



## BRIDLEWAY OR RACETRACK?

It seems the bridleway that runs from Spider cottage towards the motorway foot bridge has become hazardous recently due to cyclists using it at high speeds.

There has been a conflict of use between a cyclist and two horse riders which resulted in two horses being badly spooked by a cyclist who rounded a blind bend at high speed without thought for any other users.

The horses spun round and bolted down hill. Fortunately neither horse stepped into the ditches on either side of the pathway as this would have had serious consequences for the rider and horse.

It was also fortunate that neither horse collided with a lady who was walking her dogs further down the hill.

The riders of the horses were experienced riders both in their sixties. One man has some strain injuries but it could easily have been a much more serious incident.

The manager of Essex County Council Footpaths, has given the following advice.

*“There should be room for everyone to enjoy riding out in the Essex Countryside. Both Equestrians and cyclists are vulnerable road users and share similar risks when riding on the road between off road routes.*

*Cyclists and horse riders have a statutory right to ride on byways, bridleways and roads. On bridleways, it is important that cyclists give way to horse riders (the Countryside Act 1968 gave cyclists the right to use bridleways, but stated that they must give way to horse riders and walkers).*

*Though this is seldom noted or known (as well as understood) to both users and it is very hard to police.*

*“There are many key points that we all need to take into consideration when out riding, whether on horse or cycle and three of these are:*

*A horse could be unlikely to see or hear a cyclist, especially if they are approaching quietly from behind. Calling out ‘hello’ for walkers or equestrians is for example, welcome and important in alerting horses and riders that they are there. However most would not be sure how close to get before they call in case of startling horse and rider.*

*Also, if the cyclist needs to pass, then they should do so on the right, much as they would do on a main road. Also irrespective of the time of day, time of year or prevailing weather conditions, fluorescent and reflective (hi-viz) clothing should if possible be worn, on-road or off by Horse riders.*

*Equestrians also need to keep their eyes and ears open. Tyre tracks are a good sign that there could be cyclists about. It’s not just the cyclists that need to slow down if meeting other path users. Equestrians are used to the size of their horses and ponies, but that doesn’t mean everyone else is. The equestrian as well as the cyclist should also be prepared to stop if required or requested.”*

### Please remember

We all have the right to use the footpath appropriately, but our footpaths are not race tracks for anyone, and care and respect must be shown to all the other users at all times, who ever they may be. Combining cyclists, horses and the public in a restricted space is dangerous.

# PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

*Elizabeth Godwin*

## A 20 mph Speed limit for Birchanger Lane?

A great many residents in Birchanger have suffered unfortunate and potentially dangerous encounters with speeding motorists at some time or other in Birchanger Lane, whether they are driving, cycling or on foot. It could be possible to have a 20mph speed limit if the residents are in favour of it.

The message at the Annual parish Meeting last month from those who attended the meeting, showed that by far the greatest number of people wanted the speed limit, but not everyone who would have an opinion was able to be there.

I need to know what you think as soon as possible, as the Section 106 money will eventually be all used up. So far plans are for the improved junction with the B1383 which should have started, new bus shelters on the B1383 and at High View, and gated signs at the entrance to Birchanger on either end of the lane. The signs at the motorway end of the village are to be tidied up, and a clearer sign showing that the lane is unsuitable for HGVs is to be installed. Tot Lane will remain as it is as any other changes are not feasible at the present time.

I can be reached on 812793, or by email to [stickgo@aol.com](mailto:stickgo@aol.com)

## A new way of running Essex Police

Up until last November Essex Police Force was responsible to a committee of the great and the good. Now we have an elected police commissioner and matters are already starting to change.

It is obviously very much more direct to oversee such a large body of people with a single person in place. Committees are naturally unwieldy and take more time to make decisions. In the hands of an elected representative it is hoped that the whole process will be more direct and therefore far more efficient. We shall see.

The new commissioner is making a very proactive start. He plans to hold forums in Uttlesford twice a year. There is an email contact address where concerns can be registered directly. It is hoped that there will be far more community involvement with our policing in future and that the public will be listened to.

Meanwhile at the first Police and Community Forum we learned that crime had actually increased by only one crime in Uttlesford, that staff at Saffron Walden has been increased, emergency response times have improved back to the level last seen two years ago with a target of a real emergency of 15 minutes in urban locations and 20 minutes out in the countryside. There is a lower classification of emergency calls which is a so called "priority call" which gets a target time of a one hour response. How this is decided is down to the discretion of

the emergency services and the police. It seems that a routine burglary is not deemed to be a priority call. However if you do perceive that there are risks and the situation is very serious, call again and insist on immediate support.

By far the highest crime is theft from motor vehicles overnight. An amazing number of people leave their cars unlocked overnight with valuables stored inside. The police mounted an operation where they tried the doors of cars parked at various locations throughout the district overnight, and tried to contact all the owners who had left their cars unlocked to warn them of the likelihood that their car or possessions could be stolen. We all make it far too easy for the crooks to take our property. It is very easy to forget to lock the car.

Catalytic converter thefts from vans and commercial vehicles are also a priority. Some of us might not know what they are and even that they had one. We soon do when the vehicle will not start. They are expensive to replace but a necessity. Cheeky thieves have even been known to return to take their replacements.

We are in a rural area still, despite the pressures from all sides. There is a very effective Farm Watch system with 112 farms participating. From this there is good information about suspect vehicles, strangers and their movements but the theft of quad bikes, gas canisters, batteries, tack and bird scarers continues to be happen. Dog walkers in Birchanger are also in a very good position to report strange sightings as well. It is also a sad fact that hare coursing is happening in our area, which is not only an offence, but which causes damage to property and crops.

The commissioner plans to update the community every six months at regular community forums. The next one is at the council offices in September at Saffron Walden. The date will be announced later.

The email address for the Police Commissioner is [pcc@essex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:pcc@essex.pnn.police.uk)

## Fed up with potholes?

I think that we are all fed up with potholes. There are so many of them and they are getting bigger all the time. The problem is that they are going to cost more than there is money available to repair immediately, and the weather has only made matters worse as well. Potholes cannot be repaired properly in frosty conditions. I suppose it is one way of slowing us all down but damage is being caused to all motor vehicles and the motorists bear the costs in most cases.

Essex County Council has a new pothole repair machine which will be out and about as soon as it can when the weather has improved. There is a large area to cover so nothing will happen immediately unless we are very lucky. Take care.

## Do you have problems getting GP appointments?

It is the long term endeavour of the NHS to keep people out of hospital as much as possible. It seems that people can be treated increasingly at home with visits by specialist teams for their condition, and with a GP available for advice and support when needed. Sounds great, but it is when you get to the contacting the GP bit that it all goes wrong for many people.

It seems that in Birchanger people use surgeries in Bishops Stortford, or the one in Stansted. It also appears that the people who are registered with the Bishops Stortford practices may be getting a better deal. That is good news for the patients, but the disparities do need to be addressed, otherwise increasing home care breaks down completely for some.

I would like to know whether the perception that there is a better deal in East Herts is accurate. I am hearing a lot of stories as to how callers to the surgeries can be put on hold to the point where the caller discontinues the call repeatedly, where appointments on the day can only be booked in a ten minute window, which is very bad luck if you can't get through in the allotted time. The result is that many people feel they have to attend hospital to access medical help. Not exactly good news for those who are suffering from a long term condition, are on one of the Home Care treatment plans, are worried about someone close to you, or for the hard pressed emergency departments.

Most GP surgeries do not offer an evening or Saturday morning service. Shift workers have great difficulty phoning for an appointment in the allotted time frame. The whole set up at present would not appear to be in the best interests of the patients.

I would like to hear from you whatever surgery you use as to how you rate your routine GP care. I know that some of you have had an excellent service. I also know that this has not been available for all. I need to know from you how you think matters may be improved and what your experience is. I just want to make sure that we try to get an excellent service for everyone. I know this has not happened in every case. I can be reached on 812793. Discharging people into the community will only work if there is proper access to support and advice at all times. NHS Direct can be reached on 0845 4647, but it is your own doctor who knows your case best.

Incidentally the functions of the old Primary Care Trust were taken over by the new Commissioning Boards on April 1<sup>st</sup>. what this will mean to us is unclear, we can only hope for better services but this is not guaranteed. The new groups have undergone rigorous testing to ensure that they are fit for purpose, although our perceptions may turn out to be somewhat different. We come under the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group. Find out more about this group at [www.westessexccg.nhs.uk](http://www.westessexccg.nhs.uk)

## WRVS need your help

Being in hospital is never a fun experience, no matter how good the staff may be. The problems don't go away when you come home either, especially if you live alone, or your partner is frail, or out at work all day and the family live in the other side of the country.

The Women's Royal Voluntary Society have recognised the problems. The difficulty they face is the lack of volunteers in our area. That is where you might like to help. They require volunteers to visit the recently discharged from hospital as well as the ones who are trying hard not to go in. The purpose would be to help people with their shopping, take them to outpatient's appointments and other social events. In between this they would ask the volunteers to pop in and phone to check that the patients were all right and to address such problems as they could.

A simple kindly service like this may help to save lives. To find out more please contact Karon Gibson at [Karon.Gibson@wrvs.org.uk](mailto:Karon.Gibson@wrvs.org.uk)

## Hot line for dog mess

If you do see any dog fouling a footpath where the owner does not even bother to clear up after the event, you can report it to the district Council on 01799510510. Now there is a new way of doing it, via a form which can be completed on line. The form can be downloaded on [www.uttlesford.gov.uk/main.cfm](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/main.cfm).

## Ideal Site Found for Air Quality Monitor, but.....

For months now our environmental health officer Ann Moore has been looking for a site in Birchanger for an air quality monitor. Birchanger Club have been very helpful and very willing to accommodate the monitor and it is very likely that it will be placed there in the next few months, with a big thank you to all involved.

However there is a better place, to record the data, at the barns at Duck end. This is closer to the runway and the motorway and there would be more useful information available from this particular site. However there is a major snag.

The farming company who manages the farm is demanding a whacking £1000 fee, well out of the reach of current District Council funds. It is a pity, as it would have been something to benefit the Birchanger community as whole.. What with the gas guns causing horses to rear and bolt, shooting close to gardeners, and massive vehicles on the road, you might think they would like to give something back to the community, which is by and large, mainly uncomplaining. There is a very different story at the opposite end of the village, where the farmer does the best he can to help in many ways.

## One Allotment Spare

The Birchanger Allotment Society is up and running again, and the allotments are thriving and a credit to their tenants. You get a lot for the current rent of just £10 a year, as well as the encouragement and support of all the other allotments holders.

There is just one allotment left. If you are interested, please call our Parish Clerk, Julia Peachey on 503912.

# From Van to Nam

Little did I think when I photographed my old redundant working van and placed an Ad on ebay that it would lead to an exciting holiday in vibrant South East Asia where Barbara & I would experience some of our most pleasurable travels of recent years!

However, as the price on the van climbed steadily, exceeding our expectations it coincided with a plunge in the weather prospects outside and, naturally, as the gloom sets in you start to think of faraway countries, warm sun and the freedom of discovering new places. Little did we know this sale would lead us far away from home and the familiar holiday places of Europe.

The successful bidder came from Bournemouth and was, surprisingly, a dealer in light vans. He contacted us by email and asked if we could collect his driver from the railway station which we duly did on a cold and rainy Tuesday morning. During the course of the journey and subsequently the business of payment and transfer of the documentation, our conversation drifted on to holidays and the upcoming winter. John was a man in his late sixties, retired, but busying himself by delivering and collecting vehicles bought by his friend and boss on the South coast. So I was somewhat taken aback when he told me that he and his wife had been on a tour of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos! "But I thought that was for backpackers" I said naively.

John went on to explain that the tour company organised everything, good standard hotels, guides, excursions and airport pickups. He enthused me with his tales of the exotic food, relaxed people and, best of all, warmth of the weather. I was hooked.

Two days later I placed a call to a company in Brighton with the unlikely name of 'Rickshaw Travel' their sales advisor Erica explained that they would tailor everything to our own requirements; did we want beach holidays, sightseeing of ancient temples, tours of Hanoi, anything was possible. I explained that we were a little older than their normal clientele and that my 'dodgy knees' meant I had limited mobility for walking, climbing etc. She assured me they would put together a plan for us which we could alter and tweak until we were perfectly happy, so we set about researching the places we would like to visit. Before too long we had a blueprint for what was to prove the trip of a lifetime. It was not without its ups and downs but as I hope you will see if you join us next time, it was an adventure not to be missed!

Tony Wilson

## COFFEE MORNING



In aid of Church funds

Tuesday 14th May  
10.30 till Noon

Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane

Everyone welcome



Birchanger Sports and Social Club

## May Entertainment

3<sup>rd</sup> - Poker Night

4<sup>th</sup> - Billy Brown

11<sup>th</sup> - Charity 80s fancy dress  
disco & karaoke in aid of  
Cancer Research

19<sup>th</sup> - Charity Quiz Night in aid  
of MENCAP Grove Cottage

25<sup>th</sup> - Cabaret night -  
Comedian Willy Thompson and  
singer Fabulous Flo

Follow us at [www.birchangerclub.com](http://www.birchangerclub.com)

229 Birchanger Lane 01279 813441

# School News

## Red Nose Day fun and profitable

Of all the non-uniform days in the school calendar, Red Nose has to be the most fun. The brief was simple, just come to school wearing something red, and red it was in a variety of wigs, hair dyes, painted faces as well as the red clothes. There was even a pair of the most enormous sunglasses ever worn especially to help to celebrate the day.

The day was masterminded by Winnie and her team from Owls. They organised a treasure hunt for Ladybirds, where the children had to find red noses with numbers on in the right numerical order. Hedgehogs learned what it was like to be a child living in poverty in Kenya, while Squirrels and Owls brought white T shirts to school to decorate and wear at the sharing assembly in the afternoon. Cakes of all types and sizes were baked for sale to everyone after assembly.

Over £75 million was raised across the country, and the school could be proud of the fact that they played their part in that overall grand total.

## End of a hard Winter term

I think everyone was quite glad when the term finally ended, not because it had been a bad term for the school, but because the cold weather had made life something of a struggle for all. After the Easter service

with special prayers from children in years 5 and 6, the children enjoyed an Easter Egg Hunt, where every child eventually found a ticket which led to an Easter Egg. In the afternoon there was a very relaxing concert where children who are learning instruments at the school had a chance to display their skills.

Some very lucky children went home with trays of Easter Eggs and other Easter goodies provided by the PTA in what is now becoming an annual Easter Egg raffle.

## Chicks hatch at Birchanger Nursery

It was supposed to be a real springtime event, but forgetting the spring part, some 12 chicks hatched in front of the watchful eyes of Birchanger's Nursery School children. Lynn Dorsett had arranged for the eggs to come into school and the children watched in amazement as the eggs cracked open and the chicks were hatched.

The event has turned into an annual fund raiser for the nursery. Each child is photographed with a chick and the picture is converted into either a key ring or a fridge magnet for sale to parents and friends. The chicks which were a mixture of bantams or hens are sold to whoever wants one for a pet after a period under incubation lamps.

## 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.

Tuesday April 30	10am to 1pm	Basic watercolour techniques and colours for trees and foliage - £18 per person
Thursday May 9	10am to 4pm	Bring your own subject and materials, individual advice and guidance will be given - £30 per person
Monday May 20	10am to 1pm	Soft pastels step by step bluebell woods -£18 per person
Friday May 31	10am to 4pm	Bring your own subject and materials and 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](mailto: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

## News from the Bowling Club

2013 is a special year for Birchanger bowls club as we reach our centenary. Likewise with the cricket and football clubs, the bowls club has been present in Birchanger for one hundred years. Although we are a small club we are affiliated to the Birchanger sports and social club, Bowls England, Essex county and North West Essex bowling associations. On most weekends you will find a happy crew merrily strolling up and down the green with the Jack and bowls enjoying the company of another club on the green. Yearly the club enters a team into the North West Essex group two league where we have continued to make successful progress.

The club has seen many changes over the years, including rules and regulations however the sport continues to grow, and although at times we may feel that our membership is small we always find competitive people out there willing to join us. So this year come along and support your local bowls club at the centenary games listed below or come and have a roll up with us any Friday evening at 6pm and if you wish to join just speak to one of us on the green. The club has at present 25 mixed sex members and have a team entering the North West Essex league. They are affiliated to the Essex County Bowls and Bowls England and have three rinks which are maintained by green keeper; Mr Howard Gunn and supported by Mr J Law. They have regular friendly fixtures during the year and support local clubs with their Gala games.

The Bowling club is a small friendly club who are looking for new members whatever the age. People interested in becoming a member can join at any time. 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 6PM and all are welcome to attend. For further information, please contact Elaine Wright on 01279 813474.

### Important Games 2013

- 8<sup>th</sup> May we have a game against the Chelsea pensioners
- 30<sup>th</sup> June Essex County Men's team
- 21<sup>st</sup> July Essex County Group 2 Men's team
- 4<sup>th</sup> August North West Essex Men's team
- 12<sup>th</sup> September Bowls England president's men's team



### Rugby on the big screen - coming in June

British and Irish Lions are to tour Australia in June. It will be sixteen years since the Lions have won a series but their chances are good, according to Andy Irvine, the team's tour manager. Although recent performances from the Australian team were impressive, he was "optimistic" regarding England's success. The kick off times shown below are estimated and will be confirmed closer to the dates.

- 22 June – 10am
- 29 June – 11am
- 06 July – 11am

The matches will be shown on the big screen and bacon sandwiches will be readily available.

### Fancy dress Disco in Aid of cancer research 11<sup>th</sup> May

The club will be holding an "eighties" fancy dress disco & karaoke in aid of Cancer Research on the 11th May. Please do your best to attend and contribute to this worthwhile event as it is for such a good cause!

### Saint Patrick's Day weekend

St Patrick's weekend was a great success at the club especially when a number of beers were on special offer at low prices. Saturday night saw the return of solo singer Andy Loxley singing the likes of Frank Sinatra, Bobby Darren and Michael Bubl  to name but a few. Around 150 members attended the evening and the dance floor was pretty full for most of the night. All in all it was a great weekend.

### Special EGM

An EGM is to be held at the Club on the 24<sup>th</sup> April to discuss and request the release of funds for the lavatory refurbishment incorporating a lavatory for the disabled.  
ALL members are welcome to attend



## **BIRCHANGER BROWNIES** **(PLEASE COME AND HELP)**

Could you volunteer one and half hours each week on a regular basis during term time to help out with Birchanger Brownies who are young girls age 7- 10 yrs and members of the Guiding movement.

The pack is healthy and thriving, but requires more help in order to keep running.

Brownies enjoy an endless array of activities which can range from drama, painting, crafts to outdoor games. They are invited to attend trips and events with other guiding groups in their area allowing the girls to see how they can progress in guiding.

If you feel you can help these girls out or would like more information please call; Jennifer (District Commissioner) on 01279 814434

## **Birchanger 10k returns**

Birchanger Primary School's 10k running race including a children's 1 mile fun run.

Birchanger 10k is now in its third year having proved a very successful fundraiser in 2011 and 2012.

Whether you are new to running or seeking a bigger challenge this 10k will suit everyone. There are usually around 100 runners which makes it a comfortable field. The multi terrain course over footpaths, roads, fields and woods keeps the run interesting and although the two loops both incorporate the challenging Birchanger Lane hill, the second loop is a refreshing 2k shorter circuit taking in Digby wood. There are winner's trophies and prizes and a T-shirt and goody bag for all finishers at the end.

Last year, the profits from the race went directly towards funding a new school library which the children are now benefiting from. This year's profits will go towards a new outdoor classroom and the refurbishment of the reception outdoor area.

The race starts at 10:00am with the children's fun run starting after the final adult has finished. The children's race has proved very popular with over 50 entrants each year. All ages are welcome, but we ask Key stage 1 and under must be accompanied round by an adult. Every child gets a finishing medal and this year they will get numbers and there will be prizes for the winners.

For more information go to <http://www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk/birchanger-10k/>

## **Birchanger Wood – An update April 2013**

By the time you are reading this, I trust that the weather will be 'much more Spring-like'. It is perhaps surprising therefore, that during the very cold weather of March, the beautiful white wood anemones have been happy enough to be showing their heads and have commenced flowering in Birchanger Wood.

The wood anemones and the later-showing English bluebells are a Spring feature of Birchanger Wood and it is for this reason that the Birchanger Wood Trust has been seeking to conserve and encourage their growth over the woodland floor. The means we have used to preserve and encourage these colourful flowers has been by refurbishing our winding woodland paths so that feet and boots refrain from venturing onto the soft woodland floor and these lovely bulbs have a chance to regenerate and reinstate.

Birchanger Wood now has 5.3Km of all-weather winding well-surfaced paths including the refurbished public footpath and they are free for use by all the local community. The Wood is maintained by a band of dedicated woodland workers – we have no paid employees but we do use contractors from time to time to carry out specialised tasks like pollarding the tall trees, many of which are ash trees.

The Trust has been busy over the winter months constructing a secure compound for our tree nursery, and equipment store. At the present moment the woodland entrance at the Water Tower, Bishop's Stortford, resembles a muddy building site, but this will mellow during the years. It is important that the Trust has a base from which to operate in order to fulfil the necessary tasks of maintenance and to meet the third of the three objectives which are the reasons for its very existence – to educate the community and visitors in the local history of the Wood and its flora and fauna. The other two objectives? They are the conservation and preservation of this ancient Wood, and to provide a leisure facility for the local community.

Daphne Wallace-Jarvis, Secretary The Birchanger Wood Trust, Tel: 01279 812259

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# Village Diary

March/April

April

28<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

May

3<sup>rd</sup> 8.00 pm At the Club  
Poker night

4<sup>th</sup> 8.00 pm At the Club  
Billy Brown

5<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

11<sup>th</sup> 8.00 pm At the Club  
Fancy Dress Disco and Karaoke

12<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

14<sup>th</sup> 10.30 am Moorswood  
Coffee Morning

19<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

25<sup>th</sup> 8.00 pm At the Club  
Caberet Night

With Comedian  
Willie Thompson  
And singer

Fabulous Flo

26<sup>th</sup> 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

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