

Birchanger

October 2012



Magazine

Issue 118

Birchanger Art Show 2012

You certainly missed a treat if you missed the Art Exhibition in the village hall this year. There was something to suit everyone's taste and it certainly whetted the appetite of the many visitors as their comments were all in praise of the exceptionally high standard of the exhibits. The point was proved as they bought buying 44 paintings!

We had many professional artist swilling to exhibit their paintings at our show , some who have their work hung in the London galleries including members of the Royal Oil Institute, thanks to Heather Brown's numerous contacts in the art fraternity and sorority. Even the raffle prizes were exceptional - no hand cream or bars of soap!

First prize - to have a portrait painted by artist Donna St. Pierre.

Second prize - a meal at the Three Willows pub.

Third prize - a days painting or drawing tuition with Heather Brown at her studio.

Fourth prize - a well filled hamper.

All great bargains for £1 a go!

It takes a lot of work and dedication to have an event like this in our village and we have a great team of helpers each with different jobs to do. Sheila Devereux did a brilliant job as team leader and coordinator. All the money raised is used for the benefit of the village.

Birchanger has now built up the reputation of a high standard of work which is well worth seeing even if you just came to admire and enjoy looking at the paintings and appreciating the skill of these talented artists. It also pleases the artists to know that someone has got pleasure from just looking at their work.

Apart from all the fine art there were delicious homemade cakes to be enjoyed with a cup of tea in the marquee and the church was awash with colour, not only from the beautiful floral displays but also from the children's poses in teacups. Children's paintings decorated the walls and the photographic competition was also displayed there.

Judging by the visitors' comments many are already looking forward to our next show!

Raffle Winners

The raffle was won by a Bishop's Stortford resident who was delighted to have her portrait painted by Donna St Pierre. Dinner at the Three Willows was welcomed by the second prize winner, also from Bishop's Stortford. Both winners thought the art work on display was excellent; one of the winners bought two pictures and both are anxious to be back next year.

The remaining prizes went to Mark Lee and Sally Stone who won a box of goodies and art lessons from Heather Brown respectively.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Highway Rangers to the Rescue

The Highway Rangers are a small team set up by Essex County Council with a small van to work exclusively on minor road projects to do with roads in Uttlesford. Sadly they do not fill potholes, but we now also have our own team of pothole blasters coming equipped with their new instantly filling machine and sealer to do this job for us. Problem is there are so many across the district and nobody knows just how effective the new technique actually is. No doubt we will find out.

Highway Rangers will carry out all manner of smaller jobs which Parish Councils do not have the resources to do. They will be able to clear vegetation, tidy up road junctions, clear roundabouts, cut and trim as necessary, undertake some types of bollard reinstatement, get rid of litter, small fly tips many more small jobs which nobody seems to want to do on public land. They have been hailed as a success wherever they have been used.

They can be requested through the Ranger Service based at Essex County Highways Harlow and have already undertaken numerous small projects throughout Uttlesford. Projects may take up to four weeks to complete from the request date. Their email address is highway.enquirieswest@essex.gov.uk

Incidentally they did try to fill the potholes in Birchanger Lane by the club, but could not access them because of the gas works!!! Can't win. Keep trying.

Plans for the Church Hall

Plans to extend the Church Hall to form a small additional meeting room, new kitchen and toilet for the disabled and additional storage space for hall users have been submitted to the District Council. They are available for inspection at the Church Hall or can be viewed on line on Uttlesford District Council's Planning site.

The hall has been in the sad position of turning would be users away in recent years as the hall has been fully booked. The extension will mean that meetings of smaller numbers will be able to take place while another event is happening in the main body of the hall. On the other hand users with larger functions might want to take over the whole hall. Access can be separate or combined as necessary.

Additional storage has been badly needed for years, and there will be a separate new area for chair storage. It is hoped that the entrance hall will be kept

clear of all chairs and tables once the building is finished. Existing users will also benefit from the extra space and toilet facilities which will be available. This includes a second toilet with facilities for the disabled. The heating system will be upgraded with a new boiler. The stage remains the same so it is hoped that the additional area will make the hall a more interesting prospect for amateur groups. There will be 7 additional car parking spaces.

It is hoped that work will start in the spring, if the application is successful, but you will be kept informed. The money for the project came from the Rochford's Development Section 106 agreement. Many of the new residents regularly use the facilities. The design will follow the original which was built in 1935, with benefit of a new heating system and insulation. The project will take all the Community Section 106 money which was made available to the Parish Council last Autumn. Other projects for different bodies in Birchanger are also getting underway.

Stop Killing Our Cats!

Many people are not too keen on cats for all sorts of reasons, but I am sure that even those who fall into this group would not condone the cat carnage at the hands of speeding drivers along Birchanger Lane in the past two years.

Some families have lost several cats and doubt whether they should even consider having any pet because of these careless and ultimately very dangerous drivers.

The signs are there for everyone to see. If you are unaware of them you should not get behind the wheel. Animals are not the only people who use the lane. There are actually children and they are at risk from these selfish drivers as well. Cat carnage has never been so high as it has been recently and it is also so unnecessary.

People need to stop and think. It may be "just a cat" but it is still somebody's treasured pet. It could even be yours.

Olympic Withdrawal Symptoms

It seemed very strange not to wake up last month to more news of the Olympics. Already it seems that it all happened in another time and place. All that are left are the memories now we are back to brutal and petulant overpaid footballers as our staple sporting diet.

There were disagreements in the games, but although the competitive spirit was high it was without the viciousness so often seen in football matches. Achievement and talent were respected and acknowledged by all whatever the nationality. There was a keenness and sense of encouragement from everyone. They had worked hard to be there and the prospect of having to wait another four years for the next Olympics did not alter their own desire to be there and to start training all over again.

Contrast that with the lack lustre performances seen by the England team. Hyped up to the hilt, paid extreme salaries they struggled to deliver. Think we have gone wrong with sport somewhere. I miss the Olympic spirit. It seems to have died with the flame.

Birchanger Buddies Back in Action

For the first time since they opened nearly two years ago, Birchanger Buddies had a well-earned summer break. They are now back with a vengeance and are looking forward to welcoming all mums in and around Birchanger to their regular two hour Friday afternoon slot from 1.30 to 3.30 pm in the Church Hall. All mums are warmly welcomed and no baby is too small to come along too. The children are offered a drink and a healthy snack, while their mothers can enjoy talking, sharing concerns, having a cup of tea and making new friends.

Birchanger Buddies is run by volunteers but was set up by the Spangles Children's Centre in Stansted. Spangles still support the group, but the actual group is run by a mums' volunteer committee. They have a great deal of play equipment which is stored in the hall and new items are available on loan from Spangles.

Come and see what happens there on Friday afternoons. You will be very welcome. The group will benefit from the extended hall, as this will include a quiet room and much better catering facilities and designated storage.

No Shop for Forest Park?

In addition to the very strong possibility that the promised Doctors Surgery will never be built on Forest Park, residents there will have to face the fact that they are unlikely to have a shop there as well. All they will be able to expect are further applications for yet more houses.

Amenities are in very short supply on Forest Park. This was certainly never the intention, but the shop scheme has not been successfully marketed and there is no real interest as the profitability is deemed to be border line.

If there is no shop, which was to have been sited close to the school there is yet another loss to the sense of community on the estate. Developers do not care about the resident's problems, but local people do. The school will after all replace the St Mary's site and would have been very convenient for parents to use while they collect their children for a start.

Whatever you think of the proposal to drop the shop, please write to the Planning Department as soon as possible to make your views known.

A New Start

Birchanger School was pleased to welcome 12 new children into Class 1. There was also an older child joining Class 2, as well as a new teacher Mrs Winter in Class 4.

September is always a time for new beginnings as everyone got used to a new class and a new year group. Many people think that autumn is a sad time of year, but at school it is a very exciting time with new things to try, new people to meet and the opportunity to explore life from another angle. Every parent had the chance to come to a meet the teacher session and to find out just what they can expect their child to learn in the weeks to come as well as an introduction to the learning paths in the year ahead.

Meanwhile the parents of youngsters who are expected to start at the school next autumn and those new to the village, were invited to visit the school, to take a tour and to meet the staff.

The learning process is a partnership between the child, parents and the school. Without this foundation the whole system would not work so well.

A Sports Day Well Worth Waiting For

Postponed more than once from the summer term, the long awaited School Sports Day and Summer Fair took place on the first available sunny Saturday in September.

By the Tuesday of the preceding week the longer range weather forecast promised a fine day, and the PTA swung into action. Cakes were baked, a non-uniform tombola day arranged, the Bocking Concert and Brass Band was fortunately available, and as many attractions as possible were arranged at very short notice. The lanes were marked out and training sessions arranged. As many teachers and parents as could be available at such short notice, came to man stalls and to set up for the occasion.

In the end it was a very successful afternoon. The sun did not disappoint, the children did their very best egged on by the leavers, many of whom came back for the occasion. They were very welcome and their help was invaluable. Thank you to everyone, it was very good to see you again.

Numbers were lower than previous years due to the difficulties in advertising the event. Many just heard the band and came along.

The PTA and the staff worked extremely hard and despite all odds it was a lovely, fun and a happy afternoon, as well as raising a £700 much needed and appreciated sum for the school.

Olympic Games 2012 - Volunteer Experience

It was two years ago that I volunteered to be part of the 2012 Olympic Games. I decided it was the opportunity to represent Great Britain and be part of history. Most of my family and friends have eaten their negative words about me donating two weeks of my holiday to be part of this, as the experience has proved to be amazing. I have met many athletes, celebrities and incredible people from all around the world who visited the games. I was part of the events team within the common domain which meant that I worked in all areas of Olympic Park, Stratford over the two week period of the games. I met the person who designed and built the Velodrome and heard how he arranged for all the wood to be transported from Canada. Had a trip up the orbit to see the sights across the park and worked alongside many amazing people from around the world.

I was lucky enough to be on duty for the opening ceremony and saw the Queen arrive by car as well as helicopter!! I met celebrities like Sir Cliff Richard, Lord Sebastian Coe and Sir Steve Redgrave to name but a few, plus many of the dignitaries and families of the athletes from around the world. Throughout the two weeks I have taken photos of athletes' families following medal wins as well as members of the public attending the park and am now a dab hand with any make of camera or phone!

It feels sad to think the games are over even catching the train at 5.16 am to work a ten hour day went very quickly. The whole atmosphere of the games has felt like it changed our nation and I feel extremely proud to have been a part of something that now represents our history. Although our training for the volunteer role suggested we were the games makers. The volunteers have all worked extremely hard to make the games a success but enjoyed every minute of doing this. In the words of an Italian Fashion Designer "Great Britain has done us all proud, how amazing you all are for creating a wonderful park and representing your country as volunteers, giving your time and so many smiles." I can honestly say I wouldn't have missed it for the world, the smiles, and the roar of the crowds are engraved in my memories. Excited families, beautiful gardens and amazing stadiums within the park made the experience even more humbling. The fact Team GB did so well was the final icing on the cake, London 2012 – history in the making.

Tracy Reed



More News

School Makes Art Show Special

The children at Birchanger School made their own very special contribution to Birchanger's Art Show. Not only did they fill the church with their art pictures, they arranged a special surprise in which nearly all the pupils took part.

The sides of the church were decorated with floral arrangements in pretty tea cups. Each child had made their own special arrangement. They looked stunning arranged around the church. Visitors were asked to vote for the winner, an almost impossible task.

It was a really lovely idea much appreciated by everyone who visited the church and which complemented the beautiful larger arrangements by Rosemary Seward. It would be lovely to see it again in future years.

Attention - Allotment Holders

Birchanger Parish Council is rewriting the rules governing the renting of allotments and would like to hear the views of the village's allotment holders. If you would like to take part in a discussion on the proposed new rules please come to the village hall at 7.45 on Tuesday 6th November for a short discussion. A copy of the rules can be provided before the meeting from Ken Wheatley (ken@birchanger.com; 814678). A copy will also be placed on www.birchanger.com.

If you don't have an allotment and would like one please contact the Parish Clerk, Julia Peachey, on 503912 or Juliapeachey1@yahoo.com. Please make contact even if you are already on the waiting list.

Do we Need a 20mph Limit?

Essex County Council is changing the rules with regard to speed limits, making it easier for communities to obtain 20mph zones. Do you think Birchanger should have a 20mph limit? Have your say on www.birchanger.com.

Faster Broadband

Early adopters of the new fibre-to-the-cabinet broadband that's recently been launched in Birchanger have reported good results with one user reporting downloads of about 76Mb with an upload speed of nearly 20Mb. Ask your ISP if you're interested in the service. They'll need to book an appointment for OpenReach to install a modem on an internal wall close to your master socket, and you'll need a compatible router if your ISP doesn't provide one.

Prize Bingo

to raise funds for Birchanger Scout Group

Sunday November 25th

St Mary's Church Hall

Doors open 4:15pm, eyes down 4:45pm

£6 Adults, £3 Children, £5 Seniors includes Ploughmans

Bring your own drinks

For tickets contact Linda 01279 814938 or Dave 01279 814311

News From The Club

Reminder for the Annual General Meeting

Please remember that the Club's AGM will start at 8.00pm on Wednesday 24th October. The meeting will be held as usual in the main bar of the clubhouse and is open for all members to attend and have their say. A full agenda will be posted in the club nearer the date; however one of the main topics for discussion will be the proposal for renovation and modifications to the clubhouse and toilets.

Your club needs you!

There are five vacancies available for next year's Committee. Anyone interested in joining the committee and offering their time and energy for the benefit of the club are most welcome to apply. Application forms will be posted on the clubs noticeboard.

Bowls Club still need new members!

The Bowls club are still looking for new members, anyone interested in taking up Bowls can discuss and apply for membership by contacting Elaine Wright on 01279 813474 or by Email; elaine@elainewright1.wanadoo.co.uk

Children eat for 10p at the club

Don't forget this fantastic offer, children under 12 years old accompanied by an adult can eat for only 10p when choosing from the special children's menu! The offer covers one child per adult ordering a main meal. Two adults mean two kids eat for 10p each. Note! the offer does not include dessert.

Tequila live at the club 27th October

Don't miss the popular band Tequila, back by popular demand, the band comprises of guitars and vocals from all 3 members with the main emphasis on the outstanding vocals of Louisa. With the addition of backing tracks featuring drum, bass, keyboards and brass the band produces a big sound. Tequila performs a range of popular covers from the 60s onwards. They have their own quality sound system and also have stage lighting to add the necessary atmosphere.

For information about what's on at the Club see the village diary on the back page of Birchanger Village Magazine



Tequila

or visit www.birchangerclub.com. Follow the Club on Facebook or twitter @Birchangerclub.

Carol Service at the Club

Get your vocal chords into practice and get into the Christmas spirit. The club will be holding a special Christmas carol service outside at the club sports field between the 17th and 18th December. Please come along and join in with the service and festivities. Mince pies and mulled wine will be available after the service as well as hot food from the bar. The exact date and details will be confirmed next month.

News from St. Mary's Church

Produce Auction and Village Fete

Many thanks to all those who joined in at the Produce Auction and helped to make it a success. Each year I worry about getting sufficient items to sell then, on the day, panic that the large quantity of goods will not be sold! I should know better by now because, as before, everything went - even down to the last banana. The event raised £509 for church general funds. Church stalls at the Fete raised £342 and that sum will also go towards general running costs. Thanks go to the Sports and Social Club for allowing the club to be used as the venue.

Church Improvements

Some of you will be aware that last month we got underway with our plan to develop the church by installing a toilet and kitchenette. A water supply has been laid and we will shortly be putting in the drain. Some paper work still needs to be completed before we can commence construction work inside the church. In the meantime, work on repairing and redecorating the internal walls has started. Services will continue as usual and everyone is welcome to come along to see what is happening.

Dog Fouling in the Churchyard

This is an on going problem which is getting worse. Some people seem to think that it is acceptable to walk their pets through the churchyard leaving their pets' mess behind for others to clear away. We know who some of you are! One woman frequently walks her white westie (on its lead) along the churchyard path and twice last month was seen to allow her dog to relieve itself on the path. She then walks away leaving the mess behind! Such behaviour is unacceptable and the PCC is looking at the possibility of levying fines on irresponsible dog owners. Please make sure that **you** are not one of them.

New Library Opens at School

At one time a separate computer suite was on the wish list of most schools. Then came lap tops and computer suites became redundant as the new lap tops took their place in every class room.

In Birchanger School the old computer suite has become the school library. There are two pupil librarians who will take responsibility for the books and general running of the library. New furniture has been bought and the PTA donated £4000 for the purchase of new books.

One of the features of the new library will include book reviews by the children themselves. These have already proved very successful when used in class. They will now feature in the library as well.

We may live in the age of computers, but books still play a big part in our children's lives.

Birchanger Wood Footpath Opening

Stage four of the accessible footpath network running through Birchanger Wood will be formally opened at 11.00 on Saturday 20th October by the Rt. Hon. The Lord Petre JP, Lord Lieutenant of Essex, and by the chairman of Birchanger Parish Council, Maria Davy. The new path is on the Birchanger side of the by-pass.

Access to the opening ceremony is via the sand track and is taking place by the kind permission of Birchanger Hall Farms. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Despite its name, this will be the third part of the surfaced path network through the woods to have been opened; the earlier stages having been opened by TV gardener Christine Walkden and the then Environment Minister and former Herts and Essex High School pupil Caroline Spelman.

The new paths, which have been constructed by Stansted firm D. Honours & Son, provide two benefits: they allow anyone to enjoy the wood, on foot or in buggy or wheelchair, whatever the weather; and they protect fragile wildlife from trampling feet by encouraging visitors to remain on the paths.

When the final stage is complete it will be 5.3km long: that's about three and a third miles for the metrically challenged, or a tad over 52,000 hands.

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Village Diary
October/November

October

- 21st 11.00 am St Mary's Family Service
- 24th 8.00 pm At the Club Club **AGM**
- 27th 8.00 pm At the Club Tequila
- 28th 11.00 am St Mary's Holy Communion

November

- 4th 11.00 am St Mary's Matins
- 6th 7.45 pm Birchanger Parish Council meeting
- 10th Club Red & Black
- 11th 10.45 am St Mary's Remembrance Service
- 17th Club Race Night
- 18th St. Mary's Family service
- 24th Club Ruby Groove
- 25th St. Mary's Holy Communion

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