

EMERGENCY FLIGHT

A 999 emergency call from Long yard led to a visit to Birchanger from the Essex Air Ambulance on December 27th.



The Air Ambulance landed on the Club field at around midday in response to a call for assistance from paramedics, who had been called to an elderly lady who was suffering with breathing difficulties. There was considerable congestion on the M11 at the time, and a rapid transfer to hospital was required.

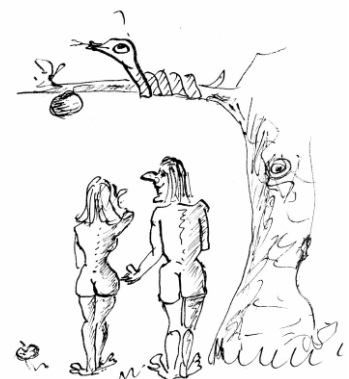
At the point of takeoff

The patient was then flown to the Princess Alexandra Hospital in Harlow.

The bright yellow helicopter attracted a number of onlookers, and sparked some speculation on the reason for its visit.

The Essex Air Ambulance operates an EC135 Eurocopter it can carry two casualties with attendant paramedics, and has two pilots. The service is charitably funded.

From the other side



Gerry Taylor

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM *Elizabeth Godwin*

A cut back in the Parish precept.

The Parish Precept has been reduced to £14.82 per person from £18.76 for 2004/5. There was a sharp increase in 2003/4 to recover from the holiday year, following the settlement of the High Court costs. Unfortunately the overall Council Tax news is not so good. Essex County Council makes up the bulk of the Council Tax requirement, and their rates have to rise to comply with government initiatives, and the Police Authority requirements.

This is really another way of raising money for essential services, much of which could be covered by a straightforward rise in Income Tax. Council Tax is not the best means to raise money equitably, and the sooner this anomaly is remedied by an equitable system, the better.

Do you want a fete in Birchanger this year?

If you do, you need to act swiftly, as fetes don't just happen on their own. The bulk of the work happens in a two month period before the fete, but between now and then, there are attractions to be booked, and all the arrangements have to be made.

The Fete Committee is now down to three members, and they simply cannot do all the work on their own. They urgently need a secretary to write letters on their behalf, and to make sure that everything is in place. They also need other members to help both in the planning, and on the day.

We have all experienced an enjoyable day for some years now. Do you really intend that last year's fete is to be the last? It is up to you.

Let's get a grip on vandalism this year.

The last few years have seen a large increase in vandalism in Birchanger, and nothing we have done so far, has made much difference.

I have spoken to the police about this, and it seems we simply are not reporting the incidents when they happen. I have told them about the difficulties in getting through to them, and I am told that if we experience this, then we must complain to the Chief Constable directly on every occasion. If we do not,

the records will show that there is not much of a problem in Birchanger, or with their system.

I do not see every incident, none of us do. Yet: every incident we do see, or hear, must be reported. For those who are worried about repercussions, tell the officer at the time of making the complaint, they do have ways and means of dealing with this. If we do nothing, the vandalism will continue, and we shall certainly lose the telephone kiosk, and who knows what else? The police van comes regularly into the village now, and our complaints are taken seriously, when they are made.

Airport gloom.

The news that Stansted Airport is to have a second runway has, understandably dismayed most in our community. However there is a great deal that has to happen before the first building is torn down. It could be said that the obstacles to building the airport will prove to be insurmountable.

The White Paper clearly states that each airport will have to fund its own costs. This presumes against any cross subsidisation. Airports will also have to contribute to the infrastructure costs, which will be extensive. It is hard to understand just how Stansted Airport, already operating at a loss, will be able to fund this, although BAA seems to think they can. The "no frills" airlines are already up in arms, regarding proposed increased costs. It is possible that they will start to move business away from the airport.

The major airlines do not want to come here. It is not the favourite option with passengers either. It is hard to know how any business anywhere can thrive, where the customers do not wish to come, the suppliers do not wish to supply, or cannot afford the service, and it is hard to find the workforce. It is also amazing just how confident the airlines have become that they can clean up their act, and be in a position to advance the expansion at Heathrow.

The airport is offering to buy out those who will find their homes within the new airport boundary. It is as yet unclear as to how they plan to compensate everyone else. BAA is to publish details of the exact land take on January 27th.

We will expect to see a planning application in 2005. That will have to go through the usual process, which should mean a full Public Inquiry. There will have to be a full environmental impact assessment, before the application is submitted. There are also threats of various legal challenges.

The story has a long way to go. All that has happened is that the gloves are off, and we know what we may have to face. The likelihood that the expansion of this airport will never happen remains the strongest possibility.

Development threat.

We have all heard of the Buchanan Report, and the threat to our area. It is real, and more difficult to quantify, as we now come into the East of England Region, with regard to regional planning matters, and housing numbers.

Nobody wants to see the scale of development as proposed in the Buchanan Report, but we shall inevitably have to accept some. How much will depend on our bargaining ability, and the attitude of other counties in the region, who would like to dump as much as they can on Essex.

We shall negotiate with all concerned. The White Paper does not want housing too close to the airport, and there may be extensions of the Green Belt around airports nationally. It is hard to see how the large development planned for Takeley fits in with this. Above all it is vital for us to keep local ownership on all of this. By offering something that we can sustain, we could avoid an imposed development, in a location that is wrong for us.

John and Muriel Gibb

A pre Christmas trip led to tragedy for a Birchanger couple on December 20th. When John and Muriel Gibb were involved in a road accident on the A1060 at Hatfield Heath. Their car left the road and hit a tree. They were transferred to Princess Alexandra Hospital. Mrs Gibb was given emergency surgery, but subsequently died from her injuries on the 22nd.

Muriel had been a much loved figure in Birchanger, from the time that the family came to the village some forty odd years ago. Although often seen to be the always loyal, calm and main support for John's many roles in the village, Muriel really did lead her own independent life. She worked for the Citizens Advice Bureau for some twenty six years, and had her own interests and many friends. Muriel was the person who delivered this publication to the southern end of the village. One of her main interests was her garden and greenhouse, and she was always happy to share her produce. She was always there for anyone who needed her help, something so many of us know so very well. She delighted in her role of grandmother, and it was following a visit to the family, that the accident occurred.

Muriel was very much loved. Everyone who knew her were deeply saddened to learn of her death. She will be greatly missed. Mr Gibb is now out of the intensive care unit. We extend our sympathies to him and his family.

Congratulations to Dorothy Lewis who celebrated her 103rd birthday on Boxing day

ONE YEAR OF VILLAGE LIFE

We have now completed our first year of publication and what a varied year it has been! Beginning with the installation and dedication of our village sign way back in December 2002.

In the Spring there was increasing attention given towards the twin threats of Airport and local housing development. And the small matter of local elections to cover.

Then on through the long hot Summer when our Open Gardens festival and Summer fete were blessed with the most glorious sunny weather. This ensured that the village events were all well supported and rewarding for the organisers.

Into the Autumn when we were treated to some spectacular foliage, an appearance at the Royal Albert Hall by our Primary School children, and promotion for our cricket club.

Birchanger Village Magazine

January 2003

Issue 1

A SIGN FOR OUR TIMES



Birchanger's long awaited village sign was

raised and bolted into place on Saturday December 21st. Un-deterred by grey and dismal weather the small but determined team transported the eleven foot sign from it's storage place in Wood Lane to it's permanent site at the junction outside of the Club.



Raised

The story of our village sign has been ongoing for some time now, and at last it is in place.

A number of villagers including Ian Kennedy, Sheila Devereaux, Ken Wheatley, Mark Crossley, Bob Jennings, Elizabeth Godwin and David Dartnell attended to help erect the sign. After some problems boring the bolt holes the supporting post was fixed into place. Then the sign was covered for it's official dedication that took place the following day.

The Dedication.

A crowd of around fifty people gathered to hear the sign dedicated by Canon Derek Jackson after a well attended Sunday morning carol service.

Elizabeth Godwin then made a presentation to Sheila Devereaux who had done so much to bring the project to it's conclusion.

"I am delighted with the result." She said. "We were determined to have the sign up in the Jubilee year and it is wonderful to finally see it." She continued: "For approximately seven years now, money has been raised at the open garden weekends and at the village fete. "In all, we collected £3,500 and many individuals have also given their time and energy, for which we are grateful."

Suffolk artist Mary Moore translated the painting into cast metal to produce the sign as a work of art.

The sign was designed by Heather Brown and depicts our Parish Church with a Fox, a Pheasant, and Birch trees in the foreground. The sign has the Essex County crest with the date at the top of the frame and a facsimile of the entry in the Domesday book relating to Birchanger below.



Birchanger Village Magazine

March 2003

Issue 3

Airport Plans Slammed

Government proposals to put the world's biggest airport on our doorstep would mean the end of Birchanger Village as we know it.

Brian Ross spells out the implications for Birchanger

Scale of the Proposals

Forget about the recent Uttlesford Council decision to allow Stansted to grow from 15 million passengers a year to 25 million. This is a mere picnic compared to what the Government has in mind.

Stansted would grow to 129 million passengers a year if the Government decides that it should have three extra runways. With just one extra runway Stansted could handle 82 million passengers a year, 30% more than today's Heathrow.

The Government plans to transfer 40% of Heathrow's scheduled transatlantic and long haul services to Stansted to 'kick start' expansion as soon as the second runway is ready to open.

Including freight aircraft, the number of landings and take-offs would increase to more than 2000 a day, one every 30 seconds during the day; one every three minutes at night. A third would be jumbo jets.

Related Development

For Birchanger, the planes are probably not the main problem. It's the development and traffic growth which would come as a result.

An eight fold increase in the level of traffic will require new roads and the world's largest airport will need a plethora of office buildings, warehouses, short and long term parking, car rental and other support facilities, inside and outside the airport perimeter. Between 30 and 40 hotels of similar size to the Hilton will be needed. The list goes on.

Health & Education

The impact on Birchanger doesn't end with concrete and traffic. There are significant health issues for the village, as a result of the higher concentration levels of aircraft emissions in the vicinity of the airport. There are implications for the education of the children in the village. Studies show that interruptions from aircraft noise cause lapses in concentration and damage the quality of children's education in schools which are near airports.

Jobs and Houses

Already the airport cannot find enough local people to fill the job vacancies and another 7,000 jobs will come as a result of the agreed expansion to 25 million.

Up to 80,000 new 'affordable' homes will be required in the area to accommodate the influx of workers required.

And for those who think that airport expansion will inflate house prices, all the evidence points the opposite way.

What can I do?

If enough local people oppose these plans vigorously and vociferously, the Government will think again. Don't let this threat to our village become a reality. Contact www.stopstanstedexpansion.com, phone (01279) 870556 or see the local press for details of how you can play your part in opposing the Government's proposals.



Those we lost

To round off the year, there was a change of leadership at the Social Club and the disappointing but predictable decision relating to the Airport development.

The past year has not been without its sadder aspects, we lost a number of well respected villagers including: Peter Saward, May Tuck, Brian Webster, Lil Bailey, Dorothy Blake and most recently Muriel Gibb. All of these people played their part in the life of Birchanger and all will be missed.

The year has been marked by success for two of our sports teams, as the Saturday football club won the Division one cup followed by the success of the cricket club later in the year.

The Cubs, Scouts, Brownies and Over Sixties club have also had a busy time, with various visits and excursions to keep them occupied.

The School also saw some busy times beginning with an encouraging Ofsted report, various staff changes and redecoration in the summer.

Even this magazine has evolved during the year with new advertisers adding to our list of sponsors month by month. We have also received some generous donations from village organisations. This allowed us to increase the number of pages we print. We thank all of our sponsors for their contribution.

Early last year we successfully sponsored a campaign to get BT to improve Birchanger's Internet access, as a result we now have Broadband access in the village. And our Christmas writing competition was also well received.

There was a moment of controversy after Andrew Spurr's ill conceived comments relating to our village sign caused such a vigorous response, that the Herts and Essex Observer took an interest.

Birchanger Village Magazine

July 2003

Issue 7

MORE FUN IN THE SUN

Good weather blessed us again for the village fete on July 6th. At around 7:30, people began to gather to set up this years event and by one o'clock all was ready. As usual there were numerous stalls placed around the Club sports field offering diversions such as - "Catch the Rat, Punch and Judy, a Coconut shy and a Bouncy Castle. There were also various plant and craft stalls. Jay Leavers babysat his Pig Roast while entertainment was provided by, the Herts and Essex Road Show bus and the Standon Morris men.



A Small funfair was set up at the western end of the field providing a Carousel, Candy floss etc. One really interesting stall sold CD ROM copies of the village archive as compiled by Tony and Carol Childs. Several copies were sold giving purchasers a good look at the documents and photos in the archive.

The Standon Morris men Almost all in step

As the day drew on various prizes were won by lucky and in some cases energetic villagers. The first prize drawn was £50 for the "Pot of Gold". The lucky winner was yours truly which went a long way to making my day. Next came the Raffle first prize was a Microwave oven kindly donated by Alan and Kath Levine and won by Mrs. J Monk. Other prizes included tickets to "A Summer Breeze" a Concert in support of SSE these could be won at Honest Brian Ross's roulette wheel. Prizes were also awarded to Kevin Robeson, Donna Monk and Lee B Cooke winners of the well throwing competition. Club Steward Tony Lucas spent his afternoon organising a Balloon race on behalf of the Saturday Football club, the winner of this is still to be announced.



A quiet moment for Jean and Sheila



The future of our village fete hangs in the balance as three of the organising committee are stepping down. Kath Levine and Husband Alan will be departing the village in the near future. Jill Sanders will be resigning due to family concerns. Paula Walking is also stepping down. There can be no doubt that the contribution made by these villagers will be missed and it is to be hoped that volunteers to replace them will be forthcoming.

Our fete is now a village institution that raises funds for numerous village projects. Any Village organisation wishing to apply for a grant should write to secretary Jill Sanders at 254 Birchanger Lane. The Fete committee have asked me to thank sponsors Pestell Estate Agents and The Social Club for the use of the field.

Honest Brian Ross at the Roulette wheel

Birchanger Village Magazine

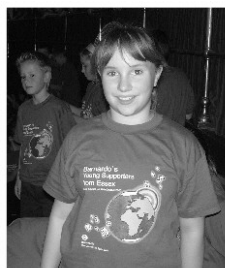
October 2003

Issue 10

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY

Birchanger at The Albert Hall by Jayne Devine

The children of years 5 and 6 from Birchanger C of E Primary School have had one of the most memorable days of their young lives. They were fortunate enough to be able to participate in the Barnardo's Essex Young Supporters Concert held at the Royal Albert Hall on Friday 10th October. Along with pupils from 39 other Essex schools, they lent their voices as part of a mass choir of over 1200 young performers, to a truly wonderful evening of music, song and dance.



Laura Devine shows off the festival Tee shirt

Conducted by Susannah Edom and compered by Jason Canning, the evening comprised of a first half encompassing traditional songs from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and a second half entitled "Along Came Man". This told, in song and dance, of the ecological problems that man is causing Earth and how we must better look after the environment. The finale was a very rousing few choruses of "Land of Hope and Glory", involving much flag waving and audience participation that ended in stupendous applause and cheering by all.

The pupils and teachers of Birchanger School have spent a great deal of time this year practising the songs, which culminated in a long day of rehearsals at the Royal Albert Hall itself. It was an exhausting day for all concerned, with the actual concert lasting from 6:30pm until 9:30pm and although, I am sure, each and everyone of them must have been extremely tired by the end of the evening, the children never wavered in their enthusiasm for the performance. It was quite obvious to all just how much they were enjoying themselves.

As a very proud parent sitting in the audience, I experienced a wonderful, and very emotional evening. I for one would like to thank Mrs Howell, Mrs Crane, and the other members of staff involved for allowing our children the opportunity to sing in Britain's most famous concert hall, and for giving them a memory they will treasure for the rest of their lives.

Absolutely Brilliant! Very Well Done to you all.



The Choir in full voice

Church and Club

The future of our church still remains in doubt, only time will tell what future it has. Its survival is dependant on active participation from parishioners as well as continuing commitment from the clergy.

The club is still flourishing. It has seen an increase in membership, as well as the introduction of plastic membership cards and the acceptance of credit cards for payment and cash withdrawal.

Looking to the future we would hope to be able to reduce the level of vandalism we still see. We will need to continue our support in resisting rapid local development. And of course we will be supporting all of the village organisations and institutions.

Finally I would like to thank my team who bring in the copy, make lots of suggestions for new features, provide photos and information without which I would have nothing to print. They proof read and get the Magazine printed and delivered and except for the printing costs, they do it all for free. Thank you team!

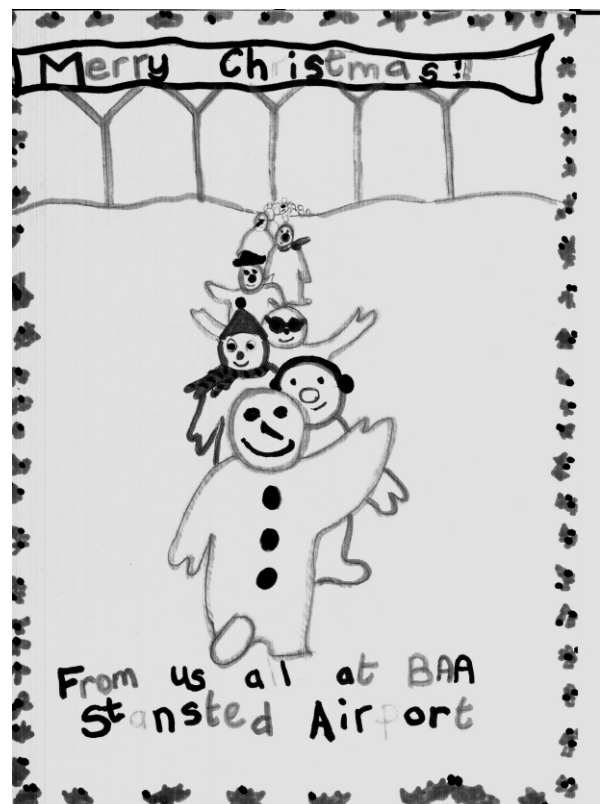
News from the School

Christmas at Birchanger School

Christmas is always the happiest time at Birchanger School. This year was no exception. The celebrations began with the greatly anticipated Nativity Play, “It’s A Baby” performed by Key Stage one Children, to a full house of parents, friends, and our regularly invited visitors. They were backed by singing, from the older children. There were few dry eyes in the Hall. This was followed the next day by school parties. A delicious Christmas Lunch followed the well attended Carol service. Some of the Year six children put on a special song to thank the kitchen staff for a really excellent meal. The last day of term began with a School Concert, where the impressive musical talents of the children gave the audience a real treat. The day ended with a visit to the pantomime at the Corn Exchange Cambridge.

Nina's Trump Card

Last year, pupils entered the Christmas card competition run by BAA to choose the design which they would use on their Christmas Card. Last year's winner was Tom Baker, from the school. This year they again selected a design by a Birchanger pupil and Nina Shaff's entry was the winning card for 2003. Nina was taken on a visit to the airport, and watched as her card was printed. She was given the first card of the run to keep. Congratulations Nina.



Birchanger Village Magazine Finances

The first full year of the Birchanger Village Magazine has laid to rest our fears about whether we would be able to fund this venture. Our bank balance is healthy, and is sufficient to ensure that the future of the magazine is safe for at least the next few months.

Income has come from three sources: first, the Parochial Church Council, as previous publishers of the magazine, passed us £481.91 from the fund allocated to the Magazine when they published it. Birchanger Village Magazine is very grateful for this money.

A second source of income is from the sale of advertising space. Mark Crossley has proved an effective salesman and space is going well. Advertising income has been £550 this year - a figure we hope to beat next year. We are grateful to all of our current advertisers but still have room for more! See our contacts details of the back page.

Finally we have received £975 in donations – an outstanding figure. These have been received from the Birchanger Fête Committee; Birchanger Open Gardens; Birchanger Over Sixties; Birchanger Social Club; Birchanger Parish Council and Mrs. Rosemary Saward. It is nice to know that the community supports us in what we do. Without this support we could not carry on, so we thank our donors wholeheartedly.

Our only expenditure has been on printing costs, which have totalled £805. This was higher than expected, but only because the amount of copy we have received, and the stable income, have allowed us to print more pages per issue than the four originally planned. The Magazine would like to thank Ken Devine for his professional printing at such reasonable rates.

The fact that our costs are so low is in part because of the time given freely to the Magazine by many villagers. In particular we thank Mr. Andrew Cameron and his team of distributors for their work in all weathers.

So, in summary: a good year that leaves us with a current account balance of £1201.91.

Ken Wheatley

Birchanger Social Club

Would like to remind its Members that Subscriptions are now due.

Subscriptions are currently £8 per member. Payments can be made in person to a club representative during most sessions during January.

There will also be a collection box on the wall for depositing subscription envelopes. Please remember to include your Name and Membership number if known.

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The village Diary is maintained by
Jayne Devine and Tina Crossley. Jayne
Devine will also be happy to type up
handwritten submissions. Each edition
will be printed for us by Ken Devine and
distributed by Andy Cameron's network
of deliverers. The deadline for copy will
be the 1st Monday of each month to
allow us to get each edition to you in the
same month.

Village Diary

January 2004/ February 2004

January

18th 11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion BCP

25th 11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion ASP

February

1st 11:00 am St Mary's Matins

7th 3:00 pm St Mary's Baptism

8th 11:00 am St Mary's
Family Service

15th 11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion BCP

22nd 11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion ASP

29th 11:00 am St Mary's Matins

Local Thespian Hugh Allison has
recently featured in a Music
video for "Busted", as a Boom
operator. He also informs us that
A production of "Beauty and the
Bitch" will be performed at The
White Bear in Kennington for
five nights, from the 3rd to the
7th of February.

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