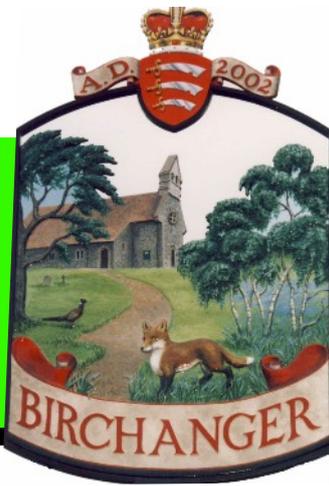


Birchanger

May 2013



Magazine

Issue 125

FROM CHELSEA TO BIRCHANGER

Birchanger Bowls club began its centenary celebrations on May 8th with a visit from a team of Chelsea pensioners.

The visitors arrived in their traditional scarlet uniforms at about 2.15 having been delayed by the state opening of parliament. A clear priority for the visitors was evident on arrival as they made a bee line for the bar!



The festivities proper began at about three pm with a welcome from Club Captain Colin Ferbrache to acting captain Doug Payne that was followed by a round of "spider" where the bowlers simultaneously bowled his wood at a jack in the centre of the green. Closest to the jack was a lady named Rita who won a bottle of scotch for her effort. Then a match was played on the three rinks.

While the match was being played I interviewed some of the veterans who watched from the shelter of the club. There was a fair amount of banter between the visitors mostly based on inter regimental rivalries and Mac, Charlie and Fred all well into their eighties told us about their life at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea. They all gave the impression of being very privileged to live there. Charlie who joined the Royal Horse Artillery as a boy soldier in 1944 served in Germany, the middle east and far east remaining in the army into the 1970s. His mate Fred was in the Royal Artillery also served for many years reaching the rank of Colour Sergeant.

Colin opens the proceedings

Mac a very taciturn chap, who likes his beer, served in the Household Division. He played in the final ends of the bowls match, that was won by the visitors.

After the match the pensioners changed into their "scarlets" and there was a photo shoot and time for the hosts and guests to socialise. Afterwards there was a roast chicken dinner followed by fruit crumble or bread and butter pudding. The Guests left the club at about 8.15 having had a very enjoyable time!

Bowling Club Forthcoming events

30th June - Essex County Men's team

21st July - Essex County Group 2 Men's team

4th August - North West Essex Men's team

12th September - Bowls England president's men's team

For people interested in becoming a member of the bowling club, the fees are £30 per year (£25 for OAP) plus the social club fee if not already a member. Roll up meetings are held at the Sports and Social Club on Friday evening at six PM and all are welcome to attend. For further information, please contact Elaine Wright on 01279 813474.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Another threat to the green belt

There has been a serious proposal made to the parish Council to build on the paddock behind Digby View. To do so would mean that the paddock would have to be taken out of the Green Belt. The gain would be that it would be for 100% affordable housing.

To gain access two householders would have to agree to move as their homes would have to be demolished to provide an entrance. Apparently two householders are prepared to do this. Others are less than enthusiastic. The Parish Council would like to know what you think. The gain would be more affordable homes for Birchanger. The loss is yet more green belt gone from the village and the loss of some of the houses in Digby View.

Much of Birchanger's green belt has already been lost to Forest Park. The District Council has no plans to take more land out of the green belt. The loss should be offset by green belt land being found elsewhere, but this just may not happen.

The proposal was aired at the Annual Parish Meeting in March when the proposal was overwhelmingly rejected. Your opinion does count. Please let me know on 812793.

Birchanger has its boundaries returned. Only to be swallowed by Stansted

It seems that the Boundary Commission has decided that we are to become part of Stansted South for Electoral purposes only.

The proposal is that Birchanger is to become part of a two member ward which will include Forest Park to be called Stansted South. The area of the proposed ward is massive, stretching roughly from the motorway service area to the border with Takeley, across to the centre of Stansted, then out towards Hazel End and then down to Birchanger Wood on the other side of the A 120 to the Hertfordshire boundary.

It is somewhat ironic as it closely follows the Birchanger village area of old, before huge chunks of the parish were taken into Stansted down the years. It is very sad now that we have our original size back, due to the warding arrangements, but are all to be labelled, "Stansted South".

There will also be Stansted North which will cover another enormous area which will include Ugley, Farnham, and Hazel End. This will be a three member ward.

This is all part of the plan to downsize the membership of the District Council to 39 members from 44. It may make sense to have less members, but several of the smaller villages may find their independence has been compromised as they are joined with much larger areas. Whatever you may think of the proposals, and many will like to think that they are a part of Stansted now, you will be able to make your feelings known. The whole matter is up for consultation until July 8th. Representations may be made to <http://consultationlgbce.org.uk>, or to reviews@lgbce.org.uk You can also write to the Review Officer, Uttlesford Review, Local Government Boundary Commission for England 76-86 Turnmill Street, London EC1

Want to be Fitter?

Wishful thinking maybe, but if you happen to be around on weekday mornings, the District Council's Health Walks might be of interest to you. These walks happen from April to September at all the larger village settlements. While there is none in Birchanger, Stansted and Hatfield Forest are included in the scheme. Walks start at the Library in Stansted at 10 am on Fridays. They start at 9.45 in Hatfield Forest on Thursdays and are done in conjunction with the National Trust and their wardens. All you need to do is to simply turn up. On the first occasion walkers are asked to arrive 15 minutes early to complete a short Health Questionnaire, that is all. All the walks cover items of interest, and these are explained on the way.

You can find out more from Paul Goddard at the District Council email address p.goddard@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Are you finding your way in the New Benefit System?

The changes to the way in which Benefits are paid and Council Tax rules have been redrafted have caused concern among many people. There is no change in most areas for any pensioner, but Universal Credit is worrying a great many beneficiaries. There is confusion and error but there is a way you can seek help.

Uttlesford District Council is aware of the difficulties people are facing and has appointed a special advisor to deal with your queries. She or a member of the team can be reached on 01799 510510 and will be able to check that the benefit for you is correct or otherwise and will be able to explain the system.

For the elderly there is no change in the council tax system for them, and they are not included in the extra bedroom tax either.

Community Project Grant Schemes on offer again

If you have a project which you would like to start now for completion by April next year, but lack the funds, the District Council may be able to help. The Community Project Grant Schemes are on offer again from the District Council this year. The minimum award is £100 and the maximum available is £3,500. If the amount requested is more than £1000, the organisation applying must show that they have raised 50% of the funding required for themselves. For amounts less than £1000 only 25% funding is required.

Many organisations in Birchanger have benefited from these grants. These include grants to the Scouts, Parish Council, Church Hall and many more. The grants can also be awarded for essential equipment. I have some application forms, and more information can be obtained by calling Sue Hayden, Uttlesford's Community Development Officer on 01799 510563.

Are we all addicted?

Most of us are probably mildly addicted to something, even if it is just a cup of tea or coffee. Over the years, apart from the usual drink and drug addictions, new forces have been at work. Communications have developed so much that we all cannot bear to be out of touch for any time at all. This means we are increasingly the owners of mobile phones and perhaps the most potent of all, some kind of Kindle or I Pad.

We can become unable to leave home without them. We may own several different devices all designed to keep us in touch at all times.

It is very noticeable in Birchanger, even when the weather improves, there are far less children about in the village.

They used to ride bikes and play football, use the recreation ground and play with their friends. Now they do communicate with their friends but rarely in person. They do play football, but not in the numbers they used to do.

They are not so numerous meeting friends in town or using the buses. Where have they all gone? Are they all busily communicating with their friends, in ways we cannot see? Are they all competing in internet games, about which we know nothing, on their I pads?

Do we even begin to know who they are communicating with? How is your credit card doing?

Is all this a good thing? Are our children safer spending more time at home, or should we try to push them out and about a little more? Children now can fix your phone or computer faster than anyone else, but cyber bullying is increasing. It seems we are light years away from getting abreast of the new medium unless we are a computer boffin or under 18.

Are we turning out the best air pilots and computer scientists ever, or are they all going to end up a bunch of overweight couch potatoes who are losing out on an important part of their childhood?

There are no answers now, only time will tell.

Work on Church Hall starts soon

The long awaited work on the extension to the Church Hall is scheduled to start next month. Tenders were sent out last month and references for the builder who submitted the most advantageous tender have been received. It is intended to ensure that the process causes minimal disruption to hall users at this time.

There will inevitably be some difficulties but we shall do our best to make the whole process as easy as possible. By the Autumn we should have a hall with a brand new working kitchen, additional meeting room and improved toilet facilities for the benefit of all the users of the hall.

Hopes of Spring are shattered

It seemed like such a beautiful early spring morning after the longest winter. The sun was shining, a gentle breeze was blowing, but instead of bird song and planes there was a deep throated roar. A digger was tearing down hedges in an overgrown pasture and something had squashed the daffodils which had barely made it out in the uncertain spring. The black caps stopped singing. The long tailed tits and the jays disappeared, as did the ducks and the pheasants. Their nests were gone and so too were the joys of spring. It used to be a country code not to disturb nesting habitats in spring. It seems the country codes are all forgotten now, but then you might argue that Birchanger is no longer a village in the countryside, so what do you expect?

Do you need another green recycling bin?

Recycling is very effective now that most people are well and truly used to the idea. You can now add glass and textiles to your green bin and bottle banks, so bottle banks, apart from the ones at pubs, are largely redundant.

Some of us now find the green bin a little too small for our needs and we tend to put the surplus in the black bin instead. There is no need as the council are very happy to provide additional recycling bins for both food and recyclables. I still have a stock of food bins on 812793, but the green bins are available from the council on 01799 510510.

If you want to join the garden refuse scheme, there are new bins available on the same council number.

Laid back in Laos

Laos, yes I remember the name, chiefly from associations with the Vietnam War. I thought it was a kingdom but these days it is known as the Lao people's democratic republic.

Our arrival was so exciting, flying over the mountains from Thailand in a tiny Turboprop plane it felt as though we had been transported back to the 1950s. With our driver there to meet us at the airport we were soon installed in our hotel in the picturesque town of Luang Prabang, a fascinating place bounded on both sides by 2 rivers; the Nam Khan and the mighty Mekong!

Our itinerary was given to us and we were particularly looking forward to an upcoming trip to an elephant sanctuary located further into the country. However our immediate needs were met by an evening spent in shorts and light clothing eating a delicious meal and sipping a cool glass of local beer at an open air restaurant on the banks of the Mekong river, Heaven!

After dinner we decided to visit the night market, I cannot believe the range of goods and souvenirs on offer, the market stalls stretched for what seemed like miles and it was all I could do to stop Barbara using up our entire baggage allowance on our first night here! Managing to get her back to the hotel without any purchases was no mean feat, but we retired for the night and resolved to explore this fascinating place in the morning.

The next day after breakfast we set off up the hill known as Phou Si, highest point in the town, home to various buddhist temples and the place to be for the most panoramic views of the area. Luang prabang may be small but it has much to offer and we spent the rest of the day visiting local landmarks and window shopping in the town.

The following day began with our driver and guide picking us up at 9.30 for the journey to the Elephant Village. We were joined by one other couple and were all full of anticipation as we caught our first sight of the Elephants we were to have charge of over the next 2 days.

There followed one of the happiest times of the holiday. We stayed in a lodge on the site, rode the Elephants, fed them on bananas and bamboo, took them home to bed in the jungle before enjoying a meal cooked by the village staff in the company of our fellow travellers. After a good night's sleep it was up at 6 am and off to pick up the "girls" (all of the elephants were female) and take them down to the river to bathe. There is nothing quite like sitting up on the back of a two ton Pachyderm as it takes you into the water sits down and begins to spray you with water from its trunk, a morning shower with a difference, I can highly recommend it! We had a lot of fun but all too soon it was back in the car for the return trip to the hotel. Before leaving Luang we decided to opt for a massage, not in the commercial spa houses but at the Red Cross as the money spent there is recycled back into their funds. Barbara had the full hour massage but after being pummelled for half an hour I went into the Sauna which

was pitch black, hot and full of invisible people who I kept bumping into. One of the most bizarre experiences I have ever had!

Next stop Vientiane, Capital of Laos, the influence of the French is everywhere here, the city has wide boulevards and there is even an oriental version of The Arc de Triomphe in the centre. But it is in the food and drink that you are most aware that this was once a French colony. Everywhere you go there is rich dark coffee and you can enjoy baguettes and croissants and rich pastries giving the impression that you are in Paris rather than South East Asia.

On a more serious note we also visited a centre dedicated to helping victims of the bombs left over from the Vietnam war. Quite sobering when you think that there are 780,000 square kilometres of rural land covered with unexploded ordnance, which they are clearing at the rate of 40 square kilometres a week. It's going to be a long Job! As our time in Laos drew to a close we took a leisurely cycle ride through the quiet back streets until we reached a park, where in the early evening we joined in with a crowd doing a crazy fitness workout. It must have been a sight to behold as Barbara & I leapt about to old eighties disco music, being urged on by some faceless trainer yelling instructions and sounding like a zealous dictator at a political rally!

We finally slipped away to the comfort of a French restaurant where we enjoyed a glass of wine, which made a nice change from the Lao beer we usually had to accompany our food.

Laos was a fine experience with its laid back style and the charm of its colonial past. The people are stoical and gentle and I like to think we might return someday. We couldn't help but wonder, on the flight to Vietnam, what excitement might lie ahead.



Tony Wilson

School News

Tiles to change the face of the School

The children will be changing the front of the school this month. It will be all their own work as well. Under the watchful direction of a local potter, artist and art teacher, David Morris, the children have made their own clay tiles which will incorporate their own ideas, as well as a view of Birchanger life. They will be a snapshot of history of Birchanger in the 21st century. Every child, along with some of the staff and governors have made a tile, which has been fired, painted and then glazed before being cemented on to the front of the school. When the work is completed they will transform the entrance of the school into a very interesting place in Birchanger. Come and see it when it is complete. As well as the tiles outside, the school is being painted throughout by local handyman Dave Debnam. It is already looking a much brighter place for everyone.

New Teachers Selected

We shall be welcoming two new teachers to the school in September, in response to the additional children expected for this "bumper" school year for pupil numbers, which starts in September. There will be a chance to meet the teachers in the remaining weeks of the school term and they will start full time at the school in September. As usual the classes involved were taught on the day of the interviews by all the short listed candidates, and their opinions and reactions were taken into account by the interviewing team. Members of the school council showed all the candidates around the school and answered their questions. The school was lucky to have such a strong list of candidates.

A Reminder.

School Sports Day will be on June 15th between 12.30 and 2pm. From 2pm the annual Summer Fete will begin, run as usual by the PTA. There will also be a bar and refreshments, so please come along and enjoy!

Birchanger Buddies.

The original children who were the founding members of Birchanger Buddies may well have started primary school now, but the group continues with mothers and under fives from Birchanger, Forest Park and Stansted. It remains a good place to go on a Friday afternoon, to meet other mums and for the children to try the excellent and ever changing toys and equipment on offer. All you have to do is to turn up from 1.30 pm and enjoy a cup of tea, or coffee, and a chat while the children simply play with the excellent equipment and have a healthy snack. The group will continue throughout the building work on the hall, and will benefit from better storage facilities and more space when the work is finished.

Art Classes in Birchanger

Artist Heather Brown will be continuing the classes held in her Wood Lane studio in 2013. They are small friendly classes to suit all abilities from complete beginners to those with some experience. The studio walls are filled with a variety of original paintings. Just make an appointment to go and have a look. Artist and Tutor Heather Brown has been painting and teaching art for over 30 years. Phone 815453 to find out more.

Friday May 31	10am to 4pm	Bring your own subject and materials and individual advice and guidance will be given - £30 per person
Saturday June 8	10am to 4pm	Flowers in mixed media (watercolour and pastels) step by step - £35 per person
Saturday June 15	10am to 4 pm	Sepia brush pens and wash with watercolour step by step - £35 per person
Friday June 21	10am to 4pm	Bring your own subject and materials, individual advice and guidance will be given -£30 per person

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF LESS THAN ONE WEEK'S NOTICE IS GIVEN FOR A CANCELLATION WHATEVER THE REASON HALF THE FEE MUST BE PAID

Materials will be available at extra cost

Tea and coffee are provided – please bring a packed lunch

Please book early as places are limited

For further information or to book please call Heather Brown on

01279 815453 or e mail heather.highview@googlemail.com

If you would like to receive the next list of dates please supply a stamped addressed envelope or your email address.

News from Birchanger Social Club

Renovations update - New roof completed!

The proposed club renovations are split into three phases; phase 1 covers the new roof, phase 2 the new boiler and toilet area and phase 3 is for the modernisation and expansion of the dance and entertainment area. The club is happy to report that despite some delays due to poor weather, the new roof (phase 1) including a 20 year guarantee and budgeted at £18,000 + VAT was completed on the 10th May.

Work starts in June for new boiler and toilet facilities

Phase 2 covering the new boiler and toilet area was discussed on the 24th April at a special EGM meeting where members agreed to go ahead with the new toilets and boiler including a totally new and long awaited purpose built toilet for the disabled. "Another Level Construction" have been appointed contractors who estimate a cost of around £60,000 + VAT. Work on phase 2 is planned to start early June 2013 and is expected to cause minimal disruption to the main body of the club. Consideration for temporary toilets is being investigated in addition to the existing facilities available in the changing rooms. There will be some impact on the availability of the snooker room and the committee will talk with the member players on a regular basis to solve any issues that arise.

Due to a very generous grant received from local government, only around £4,000 is expected to be used from club funds for the first two phases. Phase 3 covering the renovation and expansion of the dance and entertainment area will be discussed at a separate EGM at later date. The planned renovation work has been made possible mainly because of the local government grant received last year of £80,000 but also due to robust financial position of the club and the continuous support of its member's. As a footnote, membership has increased since 2012 and now stands at 475 members, so we must be doing something right!

BSSC Joins CAMRA

BSSC is has recently joined the campaign for real ale. CAMRA is the organisation which has been Campaigning for real ale and pubs & drinkers' rights since 1971. The club has a good selection of real ales and is now recognised by CAMRA. In the 2013 UK Budget the chancellor scrapped the beer duty escalator (which raised beer duty 2% above inflation year on year) following a 12 month long campaign from CAMRA, an e-petition which earned over 108,000 signatures, and overwhelming support from pub goers and the pub industry as a whole. The Chancellor went one step further and actually reduced duty on beer by 1%. Overall, CAMRA estimates that this saved pub goers around 11p on the price of a pint; compared to if the beer duty escalator had stayed in place.

Beer prices kept for the third year!

BSSC is delighted to inform its members that the committee unanimously agreed to keep beer prices the same for the third year running. However, there will be a small increase covering increased costs for soft drinks, wines, spirits and coffee.

New Products available

Some new products have been introduced at the club; check out the low prices items:

Peroni 330ml bottles
Captain Morgan Spiced Rum
Raspberry Sambucca
Quavers

Don't forget Rugby on the big screen

British and Irish Lions are touring Australia in June and will be televised worldwide matches on the big screen. Kick off starts 11.00 AM on the 22nd June, 29th June and 6th July on offer during the games.

Birchanger Sports and Social Club

June Entertainment

8th - Ainsley

22nd - Red & Black
(Louise & Cliff)

29th - Charity Race
Night

Follow us at www.birchangerclub.com

229 Birchanger Lane 01279 813441

Raffle

THE THREE WILLOWS

Apple Bobbing

Monday May 27th
From 12 PM

Coconut shie

Bank Holiday
Family Fun Day

In aid of Essex Air Ambulance



GUESS THE WEIGHT
OF THE CAKE

Bouncy Castle
Afternoon Tea and Cake

Face Painting

News from St Mary's

We have a large quantity of mainly ladies clothing and pottery that we need to sell ready for the development of the hall. Come along and have a browse or just take this opportunity to sit and have a chat with friends over a cup of tea. On 1st June at 2pm in the Church Hall there will be a

**Sale of good quality new and second hand clothing,
bric - a - brac and cakes**

Coffee or Tea?



Have I done this jigsaw before?

The coffee morning in aid of St Mary's held on May 14th at Moorswood was attended by about 30 guests.

The coffee mornings have become a regular social event in the village and are well attended raising important funds for our village church. These events have their own traditions including sales of various goods, cakes etc. As well a a good opportunity for a chin wag. And they always finish with a raffle.

The next one is scheduled for October 8th.

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Village Diary	
May/June	
May	
25 th	8.00 pm At the Club Cabaret Night
26 th	11.00 am St Mary's Holy Communion
27 th	2 pm Three Willows Fun Day
June	
2 nd	11.00 am St Mary's Matins
8 th	8.00 pm At the Club Ainsley
9 th	11.00 am St Mary's Matins
16 th	11.00 am St Mary's Family Service
22 nd	8.00 pm At the Club Red & Black (Louise and Cliff)
23 rd	11.00 am St Mary's Holy Communion
29 th	8.00 pm At the Club Charity Race Night
30 th	11.00 am St Mary's Matins followed by Summer Lunch At Moorswood

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