

LIZ GOES OVER THE EDGE

On Saturday April 30th Elizabeth Godwin literally went over the edge at the top of the water tower beside the M11 at Church Langley. It was a well attended event with participants from all over the district abseiling from the top to the ground for charity. Here is what she has to say about it!

I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of my abseil down the water tower at Harlow, on behalf of Uttlesford Crossroads last month. The event was very well organised, with a fair number of spectators and supporters for all the participants all of whom said they enjoyed the experience after the event. The real heroes were those who suffered from a fear of heights, and these included my fellow abseiler for Crossroads, Ben Smeeden, an officer from Uttlesford District Council.

The tower is climbed by a spiral staircase inside the building, until about two thirds from the top, where there is only a metal ladder. Once you are on the top the view is incredible, from all the matchbox cars on the motorway, to the miles of Essex countryside, on this occasion dotted with brilliant yellow rape fields. It was a lovely day so I wanted to linger, and watch the scene.

We were wearing all the right gear, and our kitting up had been supervised by a team from the Peak District. I was completely confident about my safety when I finally manoeuvred myself over the wall. I wanted to take my time on my descent as I was enjoying it so much, and there are ways of slowing the process, which I have yet to master. Like so many memorable occasions in life it was over all too soon.

The day raised £24,000 for charity in total. Ben and I hope to have raised well over £800 for Crossroads. Thank you for sponsoring me. Please let me have any amount you have pledged for Crossroads when you can. I look forward to repeating the experience next year. Thank you all for your support.



Elizabeth Godwin

Ahoy there. I see no ships,
only traffic and lots of
lovely Essex countryside

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM *Elizabeth Godwin*

Birchanger has a County Councillor

Congratulations to Ray Gooding who won seat for the Stansted and Birchanger Area Ward in the County Council elections to become an Essex County Councillor. The result as expected was close, but Ray who is a Conservative won by 153 votes from Liberal Democrat Peter Wilcock. Ray lives in Birchanger, and it will be good to have a voice from the village at County level.



Birchanger parish council achieves "Quality council" status

Birchanger Parish council achieved quality council status at the end of last month. A portfolio showing the way in which the Parish Council had worked over the last year, which enclosed copies of the minutes, agendas, accounts, parish information, details of our website, reports and much more, was submitted to a Essex Association of local councils. We were awarded this status along with two other Parish Councils in Essex. This is a very real achievement for our clerk, Julia Peachey who attained her AQA qualification for clerkship to make this possible.

The benefits for Birchanger are that we should expect a higher level of consultation to go with our status. It will be a bigger boost for our Parish

Plan, whose first meeting for all who are interested in being a part of this, was on May 17th in the Church Hall. We expect to be able to be funded directly eventually for items such as our own verge cutting, and to be entitled to additional grants for achieving quality status. In the expected local government reorganisation, we will be given a larger role to play, and possibly be in an additional local government tier, with special additional responsibilities. This means that Birchanger people should have more of a say in our own destinies. We have found that when we are allowed to arrange things for ourselves, they can work better.

Having achieved this status, we have to keep it, and maintain the work as it was presented to the EAOL. There are many pressures on Birchanger, and Quality Status means that there is a very important role for any member of the Parish Council both now and in the future. Due to entirely unforeseen circumstances, there is a vacancy on the Parish Council. It is now an enhanced and very interesting role. Is it for you? Call me on 812793 if you would like to talk about becoming a Parish Councillor in our new Quality Council.

Flying Eyes visit Stansted Airport.

A very special aeroplane flew into Stansted airport last month. This was the DC10 that is the flying operating theatre and training centre for Orbis, a registered charity which devotes itself to saving the sight of people in developing countries all over the world. On this occasion the plane was just back from India, with plans to visit Ethiopia and Brazil after an annual overhaul in France next week.

There are 46 million people worldwide who are blind, yet 36 million have eye conditions that could be treated or prevented. There is no way that Orbis could tackle this problem by simply sending out a treatment team. The team they send, do treat selected patients but in the context of training local doctors through an extended program before and after each visit. A great deal of planning goes into each trip. Basic equipment needs for the area are evaluated and preliminary

training starts, long before the DC10 leaves the ground. Training continues after the plane leaves and there are follow up visits. Surgical procedures range from the relatively simple cataract and squint corrections, to other more complex procedures.

The plane is staffed by specialist volunteers, who range from pilots, through to highly qualified ophthalmic consultants, ophthalmologists, ophthalmic nurses, opticians, technicians and engineers. These volunteers usually manage at least two three week trips each year. The team is backed by a fundraising and management team operating from a site near Moorfields Hospital in London. The plane is equipped with a lecture theatre, laser microscopes, a fully equipped operating theatre, and recovery suite. Video cameras, and satellite links ensure that the training process can be viewed throughout the plane, and relayed to lecture theatres outside.

On each visit a few patients with a good prognosis and suitability from the training point of view are chosen from the many hundreds referred to the team. Surgery takes place on the aircraft and is watched by the students through the video links. It takes longer, as explanations and demonstrations are given at every stage. Students learn to perform surgery under the watchful eye of the ophthalmic surgeon and when sufficiently skilled, at the end of the course, are able to instruct and train others. In this way the program is extended across each region visited.

Last year the team trained over 160 doctors in surgical techniques and instructed further doctors and nursing staff in the techniques of prevention and treatment of infective eye conditions. Additionally 800 Ethiopian teachers were trained in primary eye care. This is very important, as most children who become blind in developing countries die within two years.

Fundraising is ongoing and worldwide. In addition to the DC10, Orbis has long term partnership bases in developing countries, including China, India, Vietnam, Bangladesh and Ethiopia. Individual donations are the backbone of the financial support. So far Orbis has restored sight to 17.5million people since its foundation in 1982. You can find out more about Orbis on www.ukorbis.org, or telephone 0207 2538483.

Helicopters to fly higher

Over the last few weeks I have made representations to Air Traffic Control for Birchanger regarding the menace of low flying helicopters. They were supposed to be flying at 1500 ft, and I doubt that the majority of them ever did this. It has been agreed to raise the limit over Birchanger to 2000 ft, and they are to review the flight paths to minimise the impact over Birchanger. The situation will need to be monitored over the next few months but the flight paths cannot be changed immediately.

Hail and ride

At the end of last month a new bus stop sign was erected. We actually do not need it anyway. Birchanger village is a hail and ride area. This means for those of us fortunate enough to live in Birchanger Lane, we can ask the bus to stop outside the house and we can catch the bus by simply putting out an arm. We don't use this service very much, so let us hope that the drivers have got the message as well.

Extra recycling boxes available now

Health and Safety regulations have meant that we can no longer place recyclable materials in plastic bags, sacks or carrier bags. They must be placed in plastic boxes or they will not be collected in future. Extra boxes are available from the District Council. Please phone 01799 510510 to arrange for these to be delivered to your home.

Youngsters cleaning up Birchanger

On May 22nd, a group of enterprising young people in Birchanger are holding a sponsored litter pick throughout the village, to raise funds for the youth shelter. The pick will last from 1pm to 4pm, and they are looking for your support.

Excellent Results for School Football Teams

Friday 6th May was the day of the Girls' six-a-side Football tournament, held at the Katherine Semar School in Saffron Walden.

Our team: Demi Johnson (Captain), Rebecca Thurley, Katie Martin, Louise Luxton, Laura Monro-Smith, Elizabeth Reeves and two year 4 girls Ellie Raynor and Sarah Davy. I have to say the girls were quite nervous and not a lot of lunch was eaten before we went!

The other teams in our Group were Clavering, Chrishall, Howe Green and Manuden. The team played absolutely brilliantly and drew against Clavering. Then we lost to Manuden 1-0. We then drew against Chrishall. By the last match the girls were having a great time and really starting to play well together. We had a magnificent win of 2-0 against Howe Green, Beccy Thurley scoring both goals.

As a result we managed to come 2nd in our group, and 6th out of 15 teams, which I think is the best result the girls have ever achieved.

The boys' tournament was held the following day, which turned out to be somewhat cold and blustery for May! We had drawn a tough Group this year and had to play against Clavering, Elsenham, Great Chesterford, St Mary's Stansted and Debden.

Our team: Ashley Salmon, Jack Gumble (Captain) Matthew Gunn, Edward Earnshaw, William Sykes, Jack Culpin, Sam Irish and Jamie Glasscock.

Our first game was against Debden; Matt Gunn almost scored from the half way line with a wonderful power drive and William scored a fantastic free kick to clinch the match at 1-0.

The second game was against St Marys, Stansted. Edward Earnshaw played well in defence with Jack Gumble. Jamie Glasscock had a brilliant game and topped his performance off with a well worked goal. Result 1-0 to Birchanger. Our third game was an evenly contested match against Elsenham, who we lost to in the League. It was therefore very pleasing to manage a draw at 1-1 against them. Will Sykes scoring again.

Probably the hardest match of the day was against Chesterford, (who we also lost 3-0 to in the League.) However on Saturday we took an early lead scored by Will Sykes, then to retain our three precious points, Jack Culpin was pulled back from midfield to help defend our lead. A couple of crucial saves from Ashley Salmon resulted in a win of 1-0 to us.



We had to win our last match, to win the group. Unfortunately despite hard work from Sam Irish, Jack Gumble, Jack Culpin and Will Sykes, the Debden Goalie somehow managed to keep out all our shots. The result a 0-0 draw.

All the boys were a bit disappointed not to win the group and a medal, but we came second in our Group, by one point, and did not lose all morning.

As a result of this Birchanger came 4th out of 23 teams which I am sure you will agree is a fantastic achievement. The whole team worked really hard for each other, were beautifully behaved and a credit to the school.

Well done both teams! Thanks also to Mark Irish who kindly refereed for us.

Walking to Breakthrough Breast Cancer

On 23-25 September 2005 Pauline Squires and workmate Sue Woods will be participating in a very special event called "The Weekend to Break through Breast Cancer". They will be walking **60 kilometres** over the course of one weekend with thousands of other women and men. All proceeds will support breast cancer research and education at Break through Breast Cancer.

Pauline said, "We've agreed to raise at least **£3,000**, before the end of August, so we need some help! We would be very grateful for any donations for fundraising or items for our car boot sales and would be able to collect from you at your convenience. Please keep in mind how far we are walking - and how hard we'll have to train."

"According to Break through Breast Cancer, one in nine women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime. That's why we are walking so far. To do something bold about breast cancer. We hope that you'll share this incredible adventure with us - by supporting us in our fundraising efforts."

Please call Pauline Squires on **01279 814249** or call at **208 Birchanger Lane, (opposite the allotments and village hall)**.

Thank you in advance for your generosity!

RUNWAY RAMBLE 2005

Everyone who loves the countryside of the North West Essex and East Herts borders - or who is concerned about the scale of the massive expansion being proposed for Stansted Airport and its effects - is invited to take part in Stop Stansted Expansion's 2005 Runway Ramble and Grand Summer Fete on Sunday 26 June.

Sounds of the 60's Family Disco

Squeeze into your Minis and Bell bottoms.
Bring your own food and drink!

Saturday 28th May 2005
At 7.30 pm

In the Church Hall

Adults £5 Children £2

Tickets available from
Cheryl 07745 967354
Or Pam 815938

Proceeds to St Mary's Church Birchanger

The fourth annual Runway Ramble features five circular walks from 2 to 20 miles which will take place from 8 am onwards. All of the walks are designed for families as well as serious ramblers - will include a free visit to The Gardens of Easton Lodge, covering countryside under threat.

From midday, Fete activities will include a farmers market and craft stalls, BBQ and beer tent, pony rides, tug of war and a children's fun area with quad bikes and inflatable slides. Traditional fete stalls will also be run by some of the parishes and villages from across the region which would be adversely affected by the creation of the world's largest airport at Stansted. The day will also play host to a balloon race to be launched at 3pm.

Walks start from The Stag public house in Little Easton, nr Great Dunmow. The fete and balloon race will take place in the field behind this, and there is plenty of parking on site.

Sponsorship sheets for the walks and further details are available from SSE's campaign office on 01279 870558 or via the website www.stopstanstedexpansion.com Teams wishing to enter the tug of war should contact the campaign office.

School News

End of another term

Birchanger School broke up for the Easter holiday

on April 8th. Many families found that just as their younger child started the holiday, their older child was returning to school, making a nightmare situation for those who require additional childcare. This is because Essex schools have moved to a more evenly spaced holiday regime, which will mean a less lengthy summer term, whereas the schools in Hertfordshire are still following the conventional model. Talks are to be held between the two education authorities and it is hoped that some kind of agreement to ensure that this does not happen again will be reached.

The main Easter celebrations had all happened just before the Easter break, so the real end of term was rather low key. However the children had been collecting money, growing beans or entering an Easter Egg decorating competition, sponsored by Barnardos Childrens Homes. The winners received large Barnardos Teddy Bears. All the children who had taken part were then eligible to enter a draw for the remaining bear.

Computers need a home

The school still has some older, but usable computers which are in need of new homes, following the standardisation of the computer suite. If you are interested, please contact the school on 812362.

S.A.T.S. Month at Birchanger School

Things have been a little quiet in the first two weeks of term, as the children made their final preparations for their S.A.T.S. tests and

finally took them. There is always a sense of relief when the tests are over, although as always the children had worked very hard and took them in their stride. The PTA have planned a Post SATS Disco for 27th of May. The children can now move onto other areas of the curriculum, prepare for the school play and look forward to their weekend away at Fulmer Grange in Buckinghamshire, which is a Residential outdoor pursuits centre. The Rounders and Gardening clubs start after half term.

Information briefings for parents were held to explain the curriculum for the coming term and to provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions about this.

Pupils who are to go to Stansted School are to make special visits to the school this month to set up their own email link. Using this they will be able to access the Birchanger School, to place their work on line and to be able to use the link from their own homes. It is expected that children who are to attend other schools will be making their own links later in the term. This will enable all the children who will leave the school at the end of the school year, to keep in touch with each other as well as the school.

Thanks Terri

The school was very grateful for the help Terri Hopkins provided when she stepped into the breach when our chef was ill last month. Everyone would like to thank Terri, and to wish Gina a continuing recovery.

Can we regenerate Neighbourhood Watch?

There will be a public meeting on Thursday 2nd June at 8 pm in the Church Hall to discuss the possible revival of Neighbourhood Watch. in Birchanger.

Come along and meet our new Community Police Officer Tom Munro, Uttlesford Community Safety Officer Rachel Hutchinson and the Crime Reduction Advisor Peter Caulfield.

There have been changes to rural Policing and the connections with NW so we will be advised on the new contact procedures with the Police. One of the most common complaints we hear is poor response by the Police to our calls. So come and find out how we can use the new system and build up a rapport with our new allocated officer.

Rachel Hutchinson produces the quarterly "Observer" for NW and distribution of this throughout the village is the main duty of village co-ordinators. The ideal scenario is 1 co-ordinator in each road or cluster of houses. The more there are of us, the less there will be to do for each individual.

All are welcome young, old and those in the middle. So why not come along to the meeting to find out more about how you can help the community. If you are interested, but cannot attend, then please contact Anne Kent of the Parish council at 357 Birchanger Lane or call 813204 for a chat.

Ed's note

This is all the more relevant than usual as: sometime during Friday 13th May a house in Duck End was burgled in broad daylight. A computer and other goods were stolen. So please be vigilant or next time it could be you!

BIRCHANGER

OPEN GARDENS 2005

June 18th and 19th from 2pm to 6pm

10 gardens open to view

Including the Church and two Art Galleries

Refreshments available throughout the village

Tickets are available from Sheila on 813843,
Elizabeth on 812793, the pub and the School.



The Friends of St Mary's

Annual General Meeting

Will take place on Thursday June 16 th

At 8.15 pm

In the Church Hall

BIRCHANGER VILLAGE FETE

SUNDAY JULY 10TH

AT THE THREE WILLOWS

SEE NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE FOR MORE DETAILS



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Village Diary
May/June 2005

May

21st 7.30 pm at the School
Millionaires night

22nd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

28th 7.30 pm Church Hall
Sounds of the 60's
Family Disco

29th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

June

5th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

12th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service

16th 7.15 pm Church Hall
Friends of St Mary's
AGM

18th Open Gardens 2005

19th Open Gardens 2005

19th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

26th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

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