

DOUBLE STABBING TRAGEDY

The night of March 1st 2004 will not be recalled in Birchanger with any fondness. Sometime between 8.30 and 9.00 pm a violent attack on two young men occurred in Birchanger Lane at Duck End, leaving one of the victims lying in the lane with multiple stab wounds. Passers by were quick to raise the alarm. One lady, who was on her way to the club, drove back to the ambulance station to alert the crews on duty. Some of the residents of Duck End gave what aid they could, until the police and ambulance service arrived at the scene.

At this point a second victim, who had also received a wound, presented himself, and both were rapidly transferred to hospital. At about 9.00 pm the police started to cordon off the lane and began taking statements from the witnesses.

A police presence remained in Duck End overnight their investigation continued into the following day. By 7.00 am BBC Essex were reporting that 22 year old Ben Hardwiche had died in hospital and that his car a gold Nissan Micra, had been found burned out in Great Chesterford. By 9.00 am they reported that two men had been arrested in connection with the attack and that the police were now conducting a murder enquiry.



The Police search team

In Duck End an intensive forensic examination of the area including residents gardens was carried out and more interviews of witnesses took place.



The floral tributes on the tuesday

The police cordon around Duck End remained in place until 6.00 pm and Birchanger lane was re opened. Straight away a number of floral tributes and bouquets were placed on the grass verge adjacent to where Mr Hardwiche was found. A steady flow of friends and family have since been seen visiting the site.

Precisely what the cause of this appalling incident was remains the subject of speculation within the village. We can only hope that the authorities are able to establish the facts, that justice is done, and nothing like it happens in Birchanger again.

One feature of the events following the murder of Ben Hardwiche has been the volume and variety of wild speculation surrounding the case. Mostly the speculation centres around the reputation of the victim and postulates a motive for his attackers.

There are many unanswered questions and this is what sparks the speculation. Did the victims know their attackers? If so, what were they doing here? What would create enough rage in a young man to make him stab another so many times? How did the police make arrests so soon after the incident? The questions go on and the answers are batted around with each person contributing just a little more to the pot of "knowledge". From which we all paint a picture that is unlikely to be a true image of what occurred and why.

When you consider that no one except the victims and perpetrators actually witnessed the attack and the speed with which the police isolated the area afterwards. The amount of verifiable information about it all is very limited.

Mr Hardwiche was clearly well known and he was very well thought of by those who knew him. This is demonstrated by the number of people who have visited the place where he fell, and the number of floral tributes they have left there to him.

I have heard that some people are unhappy that the site of his murder is marked at all. I wonder how they would be feeling if he had been their son, brother or friend. No one wants a permanent shrine to this incident. It will be cleared in time. In the mean time let his people grieve.

What ever Ben Hardwiche was doing in Duck End that night, what ever his relationship to his assailants, there can be no excuse for what happened to him.

Ed Gilbey

St Mary's, Birchanger, PCC
ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING

In the Church Hall On 29th March at 8:15pm

What has your PCC done for you in 2003 ?

What do you want of your PCC in 2004 ?

What can you do for your PCC in 2004 ?

Agenda includes:

Appointment of Churchwardens

Annual Report of the PCC & Annual Financial Statements 2003

Elections of Church Councilors & Appointment of Sidesmen

Note: *Only those on the Church Electoral Roll are eligible to vote at The Annual Parochial Church Meeting*

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM *Elizabeth Godwin*

Mr Ben Hardwiche

Everyone deplores the brutal killing of a young man in Birchanger. Reports linking the killing to the drugs scene, have yet to be substantiated. I am talking to the Community Police regarding this matter, and if there is proved to be a cause for concern, the Parish Council will work with the police to eliminate this menace. Meanwhile I would ask all parents to be very sure of what is really going on with their sons and daughters, when they are out and about. This tragedy was not directly related to Birchanger. There must not be another one.

I am available to listen to your concerns. The Community Police are expected to be at the Parish Meeting on August 14th. The Community Police Bus is at the Service Area every Thursday between 10 and 11 am. They will near the club field on April 1st from 11.15 to 12.00 pm.

Flitch way has a new Manager

It may be a surprise to learn that the Flitch way is a designated country park. It has a somewhat unusual shape for a country park, being some 15miles long, and mainly around 15 feet wide.

Matt Wilson is the new manager. He plans to link up with local schools and Parish Councils. He wants the Flitch Way to be included in all definitive maps, which would safeguard it for posterity. To do this it would need to be linked to the existing rights of way network, and to be maintained up to the regularity 15 metre width.

Meanwhile, you can cycle or walk the whole 15 mile length. There are stretches where you cannot see a house, or hear a car, yet still be linked to Dunmow or Braintree Town Centres. The weather will get better. Try it sometime.

Pharmacy out of hours for urgent medication

We have all been there. A family member has at a weekend. The doctor has visited, and left an urgent prescription. What can you do?

There is a telephone help-line. Call 01245 444431, to be put in touch with your nearest out of hours pharmacy. These arrangements apply from 5.30pm on Saturday night, to 9.00am on Monday morning.

Telephone lifeline

Did you know that you could turn your phone into a lifeline? If you have a phone, Uttlesford District Council can, in most cases, arrange to supply a life-liner unit, together with a personal alarm trigger. The lifeline is connected to the phone, and pressing the large red alarm button on the unit, or the radio alarm automatically dials a 24-hour monitoring centre.

The telephone's sensitive system allows you to speak to the person there to help you, from wherever you are in the house. As soon as that person knows what sort of help you need, they will respond as quickly.

Unfortunately, the system costs £44 per quarter, with a reduction for Council house tenants, but it could be vital for those who are elderly, or sick. If you would like to know more, call Mrs Ruth Fulton, on 01799 510505.

The Vandals cost us dear

In the last two months the Parish Council have spent a staggering £375 on repairs to damaged street lights in the village. There were only a few that had worn out bulbs replaced. The majority had broken glass around their base, and the whole unit had to be replaced.

We cannot afford this level of replacement every two months. It is a sad fact that broken lights in the village, particularly the vandalised ones, will not be replaced speedily now. It is up to everyone to report vandalism to the police when it happens.

Lighting was not the only thing to be vandalised. The spring animals in the recreation ground have been rendered useless. The Parish Council is obtaining estimates for their repair, if at all possible. In this climate, they will not be replaced.

Council Tax rises

It is that time of year, when along with all the other winter bills, the Council Tax arrives, and it always goes up. Why?

The government has chosen not to raise Income Tax, but assumes that we will not notice the 50% rise in General Taxation, or Council Tax. Local Authorities have been told to increase funding by 8% to areas such as Education, and to fund new government priorities, but has failed to increase the necessary grant. The councils have to comply, so the shortfall has to be raised from the Council Tax.

The Chancellor's pre-budget report predicted a tax rise of 8%, but threatens to cap councils with a rise of more than 5%. The Audit Commission's Report notes that the government has failed to match spending with the necessary grants, but the situation next year is unlikely to show much improvement.

The District Council's portion of the Council Tax is to increase by £8 per annum from £108 to £118. The Parish Council Precept has been reduced by some

£3000 this year, due to further stringent savings. This is but a small drop in the ocean, and may not be sustainable, although we will try.

It's official: Parents do matter

Well, we always knew that they did, and now recent research has proved that we are right. Children whose parents are interested and involved with their education, perform better than the children of those who are not so involved, regardless of family background, social class, and level of parental education.

A new website for parents and carers who want to help their child learn, has been launched at www.parentscentre.gov.uk. It will provide support, information and advice about children's learning.

News from the School

Audley End comes to Newport

The children are to take part in a music festival with a difference. The festival will take the form of an open air concert, and will be accompanied by fireworks. Everyone is looking forward to this, and rehearsals are starting. Everyone is welcome.

The concert will take place in the grounds of Newport Grammar School on Tuesday, June 29th. Should the evening prove to be rainy, there is a fall back date of June 30th. Further details can be obtained from the school.

Healthy School programme

Birchanger School has won two awards in this program so far. This year the aim is to work for a further award through a new Fitness Club, which is run for Class 4 children on Friday afternoons after school. This is in addition to the Football, Netball and Rounders Clubs. It is aimed at children who would like to do something a little different to the existing clubs, and already has a membership of twenty.

Home made School lunches

In an effort to cut costs, Essex County Council has changed the format for providing school meals, which saves money for them, but has made it far too expensive for most schools using the existing catering services. Birchanger School has decided to provide its own school dinners, and arrange all the catering in house, under the enthusiastic management of our existing cook.

Advice has been taken from health and safety officers, suppliers are being sought, and a full healthy menu, varied daily, which will include a range of foods from roast dinners, and salads to baguettes, for those who would prefer a lighter lunch.

Currently 57 children have a school lunch. It is hoped to increase this number, and to include all staff. The new lunches will start in the Summer

News from the Cubs and Scouts

CUB NEWS

On the same day the Cubs district annual handicraft competition was held in Dunmow.

Each cub group District enters a Pack Model and the theme this year the theme was a Circus Big Top.

Birchanger also had a number of cubs enter individual categories.

For many weeks the cubs were making clowns, animals, high wire acts, candy floss stalls, the audience, the very impressive big top tent and various other circus pieces. The model and other entries were carefully transported to Dunmow and set up, where they were judged by an independent panel. Our Pack Model was good enough to win this year and we also were awarded certificates in the individual categories. Well done to everyone and a great reward for so much hard work.



A view of our winning entry

SCOUT NEWS

On Saturday 28th February Birchanger Scouts Bernice Edgeworth, Jay Cox, Kenny Gould, Max Gibbon, Matthew Bedding and Simon Carter took part in a shooting competition held in Takeley.

They had spent weeks three weeks training for the event and it paid off as Birchanger won the overall competition. There was also success in the individual age groups: Max won the 11 year old, Kenny the 12 year old and Simon the 13 year old. A great team effort and well done to all.

1st Birchanger Cubs/Scouts group **Family Bingo Night**

To be held on 3rd April in the Church Hall

Starting at 7:30pm

Teams of 6-8

£6.00 Adults £5.00 OAP's

£3.00 Accompanied Children

Tickets available from

Trevor Stone 812994

CUP FINAL

Birchanger FC V Potter Street Res

BSSDFL DIVISION ONE CUP

Woodside Park Bishop Stortford

27th March 7.30 Kick off

Come along and support your village team!

Kid's Corner

A new item for our Village Magazine, we would love to hear what Birchanger children think of it. This month our Kid's Corner has an Easter Theme. Also this month you can enter our Easter Colouring Competition. There are 2 categories, Age 7 and under and Age 8 to 11. Judges will be looking for neat and colourful entries. The closing date is March 31st. Easter Egg prizes for the best entry in each category will be awarded. You can submit entries using our template below or you can draw your own on a separate sheet of paper. So, kids, get colouring!

Easter Wordsearch

B	L	H	R	I	M	T	H	V	Z	S
Y	A	D	I	R	F	D	O	O	G	P
S	P	R	I	N	G	G	T	R	N	U
L	S	I	M	N	E	L	C	A	K	E
I	O	A	C	G	X	F	R	C	H	J
D	E	T	A	L	O	C	O	H	C	L
O	P	A	R	A	D	E	S	I	R	A
F	I	R	A	G	E	K	S	C	A	P
F	L	J	Y	N	N	U	B	K	M	R
A	U	L	U	W	Q	U	I	S	F	I
D	T	M	X	B	O	N	N	E	T	L
G	Y	A	D	N	U	S	S	G	G	E

The 15 words below can all be found either forwards or backwards in the wordsearch grid on the left.

APRIL BONNET
BUNNY CHICKS
CHOCOLATE DAFFODIL
EGGS GOOD FRIDAY
HOT CROSS BUNS MARCH
PARADE SIMNEL CAKE
SPRING SUNDAY
TULIP

RIDDLE-ME-REE

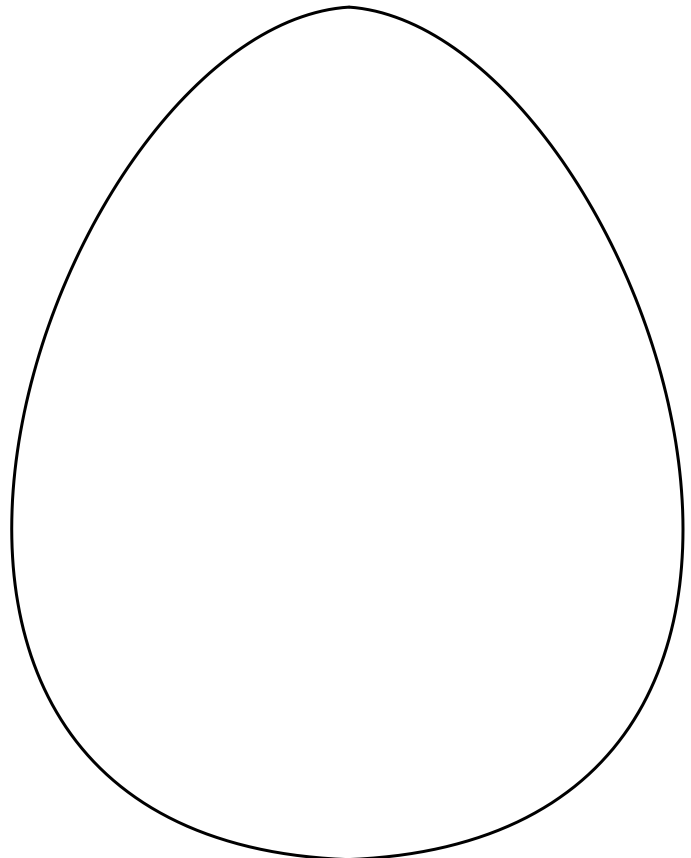
My first is in Sunshine and also in Shower
My second in Tulip but never in Flower
My third is in Sparrow and also in Wren
My fourth is Chicken but never in Hen
My fifth is in Nest but never in Bird
My sixth is in Singing, twice so I've heard.
My whole is a time that brings a loud cheer,
Because we're so glad that this season is here.

Name.....

Age.....

Address.....

Tel.....



The Friends of Birchanger Primary School

Present a
Quiz Night

To be held on 27th March
In the school hall At 7:30pm

Teams of 6-8
(Over 18's only)

Tickets price £6.50 each Includes Supper

Tickets available from school or PTA members

1st Birchanger Brownies

“A Brownie thinks of others before herself and does a good turn every day”

We have a few vacant places for girls aged 7-10 at the 1st Birchanger Brownies. If you would like to find out what being a Brownie is all about, take part in different pursuits such as games and quizzes, arts and crafts, outdoor activities, make new friends and have lots of fun then ask Mum to bring you along on a Thursday night at 6.15pm to St Mary's Church Hall in Birchanger and speak to Brown Owl (Jenny Jameson) or telephone her on 815396. She would love to hear from you.

YUM YUM

Solve the clues and the letters in the shaded boxes will spell out something we all love to get at this time of year.

1.								
2.								
3.								
4.								
5.								
6.								
7.								
8.								
9.								
10.								

1. Large animal with a trunk.
2. One a day keeps the doctor away.
3. Days in a week.
4. A loud, brass musical instrument.
5. You needs one of these to post your Easter cards in.
6. Flowers with a beautiful perfume, or, a box of chocolates.
7. Jewellery for ears.
8. Harry Potter's wizarding bank.
9. When dried this fruit becomes a raisin.
10. An old-fashioned children's game, or, tinned fish that's nice on toast.

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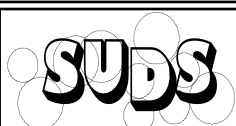


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Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on Wednesday April 14th at 8pm, in the Church Hall. The guest speaker will once again be Norman Mead, who will update us on the continuing battle to stop a second runway at Stansted. There will be opportunities for you to put your views, and time for an informal chat over refreshments at the end of the meeting.

Everyone is welcome.

Village Diary

March 2004/ April 2004

March

- 21st Mothering Sunday
11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion BCP
- 27th 8:00 pm Social club
Cover Up
- 27th 7:30 pm At the School
Quiz Night

- 28th 11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion ASP
- 29th 8:15 pm Church Hall
P. P. C. Meeting

April

- 4th Palm Sunday
11:00 am St Mary's
Family Service
- 11th Easter Sunday
11:00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion BCP
- 18th 11:00 St Mary's
Holy Communion BCP

Published on behalf of the people of Birchanger, and distributed free to each household in Birchanger. The views expressed herein do not automatically reflect those of the Editor or any of the organisations or institutions represented. Editorial team: Eddie Gilbey (816171), eddieb@gilbey54.freemove.co.uk Elizabeth Godwin, Ken Wheatley. Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.