

MERRY CHRISTMAS ONCE AGAIN

Hello again and welcome to this years Christmas issue.

2005 has been a busy year for the magazine with Articles ranging far and wide from the El Alamein war graves, to the lost city of Machu Pichu and on to the slopes of Kilimanjaro. This year Elizabeth Godwin threw herself off a water tower for charity and lived to tell the tale. There were Community awards for Ken Sturgeon and Rosemary Saward. There was an award for Tony Lucas at the Club. Good weather for Open Gardens and the Fete and a myriad of articles from the School and the Scout group. The year has culminated in the installation of the youth shelter.

Once again we have offered the villages children the opportunity to impress us with their creative skills and this year we have three worthy winners of our festive writing competition. They are Laura Parrot for her poem "Loved by all" and two runners up Ben Mortishire-Smith with two nice Limericks and Simon Baker with his festive tale "The Best Festival Present Ever" which he has set in Birchanger wood. Congratulations to all three. You will be receiving your prizes of WH Smith vouchers before Christmas.

We have now been publishing for three years and I hope we are still finding enough news and features to keep you all interested. My team have all been working hard to bring it to you. None more so than Mark Crossley who looks after the advertising on our back page. It's the income from this advertising that has allowed us to increase the content from seven to eleven pages.

I've singled out Mark because he's recently negotiated a tie up with the Mountfichet Romeera Leisure Centre. Apart from their advert they are also sponsoring our new Sports Page and are generously donating two six month memberships for us to use



Some action from The leisure Centre

as prizes. These are valuable especially for those hoping to shed a few pounds after Christmas.

Right, that's enough from me. Have a great Christmas and a very happy New Year from all of us at the Birchanger Village Magazine.



All this exercise and so few smiling faces

Ed Gilbey

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM *Elizabeth Godwin*

Awards for Birchanger youth

Congratulations to Jessica Wright and Rudy Roberts who received awards from the County and District Councils for their fundraising work for the youth shelter in Birchanger. They were the only two who actually stayed the course over the two years, and richly deserved their award. Well done and thank you to you both.

Another load of rubbish.

The way in which our rubbish is collected is about to undergo a radical change in the next few months. The unpalatable truth is that we have run out of landfill sites, and there are now very heavy financial penalties for councils who exceed the bare minimum targets for landfill. Ultimately all landfill will cease, and the councils have to find alternatives, possibly anaerobic digestion, to take their place. In the meantime, higher recycling rates have to be put into place as soon as possible. Uttlesford District Council has no other option but to comply, or raise council tax by major amounts to pay the heavy financial penalty imposed by the government.

Where possible wheelie bins will be introduced, but this will not be practicable for everyone. They will not be imposed on those who can show that they have a genuine difficulty using them, or that their premises are unsuitable to store the bins. It is possible that there will be two wheelie bins, one for residual waste and the other for dry recyclables. There will be a weekly kitchen waste collection which may possibly involve a smaller bin. Dry recyclables, paper cardboard, plastics and metals will all be collected together in one of the wheelie bins, while all the residual waste will be collected in the other on alternate weeks. Where wheelie bins are unsuitable, appropriate sacks will be issued to householders. The recycling banks will remain as at present.

The District Council will be consulting further on the options in the New Year.

The Christmas present nobody wanted

We have just learned that the regular Friday morning surgery in Birchanger Church Hall is to cease from December 31st. This will affect a great number of those who rely on the Friday morning slot for routine visits, and who have difficulty accessing the surgery. This is apparently due to economic reasons, but it is very much to be regretted by all those who are patients of the Stansted surgery.

Patients are having a raw deal. It is very hard to access an appointment at the surgery at the best of times. It would seem that the patient is not the prime consideration these days.

Do you want to help someone?

When the Christmas and New Year celebrations have finally come to an end, many people feel somewhat flat, and perhaps a little lonely in the long January nights. It is often a time for introspection and a time when life changing decisions are made.

If you do fancy an added dimension to your life, you might consider becoming a volunteer and working with one of the many and varied groups who operate in the District. Most people do not know what is actually out there for them to do, and do not know how to go about finding out.

The Volunteer Bureau has changed its name to the Volunteer Centre. It provides a free and confidential service both to volunteers, and to the organisations who need their services. There is no pressure to volunteer for any organisation, but the staff at the bureau are happy to talk through the various options available.

The main office is a cosy portakabin at Saffron Walden Hospital, telephone number 01799 513626, or they can be reached at Uttlesford Voluntary and Community Centre at the Council Offices in Dunmow on Thursdays from 10 am until 1pm, where you would be welcome to drop in for a chat.

Parish Plan.

If you were among the 56% of Birchanger residents who completed the Demographic survey of The Parish Plan, a very big thank you. Your time was much appreciated, and the results are in the process of being collated to form the basic picture of Birchanger as it is today. The second part of the survey, which is the Issues Questionnaire, will be delivered in the week beginning January 16th. Again we are asking for just a few minutes of your time to let us have your views on life in Birchanger, your concerns, what you would like to see preserved, and what could be improved.

The Youth Questionnaire will be distributed at the same time. This is a special questionnaire aimed at the 10 to 17 year olds in which we are looking for their views, their needs and what they want to see in the Birchanger of the future.

Second runway threat looms closer

BAA have finally unveiled their options for a second runway, or more realistically a second airport. There are three main options each taking up slightly less land with three of them available in mixed or segregated mode. A fourth option D which is only available in segregated mode would have the runway to the North West of the existing runway and would have the one of the greatest impacts on Birchanger.

The published options could have the affect of splitting the community into factions, as for each

option it is easy to assume that there will be winners and losers. The hard fact is that in this consultation there are no winners. The impact of an airport which will carry 75 million passengers per annum is going to impact badly upon us all in terms of air pollution, noise, traffic jams; in fact a Heathrow scenario as is seen now. Make no mistake, no matter what BAA say, our area, as we know it will be gone for ever.

There are no proposals for rail and road improvements. BAA are said to be working on these. The truth is that they cannot afford to pay for what is necessary, and neither the Government, nor the East of England Development Agency will fund them. BAA will try to get permission without anything concrete in place other than a convincing yarn.

The consultation runs until March 24th. There will be an exhibition in the Village Hall on Friday March 20th from 11am until 9pm. You will be able to see the proposals for yourself.

It is Christmas time and I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas. Please remember those who have lost someone this year, and those who live on their own. They need some special consideration and care at this time

Elizabeth



There was a young man from Duck End,
Who started a popular trend.
In the cold freezing snow,
In his slippers he'd go,
And he's driving his Mum round the
bend!

(Dedicated to my friend Daniel Crossley)

There was a young girl from Birchwood,
Who in blistering hot sunshine stood
In her thick coat and hat,
(she's as mad as a bat!)
She'll boil if she keeps on that hood!

From Benjamin Mortishire- Smith, age 8.



Bowls Club News

From Elaine Wright

Monday September 12th saw the closure of the green for Birchanger Bowls club for this year following an excellent season.

The Gold Cup Competition was held on the 19th Jun and was sponsored by Mr Fred Wadhams from Stortford Angling. The winners of this years competition were Thaxted and the runners up Tye Green, Harlow. The representatives of the winning clubs received their trophies from Mr P Dawson president and Mr D Wright Chairman.

The Open Pairs competition was held on the 2nd July and was sponsored by Mr. Colin Ferbrache who promptly went on to win it with his partner Mr A Spackman From Castle Hedingham.

The Peter Saward Memorial day was held on the 17th July this year and was won by our Birchanger B Team against the Stansted Team. The team members were



Winners of the open pairs competition Colin Ferbrache with Peter Dawson and Mr A Spackman of Castle Hedingham



Mr. Peter Dawson, Mr. Colin Ferbrache, Mr. Howard Gunn and Mrs. Elaine Wright.

Presenting the trophies are Mrs Rosemary Saward and Mr Paul Wright, Club Captain. A big thank you to all our members, the Social Club committee, caterers Ann, and the girls from Turpins for making this year successful. And to those new members out there, join us next year for a great and enjoyable game of bowls. Contact us on 01279 813474

Birchanger "B" team with the Peter Saward Memorial Trophy

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School News

Remembrance Day.

There was a great deal of criticism about the way that children do not buy poppies or acknowledge Remembrance Day anymore. This is certainly not so in Birchanger School. The head teacher Mrs Howell led a special November 11th assembly for the whole school including all the staff. Everyone joined in the singing of a special song written for children on Remembrance Day, which had a particularly haunting tune. Nobody broke the two minute silence, and a few children were moved to tears for the soldiers who had died for their country. They will remember the soldiers long after the rest of us are gone.

On Remembrance Sunday the Birchanger Scout Group was back in Church for the service after an absence of many years. They were a very welcome sight especially for those who had missed them for more years than they could remember. It is very much hoped that they will be back next year.



Birchanger Scouts led by Matthew Bedding and Harry Fisher on their way to St Mary's

New chefs at Pizza Express.

Class Four have been learning about the making of various breads this term, and were able to take advantage of the Pizza Express offer to make bread and pizzas with them for a morning. Many original breads and pizzas were created, but very few actually survived to come home that afternoon. Learning has never been so much fun.

Beating bullying in Birchanger.

The message has gone out loud and clear. Birchanger School children will not be tolerating bullies in their midst. The children took part in the national anti bullying week. Throughout the week the children held anti bullying assemblies involving role play and there were opportunities for children to discuss their feelings on bullying, whether they had been a bully and how that felt. The children developed coping strategies and formed support groups. The children were left in no doubt that if bullying was to happen to them, they would tell someone immediately, and they would be supported. The week ended with a Feeling Blue day. The children came to school in blue, with hair to match. They were each given a bracelet to wear, and the confidence and the strategy to cope with any bully anywhere.

The school operates an anti bullying policy along government guidelines in common with all the other schools in the area. If you do know about an instance of bullying, please talk to the school about it.

Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2005

This year the 1st Birchanger Group were approached by members of the Church in Birchanger asking if the Cubs & Scouts would be willing to come to the Remembrance Sunday Service to help heal an old rift between the Church and different organisations in the village. This was organised and coordinated by Group Assistant Leader Elaine Howley.

On Sunday 13th November 2005 a total of 19 Cubs, Scouts and Explorers met at the Birchanger Group Headquarters and paraded down to St Mary's Church in Birchanger with Elaine and Explorer Leaders Jeremy Williams & Steve Margle. They attended the service to the delight of many parishioners who commented how nice it was to see them there.



1st Prize!

Loved by all

As the clock struck midnight
The snow began to fall
Christmas is a time
That is loved by all

Turkey with all the trimmings
Potatoes crispy and hot
Carrots sprouts and broccoli
We seem to have the lot

Letting dinner go down
Grandma gives us more
Christmas pudding with brandy butter
And of course mince pies galore

We all go to the lounge now
And we sit round the tree
One by one we give and take
I like it when it comes to me

Mum switches on TV
As Christmas Eastenders starts
Grandpa falls fast asleep
And dreams of playing darts

My grandma gives us more food
More turkey, oh please no
Sister pours out cups of tea
I look out on the snow

I go off to bed at ten
After having a great day
Nice presents lots of food
Thank you is all I can say

As the clock struck midnight
The snow began to fall
Christmas is a time
That is loved by all

By Laura Parrott Age 11

The Best Festival Present...EVER

As the Church clock struck midnight, the snow began to fall. It was Christmas Eve, and Richard and his family peered anxiously from their rabbit hole in Birchanger Wood. "What happens if he doesn't come?" whispered Roland, Richard's younger brother.

"Don't be silly, love. He always comes at Christmas," replied Mum, "He wouldn't suddenly miss this year, would He? Not with everything that's going on at the moment," she continued, "Just wait a little longer."

"All right Mum, but I'm getting cold, and the snow keeps falling on my nose." Roland brushed at the tinywhite flakes angrily, but more kept coming.

"Make space for your little brother, Roberta, He must be freezing," scolded Papa. Roberta was two years of age, and was the oldest of the children. She was also the biggest, and was taking up rather a lot of space! "I've never seen Him before, what does he look like?" Roland was getting on his Mother's nerves.

"Be quiet, Roland, and stop asking silly questions," she reprimanded him sharply, "You'll see Him when he comes."

"I hope His hole hasn't been destroyed already," thought Richardto himself, 'For little Roland's sake, I hope it hasn't. It's just not right that a rabbit should never see Father Christmouse.'" Richard was interrupted in his thoughts by movement in the hawthorn bush on the other side of the path. "Is that Him? Is that Him?" exploded Roland, excitedly.

"No dear," said Mum, wearily, "It's just the squirrel family burying their food. I don't know why they're doing it, they'll never see it again. I'm going inside for a rest, darling," she told Papa, "Make sure Rolandkeeps quiet, or Mr. Fox will find him!" She winked.

Roberta let out a yawn. "This is like, soo boring," she shouted over the noise of her earphones, "At least I've got my Acorn oakPod to listen to, otherwise I'd be simply dying to get my presents." "That's enough, Roberta," said Papa, sharply, "and keep your voice down. You should be grateful forwhat you already have, I shouldn't be surprised if Mr Christmouse doesn't give you anything this Festival." At this, Roberta turned round and stormed back into the hole, and sat down on her leaf to read Mouse-wives Weekly,' or as Papa would call it, "that dreadful magazine of hers."

Soon the clock struck one, two and three, but there was still no sign of Father Christmouse. The family trooped

back in to the burrow, very tired, and very disappointed. "I really thought he was going to come this year," grumbled Mum, "I've a good mind to go round to his hole right now and give him a piece of my mind! Bloomin' cheek." "Calm down, dear. Papa soothed, "I'm sure that there will be a perfectly reasonable explanation for all this.""Do you think he's...dead?" questioned Roland, quietly.

"Of course not! His hole is too well hidden. The humans would never find it, no matter how many of those awful machines they use," answered Mum. "Remember, this is Father Christmouse we're talking about here." Roberta spoke up, "The humans in the Birchanger area are preparing to destroy Birchanger Wood to make way for a new housing development. Access will be from..." "That's enough, Roberta," snapped Papa, "Stop stating what we already know, especially when it's from that dreadful magazine of yours." Roberta sat back in a huff, glaring at her Father. "Now children, it's well past your bedtime, and it will be a busy morning tomorrow, what with the celebrations," concluded Papa. "Bedtime," he emphasised. All the children climbed reluctantly into their leaves, somewhat subdued. Papa tucked them in, and each one fell asleep as soon as their heads touched their dandelions. "Wake up! Wake up!" hissed a small voice from the entrance to the rabbit family's burrow. "My goodness, it's Father Christmouse, exclaimed Mother, from the darkness of her corner. "What are you doing at my house after your performance, or lack of it, last night?" she demanded. "You must come now. All of the others from the wood are there. I've got a surprise for you," came the urgent reply.

By now, everyone was awake and getting dressed to go out outside. As the family looked from the hole, they saw the most beautiful sight ever to meet a rabbit's eyes. A thick blanket of snow encompassed everything. A path was trodden into it, which the family followed, hastily. Father Christmouse led them to the very edge of the wood, where all the log cutters had once been. Now there was a difference. The space was empty! All of the fellow inhabitants of Birchanger Wood were huddled together around the edge of the clearing.

"Wow," breathed Richard, in a state of disbelief. "That's... well... unbelievable!!" Questions poured in from every side. "How'd you do that Mr Christmouse?" asked Mr Vole. "Where'd they all go?" exclaimed Mrs Fieldmouse. "Did you have anything to do with this, Christmouse?" That was Badger. His booming question stunned the excited group into silence. "Well...err... as a matter of fact, Mr Badger, everyone, I did!" "But how?!" was the question which came tumbling from everyone's mouth. "You know," came a small voice from behind Mr Squirrel. "This is the best Festival present...EVER!!" It was Roberta. She had been hiding behind the group, feeling very guilty, and very ashamed of herself. "All of this season, I've been wondering what I'm going to get. What I want. But now, I realise that it isn't just about me, it's all about everyone," continued a slowly reddening Roberta. "And I'm sure that Mr Christmouse has worked very hard to make this possible. And I just know, that everyone here will join me in saying a huge thank you to Father Christmouse," she finished, now a dark shade of crimson.

For a moment, everyone just stared in shocked silence. Then, a huge cry of 'THANK YOU MR CHRISTMOUSE!!' shook the Wood from end to end. And everyone thoroughly meant it, with the most heartfelt thanks. "But how did you do it, Mr Christmouse?" squeaked Roland, quietly. Mr Christmouse smiled knowingly, and replied, "Do you really want to know?" "Ooh, yes please Mr Christmouse!" came the immediate answer. "Well you just come in to my hole over there, and I'll tell you."

No one will ever know what was said in that five-minute conversation. What we do know, however, is that on the 25th of December, 2005 (human time) there followed the biggest period of rejoicing to ever be recorded in the history of the animals of Birchanger Wood. And there proved to be many more festivals, year after year, all because of one, very, very clever Father Christmouse.

Runner up

By: Simon Baker (Age 12)

Helping the Essex Air Ambulance

During the earlier part of the year 1st Birchanger Cubs & Scouts decided to organise a paper Film Quiz to raise money for their funds and also made the decision that whatever was raised they would donate half to the Essex Air Ambulance.

On Good Friday this year, a Group of Cubs, Scouts, Leaders and helpers with the kind permission of Focus Do it All in Bishops Stortford, stood outside the D I Y store and successfully sold many of these quizzes, tempting people that by paying £1 and completing the quiz, sending it in to our Group Treasurer (Dave Dartnell who set the questions) they would have the chance to win £50 cash. The quizzes were also sold around Birchanger and to families and friends of the Birchanger Cub & Scout Group. It was a great success and we raised over £350.00. The prize money was taken out of what we made and we were able to give the Essex Air Ambulance £150.00.

On Wednesday 12th October 2005 a representative from The Essex Air Ambulance, Clive, came to the Cubs pack night to receive the cheque and to tell the Cubs all about the Air Ambulance and what they do. The Cubs were a bit disappointed that he did not arrive in a helicopter, but as he explained they do not fly in the dark, as they cannot see to land in fields etc. The Cubs then asked Clive lots of questions, which he was pleased to answer.

1st Birchanger Scouts go Clay Pigeon Shooting

Birchanger Group Assistant Malcolm Bonney who is a member of the Bush Springs Clay Pigeon Shooting club at Chickney Hall Farm, Broxted, arranged for the 1st Birchanger Scouts to be able to have a go at Clay Pigeon shooting. The owner Dave Barnes allowed the Scouts do this at a special rate, which was also partly subsidised by the Birchanger Scouts Finance committee.

On Saturday 5th November a group of Scouts met at the venue and before the shooting took place were given a strict Health & Safety talk with the do's & don'ts for the afternoon. They were all given the necessary earplugs and wore glasses and hats for extra protection. Then they were split into groups of 5 or 6 and were allocated instructors, all of whom are members of the club and had given up their afternoon free of charge for the Scouts. Each group included adult helpers from the Birchanger committee who were also allowed to have a try. It was a very successful afternoon and all the Scouts said that they enjoyed themselves.



Will Sykes supervised by Malc Bonney

At the end of the afternoon the scores were totalled and Dave, the owner presented the overall winner James Slade-Hunswick with a shooting trophy, which was very nice of him. In return all the Scouts gave Dave a framed thank you signed by all who attended so that he could hang it on his wall at the club. All the instructors commented on how they had enjoyed helping the Scouts and how well behaved they were, to the extent that we have been asked if they wanted to have another go in the spring next year.

Birchanger residents to get more leisure

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre is to join up with your Village Magazine in two developments that will prove of benefit to us all.

Firstly they are joining our illustrious list of advertisers, thus helping to keep the magazine going with much appreciated funds, and secondly they will be sponsoring the new Sports Page with a view to keeping us all up to date with sporting news, views and achievements pertaining to the village and village residents. This partnership will be kicked off by a fantastic competition and prize this month (see bottom of article).

There can't be many villagers who don't know that the centre opened a little over two years ago (19th August 2003 to be precise), with the Duchess of Gloucester doing the official ribbon cutting in October of that year, but I wonder how many are aware of the full range of activities available.

Gymnasium 5 a-side football Basketball Netball Tennis, Badminton, Karate Pilates
Yoga Dance, Volleyball Body Balance Body Combat Body Pump Creche
facilities Childrens clubs, Parties Trampolining, Arts & crafts (coming soon)

There are others but quite frankly I have forgotten them! The parties alone can be as varied as you like, with options including football, parachutes (yes parachutes) and go-carts to name but three, so there should be something for everyone. There is also a 'Junior Harpers' club that is for children between 11-16 that allows access to gym facilities between 4 and 5.30 seven days a week and for the really little ones the crèche is manned by fully qualified staff and takes children up to 5 years old

The Leisure Centre, which is aligned to Stansted School as part of a PFI contract, has range of memberships including the full membership, Junior Harpers, student membership (designed for the holiday periods), GP referrals and special needs. There is even a three site membership which allows access to Stansted's two sister clubs, the Lord Butler in Saffron Walden and the Great Dunmow site, and as both of these sites have pools this option could make a lot of sense for those who want to swim.

The facility is already used by many clubs but as the Centre's Business Manager, Lynn Fisher told me. "We are a completely inclusive centre and are always looking to be of service to the local community, the more the merrier!"

Lynn also told me how proud she is of her youthful but enthusiastic staff, "They are always up for helping out and doing extra duties, for example they have visited Birchanger School, something that will be repeated and we have hosted the school here". Indeed the school has been adopted by the Leisure Centre as part of the Government's Health and Fitness for Children campaign which looks at all aspects of healthy living for growing children.

Lynn's message to the village is "We are here, come and use us"

Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre:
Tel: 01279 648580
e-mail: mountfitchet@leisureconnection.co.uk



FREE MEMBERSHIPS FOR BIRCHANGER RESIDENTS

To celebrate the new partnership between your village magazine and the Mountfitchet Romeera Leisure Centre we are delighted to announce that we have been presented with two, six month memberships to the club, one adult and one junior (under 16).

All you have to do is fill out the form below and either leave it at the Birchanger Social Club or send it to Mark Crossley at 5 Duck End.

The winners will be drawn from a hat and notified.
The competition closes on Jan 9th 2006.

All entrants must be resident in Birchanger!

Good Luck!

Name:	_____
Age:	_____
Address:	_____
Tel:	_____
email:	_____

War Memorial Update

The petition to the care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 for a faculty to clean and re-point the plinth and fit eight Nabresina panels over the existing stone faces has at last been granted. Work is planned to commence in the Spring and should be completed within a month.

The original names on the war memorial are now almost illegible.

The spelling of the names on the memorial and those inside the church are not always the same.

The names in doubt are:-

H Bonney (Binney)

W Claydon (Clayden)

F Dansy (Dancy)

C+H Herrington (Harrington)

A+W Hutley (Hatley)

J Hudgell (Huggell)

If anyone knows that a spelling is incorrect please let me know this is most important because once incised they cannot be changed!

I have commitments to cover the total costs now. Thanks to all those who gave so generously I will give the details of donations and costs when the project is completed.

Names to be incised onto the panels are as follows:-

1914-1918

George Banks
John Banks
Alfred Blake
George Banks
Walter Blake
Frederick Blake
James Blake
Herbert Bonney
John Bush
Charles Bushell
Harry Keppel Chester
Harold Childs
William Claydon
Frederick Dansy
James Forrest
William Gilbey
William Graham
John Green

Charles Herrington
Henry Herrington
James Hudgell
Arthur Hutley
Walter Hutley
Arthur Luckey
Harry Luckey
Ernest Luckey
Harry Miller
Christopher Miller
Joseph Monk
Frederick Peoples
Richard Phillips
William Ross
Henry Sanford
Charles Shaw
Rolf Simpson
Frederick Sizeland
Richard Willett
37 names

1939-1945

George Bentley
Lesley Carter
George Clark
Stanley Grey
William Halsey
Leonard Harvey
Stephen James
William Mallory
George Reeve
Charles Tuck
Eric Waterman
Sidney Wren

12 names

Pim Godwin

Return Thanks

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has given us words of comfort, sent letters and cards and also for the generous donations from so many of you.

Thank you also to the people who attended Nick's funeral and gave us such support on a very difficult day.

Also a big thank you to the Revd Andrew Spurr for all his help and support during the past few weeks and for putting together such a fitting service for Nick.

Carol Yeoman.

Letters to the Editor

In memory of Ellis Banks

I sadly heard the news of the death of my dear Brother Ellis Banks on Saturday November 19th. I understand from his daughter that he died on June 2nd this year. As you can understand it came as a great shock to me as I was not informed of his death I could not let anybody know. He was 78 years old.

If anyone would like to send a donation in his memory. Please forward it to the Essex Air Ambulance, Chelmsford Essex.

From his beloved sister June Brown (formerly Banks)

Having just received the November 2005 issue of the village magazine, I feel compelled to respond to your comments on why there will not be an evening carol service in the village church this year. I should first, however, make it clear that even though I am a member of the PCC, what I say hereafter does not necessarily represent the view of other members, although I do feel that many will agree with my views.

In the final paragraph of your editorial you have said that you are “bothered” about the fact that there will not be an evening service – due to the retirement of the benefice musical director. I do not know your source of information but the statement, is in fact, incorrect.

Within the PCC, there was much discussion about whether or not there should be an evening service this year because last year the congregation (apart from regular attendees) was pitiful. It was also noted that in the preceding year, attendance had been lower than usual.

Account was, of course, taken of other matters including the expressed wishes of parishioners who regular attend church who had indicated that they would like to have a carol service but would prefer not to have to face inclement weather on a dark night. In the end, it was decided to have a morning carol service rather than none at all.

There are many people within the village who seem to be quick to criticise the operation of the church but, they rarely

attend church services or any of the functions that are organised on a regular basis. Most of these people do not usually attend services but turn up on “high” days and “holidays” expecting nothing to have changed. There are others who say that they want the church to remain open for worship but then, allow personality differences to intervene. For me, this is particularly sad because St. Mary’s is our church. At any service, it should not matter who the officiate is or if there is an organist present. What is important is that if people want an active church in the village, they must recognise the fact that there is no point in having a service if no one attends!

At the present time, there are a few people working hard to maintain and promote worship within the village. They do not deserve to be criticised for their efforts. I believe that at some future date, most of us will turn to God for support and comfort. I would like to think that St. Mary’s will still be open and will be able to provide a place of sanctuary but that can only happen if there is regular support both on a spiritual and a financial level.

If there are any villagers out there who feel as I do, I urge them to think very carefully about what they can do to ensure that St. Mary’s remains open and remains our parish church.

Sincerely yours

Pam Lee

This issue came about because I queried the lack of the evening service when I was sent the details of forthcoming services. Thus:- Is there going to be an evening Carol service this year? if so when?

No. Unfortunately our Benefice Director of Music has resigned (retired to go farming in Wales) and the Benefice Choir is not able to put on a carol concert this year - hence we are doing our own thing, unassisted by the choir, on the last Sunday before Christmas.

My editorial was based on this information. It came directly from another member of the PCC. I do not accept that there was any criticism of those who “maintain and promote” worship in Birchanger, they give their time and efforts freely as I do. Since it is the season of goodwill I will not enflame this matter further but urge as many parishioners as possible to attend St Mary’s while they still can.

Ed

Mountfichet Romeera Leisure Centre

Gymnasium	5 a side Football
Basketball	Netball
Tennis	Badminton
Pilates	Yoga
Dance	Trampolineing
Volleyball	Body balance
Body Combat	Body Pump
Creche facilities	Children's Clubs
Parties	Arts and crafts

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Village Diary November/December 2005

December

- | | |
|------|---|
| 18th | 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins Carol Service |
| 23rd | Time tba From the Club
Children's Panto |
| 24th | 8.00 pm At the Club
Christmas Eve
entertainment |
| 25th | 11.00 am St Mary's
Christmas Day
Holy Communion |
| 31st | 8.00 pm At the Club
New Years Eve
Entertainment |

January 2006

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1st | 11.00 am St Mary's
New years day
Matins |
| 8th | 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service |
| 15th | 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins |



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Christmas refuse collections.

Refuse collections will be as normal on Friday December 30th. The next collection will be on Saturday January 7th. The green box will be collected as usual on Thursday December 29th, with the black box collection taking place one day later than usual on Friday January 6th.