may not be possible. What is very clear is that NATS is trying to cope because the government has given it no alternative. There are clearly too many airports in the south east.

Runway 2 is very bad news for Birchanger

We may think that Birchanger has got off lightly in comparison to villages to the east of the airport. Perhaps we have as regards to take off when the wind blows from the south west, but the reduced size of the land take means that a great deal of development will take place on sites to the south west which are currently used for car parking. You can expect another big hotel next to the Hilton, and the car parks to be moved towards Burton End with a great deal of additional building on their sites. This combined with the effects of junction 8b will impact badly on Birchanger. Again your representations are badly needed. BAA have not distributed the project documents widely, there are too many. The summaries paint a glossy picture without giving the full facts. To find out more, log on to www.stanstedairport.com/future. You can alternatively telephone for a copy of the disk with the application on 662800. The planning application has started to arrive at

the council offices, the Compulsory Purchase Notices are up, this application is for real.

Airport noise raises blood pressure Official

As if we did not have enough difficulties trying to live alongside a noisy neighbour, a new study has shown that a noise exceeding 35 decibels will raise your blood pressure even if it does not actually wake you up! The noise we experience at night from the airport is generally well above this level. I wonder just how many people in Birchanger are affected in this way?

To smoke or not to smoke

That if you are a smoker is the burning question. You want to give up, but it is proving to be a struggle. New figures show that those who use National Health Service support are four times more likely to succeed than those who try to go it alone.

You can visit www.nhs.uk/gosmokefree to order a free DVD. This will tell you about the range of NHS Services which are available as well as the stories of real life quitters who have actually made it to smoke free status. Support works, over two thirds of those who have finally managed to kick the habit have done it with support rather than trying to attempt it solo. After all the so called smoking shelters are very bleak places on a cold winter's day!

Selfish Parking AGAIN!

How about this, you live in one road with parking on your property available, but you park your own car in somebody else's road where their parking is strictly limited and the houses are more densely packed. To the few in Bradley Common who are doing this, please consider your neighbours. They don't actually have anywhere else to go, and I am sure you would be very unhappy about the situation if you were in their shoes!

They whizz down the road too fast as well.

Contractors working in the lane have complained that it has become a very dangerous place. It seems the number of those who drive too fast has increased a great deal over the past few months. The next thing will be the speed gun, you have been warned!

Criminal damage in the allotments and more

Last month they showered the new young vegetables with poison, this month they moved on to very serious criminal damage when a shed, its tools and other equipment was tampered with and removed. The allotments themselves were also damaged. The police

view this very seriously, and sooner or later someone will be charged. Meanwhile for those who have had all their hard work ruined, there is every sympathy from the rest of the community.

Please watch out.

A child's brand new bicycle has also been stolen from his own garden in Birchwood, again the people concerned must be pretty sick to do this. Meanwhile vandals have caused hundreds of pounds worth of damage by shooting at the windows in the church with an air gun. This is also being investigated. Birchanger is still a good place to live, but we have to watch out for the bad element and please report anything you see which is suspicious on 07801 461666.

Community Grants.

The invitation to voluntary groups and organisations to apply for matched funding grants for their pet projects is out. The grants can cover any scheme involving children, play equipment, and facilities for the community. Applications are invited from all voluntary groups in the village. There is not much time, as the applications need to be in by early May, but if you think your group might be eligible and you have a project in mind, please call me on 812793.

New residents to Birchanger

It may seem strange, and it will certainly be very confusing to the new residents of the Rochford Nursery Site, but most of the homes, (over 80%) will actually be in Birchanger. It may well be that most of the residents will feel that their ties are much more closely bound to Stansted, by geography as well as by amenities. However they will be able to use the facilities in Birchanger as well as they will actually be residents of Birchanger parish. This may all change by the time there are around 200 houses occupied and there will be new boundaries drawn by the Electoral Commission. Both the Parish Councils of both Stansted and Birchanger as well as the residents of the new estate will be consulted about this. Meanwhile the first houses are expected to be occupied very soon. Welcome to Birchanger!



"A new housing estate would give many people a chance to enjoy rural life."

Uttlesford's New Website

Uttlesford District Council has completely redesigned its website. The new website is planned to be easier to use for everyone. You can now download various forms on line, including Planning Application Forms. It is easier to access the council's timetable of meetings and to email relevant departments. It is hoped that users will find it easier to access wide ranging information. Check it out for yourself. Just putting in the word Uttlesford will get you there through the various search engines.

The planning forms are easily accessed through the system, and they vary according to the type of application you wish to submit. They are designed by the government for national use which means that the forms are the same for everyone. There are also notes which will explain what you need to submit with your application. Applications can be refused if some documents supporting the plans are missing and not submitted on time. This will mean a new fee and the applicant will have to start the process all over again. The system is part of the government's new planning process and if anybody would like to see the forms I do have a few samples.

You can also look at plans for anywhere in the Uttlesford using this system. It helps if you do have the application number, but they can be accessed through keying the town followed by the address.

There are a great many forms which the council requires you to fill in over the years. Most of these forms will also be available through the website.

Empty Homes in Uttlesford.

There are 319 empty homes in Uttlesford at present. Sadly most of them are around the airport where houses of all sizes have been bought by BAA and simply left to rot. This upsets their previous owners, and does absolutely nothing for the community. A new scheme known in the short form as PLACE but which means Private Lease Agreements Covering Empties is to be trialed by Uttlesford District Council. There are many families on the Housing List who could benefit from the scheme. It is proposed to renovate the houses to the Decent Homes Standard and to rehouse somebody from the Council's waiting list. At the end of the three years the house will be returned in its refurbished condition to the owner while the tenants will have been established in other permanent accommodation. The project is being financed by Regional Government. Hopefully life will eventually return to some of the abandoned communities, even if only for a little while.

BIRCHANGER SOCIAL CLUB

**BAR/ WAITING STAFF
REQUIRED**

**EVENINGS AND
WEEKENDS**

CONTACT THE STEWARD

01279 813441

New recycling booklet

A new recycling booklet is to be distributed throughout Birchanger in May. The booklet will contain a calendar of bin collections and a great deal more information on where to recycle. Please keep it as a useful waste collection reminder. It is planned to distribute the next booklet with the Council Tax bills in March next year.

Some residents have registered preferences not to receive junk mail, so it is possible that if you are registered for this you may not receive the booklet. The local development framework documents were not delivered in many cases before Christmas. If you have not received the booklet by the end of May please let the council or myself know and we will arrange for a booklet to be sent to you.

Unofficial airport parking at Duck End?

It seems unofficial airport parking may be taking place on the Duck End Farm Forecourt. My Spies tell me cars not seen previously arrive followed by taxis who depart. And then the cars disappear after a few days.

Birchanger in UK first

Three Birchanger families are helping to change the lives of disadvantaged children from Botswana and India in an initiative being run by Bishop's Stortford Rugby Club.

As some of you will know, the U13s age group at BSRFC have had a fantastic few years of success, and it was whilst they in the process of winning an international tournament in Belfast last year, an idea was hatched. The coaches realised that the boys were making friendships that would hopefully go on to last their lifetimes, as we had made friendships when we were starting out in the sport, rugby is like that, it is one big family.

One thing led to another and eventually this germ of an idea took root when the club hitched up with a charity called "**Touraid.**" This charity specifically looks to use rugby to help and develop children in need from around the world

So, the club, which is based at Silver Leys, will be hosting an invitation international rugby tournament at their grounds over the weekend of 3rd & 4th of May this year and sides are coming from afar a field as West of Scotland RFC, Calcutta and Gaborone in Botswana

Yes you did read that right

The focal point of the weekend will be to welcome children from the Vultures rugby club based in the Botswanan capital and the Tiger Cubs rugby club from India. Most of the children from these clubs are orphans and rugby is used by their mentors and teachers at home to give them identity, hope and focus for achievement in their lives, and we at the club consider it a privilege to be their hosts. In fact, of the three Birchanger families involved, the Edgeworth's will accommodate two players while the Robins' and the Crossley's will be lending support in the shape of 'buddying' up the duties involved.

The visit, which will last a week either side of the weekend of rugby, are designed to be a precursor to sustained support from us, their hosts, for their communities back home, and this legacy involvement lies at the heart of the reason for holding the event. The BSRFC U13 Festival aims to create relationships from which both tourists and hosts benefit greatly for years to come.

As mentioned we will be having two players stay in the village and I am sure Birchanger will rise to the occasion and help show them the time of their lives. Remember some of these kids come from desperately poor backgrounds, so let's give them a fantastic outlook on our village.

A venture of this nature costs money, and this is the first time in **touraid's** history that a British club have taken on the fund raising to pay for the whole trip. The U13 age group are attempting to raise a massive £40,000 to get these clubs over (anyone tempted to donate please contact me – all monies gratefully accepted!!), and there are a myriad of activities being held to keep the coffers growing, including music quizzes, beauty treatment evenings and a gentlemen's evening (tickets available for all but the beauty treatment).

Touraid is a registered charity that is supported by the likes of Phil Vickery, Jason Leonard, Mike Catt and John Inverdale and we will be looking to get as many of these names involved in the project as possible, so watch these pages!

Mark Crossley

Green light for a new building project

For a long time now the school has been saving and planning to extend the staff room and the resources centre as well as to provide a second toilet which will be easily accessible from the hall. Last month we heard that our bid for finance towards the project has been successful. Hopefully this will mean that work will begin in the early Autumn.

Mrs Augustine is to return home

For six years Mrs Augustine has stayed on in England to teach at Birchanger School. She returned here after her wedding last summer. We all knew she would go back home to Canada eventually. Sadly she has decided to return at the end of the Summer Term.

We shall miss her, she has done a very great deal for Birchanger, and she has always been a happy and bright presence in the school. We shall enjoy having her with us for one more term, and we shall make the most of it.

Portraying relationships

There are always interesting displays around Birchanger School which each class creates. The latest one in the school hall portrays relationships. It looks at all the relationships human beings have and these are portrayed in raised figures in various playground scenes who are interacting with each other, and in black and white etchings of friends older people and the relationships between them.

The whole display helps children to see how relationships work, to consider how others might feel and to put themselves into another person's life. See it if you can.

First public performance of Birchanger Strings

The new string group have been practicing hard all term and their efforts were rewarded when they made their debut at the end of term concert. Music continues to play a very strong role in the life of Birchanger School under the overall direction of Mrs Sherriff. Everyone is looking forward to the group's next performance.

A book worm lunch

The children celebrated World Book Day with a special themed Book Worm Lunch. Kipper's Hot Dogs were accompanied by Jack and the Beanstalk's Giant's Golden Coins and the Magic Beans. For Dessert they were served Cat in the Hat's Strawberry Top Hats. It should not be hard to work out the very popular menu.

There was also an opportunity to buy books at special prices when the Book Fair visited the school at the end of the month.

Birchanger School is an Outstanding Caring School.

For any school anywhere Ofsted Inspections are greeted with a mixture of apprehension and concern. There is little time to prepare for the Inspector's arrival and everyone wants their school to do well and work hard throughout the inspection to get to know the Inspector and to show him just what their school is about. The Inspector rated the school overall as an outstanding caring school.

The Inspector found that Birchanger School was a school where everyone matters and learning is fun. Pupil's behavior in class and their attitudes to adults and to each other are very good. The children are committed to their lessons, enjoy them and have a very impressive drive to do their best. They work well in groups and relationships are exceptionally good. Pupils told the inspector that bullying was rare, and if it happened was speedily dealt with. Children in Year 6 leave the school exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education and beyond. Standards throughout the school are above the average, and in some classes well above this.

The Inspector found that children enjoyed coming to school, they felt safe and secure. They had an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and a very mature understanding of how to be a part of the school community and to have an important role in it through the School Council and the Play Leaders Scheme. They also enjoyed an outstanding range of additional school clubs, and the many visitors to the school and the school visits enhanced the learning experience.

This is an Ofsted Inspection of which everyone can be proud. There are issues which were suggested for further improvement which involve the use of target information to inform improvement planning and for the most effective teaching elements to be shared across the school and as the Inspector acknowledged, work on this was already in place before his visit. Congratulations everyone.



News from St Mary's

Many thanks to all those people who supported the Easter lunch on the 30th March. There is a small band of people who regularly turn out to these events. It was a pleasure to welcome them. There were also some new faces - I hope that they will eventually join in the regular services held our lovely church and perhaps one day join the "Friends of St Mary's".

I have had some lovely feed back which I have passed on to those who helped out on the day.

A total of £213 was raised for church funds.

Some of you may have noticed that over the past couple of months the interior lighting in the Nave has not been very good. This is because some of the reflective light shades have broken and following a diocese inspection, we have been told that we must make a formal application to upgrade the light fittings. That application has been made and as soon as we get the go ahead, new lights will be installed.

I am pleased to say that I have some response to my appeal for funds towards development of St Mary's - but we do have a long way to go. If you want to make a donation now please contact me (07702171744). We are ring-fencing all monies received for the development project.

The Passing of Another Good Friend

Anyone who is a frequent visitor to the Club will know about the passing of Michael Brick - Mick to his friends, of whom there were many. But I just want to say a personal note about him and the kind man that he was.

He and Mo provided the transport for my wedding. I shall never forget him turning up on the day, dressed in a chauffeurs' uniform complete with peaked cap. At that moment my mother and sister were arguing about which one of them would give me away (my brother had had an accident the night before and it was uncertain as to whether or not he would be with us). Mick heard what was going on and calmly whispered to me that he would be honoured to give me away! I had to laugh. How was I ever going to tell my mother and sister that neither of them would be walking down the aisle with me and that the "chauffeur" would be there. Fortunately, I did not have to do this as my brother turned up just in time.

Mick had a generous heart with a rare gift for making people laugh, even when they did not feel like doing so. He will be sorely missed, particularly on Saturday afternoon. I shall miss him a great deal.

Pam Lee

Plant Sale - 24th May 2008 at 10.30am

As usual, bedding, perennial and vegetable plants will be available at 4 Harrisons. Tea in the garden (weather permitting). Hanging baskets filled to order.

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Village Diary April/May 2008

April

27th St Mary's 11.00 am
Hol Communion

27th At the Club
200 Club Draw

May

4th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

10th At the Club 8.00 pm
Ash

11th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

18th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

24th At the Club 8.00 pm
Russell Crimes

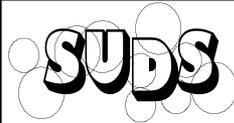
25th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

25th At the Club
200 Club Draw



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