

CLASS 4 GET A PIZZA THE ACTION

By Lucy Haggerwood-Bullen

Do you like pizza? Well, Class 4 of Birchanger school went on a visit to Pizza Express on Thursday 1st December as part of their work in Design & Technology on 'Bread' and in Science on 'Micro-organisms'. It was so much fun and the pizzas were delicious!

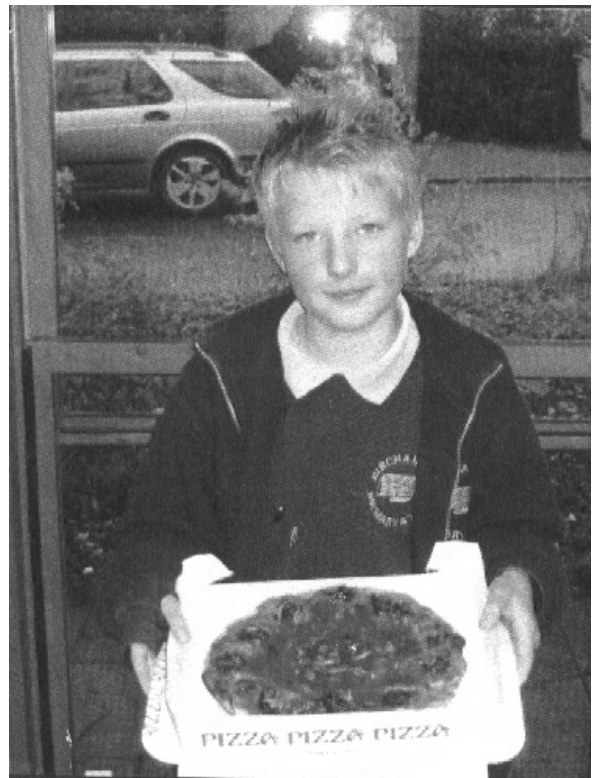
Initially, the children learned about the importance of cleanliness and hygiene when dealing with uncooked food - to stop harmful bacteria spreading and causing illness. The children had previously studied mould on food under controlled conditions in the classroom.

Next they tasted various ingredients used to make authentic Italian pizzas. For example, mozzarella, goat's cheese, parmesan, capers, anchovies, artichokes and jalapeno peppers. Most of the children loved the new flavours although the anchovies were not popular. Daniel Brett thought he was being poisoned!

Afterwards, the children were given a tour of the premises. The most exciting part was going into the huge walk-in freezer. They also saw the cooking and preparation areas.

Finally the children designed and made their own pizzas. They thought carefully about how to make their pizza look appetising. Guy Robins was awarded the Achievement Star that week for the Best Presented Pizza.

Back in the classroom, the children learned how to write instructions on how to make their particular pizza and they constructed a product profile of their pizza. All in all, the visit was a tremendous success.



Guy with his award winner

FEED A FOX FOR CHRISTMAS

Uttlesford district council have proven once again their commitment to the wildlife and general environmental well being of Birchanger by allowing the cancellation of the final waste collection of 2005. The decision to cancel was taken due to the threat of snowfall on December 30th and proved a lifesaver to the scavenging wildlife in the village. This could be seen by the number of torn bin liners with scattered remnants of Turkey carcasses littering our roadsides.

On Thursday 29th the regular collection of recyclables was bravely undertaken in the most difficult of circumstances when almost 15 millimetres of snow fell giving the waste collection technicians a challenging day. By Friday the threat of another 20 millimetres of snow falling was enough for the collection to be cancelled.

Swinging into action a pre planned contingency was put into force and an email was sent cancelling the collection.

The safety of Ecovert's skilled waste collectors is of paramount concern and exposing them to the hazards of deep snowfall in a remote and isolated place like Birchanger was a risk that was far outweighed by the potential benefits to the local fox population.

A spokesman for the foxes was heard to comment.



DELIVERERS NEEDED

As we go into our fourth year of publication we find ourselves short of two people to deliver the magazine. The areas in question are Birchwood and Forest Hall Road.

Currently our distribution is done by Andy Cameron, he has a team of up to nine deliverers who give up their time to pop the magazine through the letterbox of each household as it becomes available. Birchwood is the largest round with 79 copies (This could be split between two people) and Forest Hall Road the smallest with only 18 copies to deliver. So while Birchwood has the most copies to deliver the houses are the closest together. The opposite is true of Forest hall road.

So if you are willing to give up about an hour of your time once a month to maintain our deliveries and get a little fresh air and exercise at the same time. Please contact Andy at 816727 or the Editor at 816171.

I would also like to thank the delivery team for their ongoing efforts and those who have helped us in the past.

Ed Gilbey

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM

Elizabeth Godwin

Watch out, there's a photographer about

In the next few months you will see a man with a camera systematically taking pictures around Birchanger. This will be Russ Barron, whose ambition it is to photograph Birchanger as it is now for posterity. It will also be a photographic record to compliment the demographic survey and the Parish Plan. Eventually the whole photographic record will be available on a disc, to commemorate Birchanger 2006 in perpetuity.

A Carol service with a difference

The Church was packed on December 18th for the traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols. It was traditional in name only for Birchanger. It happened by day, and was largely organised by members of Birchanger Church, with both Canon Caroline leading the prayers, and Rector Andrew Spurr in attendance. The readings were very different, and several had an innovative twist. It is good to know that there are the resources in the village to arrange a service like this. The choir from the school delighted everyone, and there were mince pies and mulled wine to round off the morning. A real success, congratulations everyone.

The Birchanger precept

The Parish precept will rise this year from £11, 502 in 2005/6 to £11, 709 in 2006/7. The small increase reflects the rise in costs from contractors, and has been kept to a minimum, and should have meant that electors would not see an increase in their individual payment of the Parish element in the precept. That is if the numbers of electors in the parish had remained at their usual levels.

Unfortunately, when the electoral roll arrived it showed that the plan to take Rochford Close, Stoney Common and Stoney Place into Stansted South, and the incorporation of the remaining houses in Start Hill into Great Hallingbury, had finally received ministerial approval. This means that Birchanger has lost some 50 electors. The

services such as lighting and maintenance of the recreation ground and the ground rent still have to be paid and remain the same. The Parish Council cannot make any further reductions at this point. This means that the precept must rise from £14.48 per elector, to £15.73, an increase of £1.35. It is not known at the time of writing what the District and County Council's tax requirements will be.

The decline in numbers in Birchanger is only temporary. The Rochford estate residents are expected to start moving in during 2007, and unless there is another change in boundaries, Birchanger will be getting much bigger.

Two new Parish councillors required

Sadly the Parish Council has lost two Parish Councillors. Jezz Chuchla has been forced to resign for work reasons. A big thank you to Jezz for all his work in the recreation ground, which frequently included urgent dashes up to the ground to sort out problems.

John Gibb has been a member of Birchanger Parish Council for over 30 years. At least a third of that time was spent as Chairman, and he had particular expertise in planning. John has been unable to continue in his role as Parish councillor for health reasons, although he is still very active as the Chairman of the Friends of St Mary's and is largely responsible for the healthy financial position of The Friends. He has seen many changes and many different councillors over the years, and he is still always there for help and advice whenever it is needed. Thank you John for all your continuing service to Birchanger.

Being a member of the parish Council is a varied and interesting role. There are always challenges and interesting people to meet. It could be just the role for you, if you are looking for something a little different to occupy any spare time you may have, and you would like someone to benefit from your efforts. To find out more, please call me on 812793.

BAA Transport Forum

Each year the BAA holds a Transport Forum, and each year there seems to be news of yet more cuts in rail services. The track expansions at Liverpool Street Station are now reduced to eight. There are similar cuts to the track at Stratford. A new rail service from Stratford to the airport only runs at off peak times because of lack of rail capacity at peak times. Apparently the airport can expand without the improvements to the M11 north.

The message was that while the East of England Development Agency and the city both look upon expansion as a good thing but neither want to pay for the necessary infrastructure to go with it, despite the fact that the spokesman for the EEDA claimed that it the East of England's number 1 asset. The government won't pay either, unless EEDA can make a special case.

The good news is that coach services are expanding, and being used. There is now a service which operates every ten minutes to Victoria Station throughout the day, and coaches do run through the night. National Express has some new special coaches with easy wheel chair access for the disabled. It will accommodate the user's wheel chair, and has special seat belts. There is also a reduced fair for disabled passengers. The new coaches have leather seats, seat belts, and in coach entertainment. Bookings may be made on line, and seats reserved. If the roads were not so congested, this could be just what we all need.

New area committee

The first meeting of the South West Area Committee which is the area which includes Birchanger, will take place at 7.30pm on Thursday January 31st at Stansted Mountfitchet School. This committee will focus on truly local issues, such as the airport, transport matters, highway matters and items of local concern which you would like to be included. There will be more opportunities for members of the public to raise issues and to make their views known. It will also be more informal than meetings of the full council.

It is for local people, and it is your chance to make your contribution to local matters, and to hear presentations on local community topics. You are all welcome.

Should you have a little red button?

A little red button alarm has proved to be a life saver to elderly residents throughout the district. It is particularly vital for those who live alone or who are disabled. It is connected to the user's telephone, and the button should be worn around the neck at all times. To find out more please call the District Council on 01799 510510.

The blue badge scheme

You are eligible for a Blue Badge if you receive the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, or have a severe disability in the upper limbs and still drive a car, or if you have a permanent disability which restricts walking. To apply for a badge contact the Social Care Service of Essex County Council on 01799 513332.

Youth shelter has lights

After what seems to have been a very long time, the youth shelter finally has its lighting. The lights are low voltage and should cost less than £5 per annum to run. They are on a timer located in the hall, and the lighting will be adjusted each month according to the season.

It is dangerous to tamper with electricity. If the lighting is interfered with, or broken through vandalism, it will not be replaced. You have been warned!.

They are at it again

Imagine the scene: you have parked your car then return to it as usual. You need to reverse out of your parking space, but you find a piece of paper has somehow stuck to your rear screen, and your view is impaired. You jump out of the car to remove the paper, leaving the keys in the ignition, engine running, valuables in the car, only to find that somebody has jumped in, and revs away, nearly flattening you in the process. It is very galling for the thieves when their intended victim spots the paper and removes it before unlocking the car. Watch out.

STRICTLY COME DANCING

By Sally Tilstone

Fred and Ginger would be proud to know that ballroom dancing is as popular as ever. Are you aware that every Monday evening a group of people get together in our village hall put on their dancing shoes and dance the night away?

I had always wanted to learn to dance. It was all very well getting up at the discos, but I admired that generation who glided so elegantly across the floor and also got up to bop away to disco beat.

I enquired about the dancing in the village hall and was told that every Monday evening a group of people would meet up to dance but unfortunately they did not teach dancing.

The dancing began around 1989 when Joan and Vic started small tea dances, then they decided to teach people to dance. Sadly Vic died in 2002 and without Vic, Joan felt unable to teach.

However three couples decided to keep the dancing going by taking it in turns to run the dancing for a month at a time. Each couple had their own style and choice of music and it made it interesting.

Thanks to those couples, Fred and Rose, Alan and Betty and Len and Betty, the dancing has kept going to this day. I was a little worried when I walked down to the hall for the very first time although Alan explained that they did not teach. He said that I was welcome, was sure pick it up and that people would help me.

I was very nervous especially as there was no one I knew and had no partner. That day I was also joined by another two ladies wanting to learn to dance. But once they knew that the group did not teach, they decided to go to Ware college to learn.

However, I decided to keep persevering. There were only about four couples and about six single people both male and female when I began. How different that is today, the numbers have grown.

The people are so welcoming and so very friendly. Each week they would try to teach me a few new steps. Of course it is not easy and it was not always very easy to teach. I was ok going in a straight line but hated the corners. I have been guilty of many sins, hopping, stepping too wide, not spinning on one foot and leading



the male, etc.

I asked how people met and of course the dance halls were the place to be to meet the ladies. I had to remember that these people had been dancing for a good many years and they were a joy to watch and were patient with me.

The group is so willing to help others. It does not matter if you make a mistake and you are not the only one. People use the evening to practise new steps and dance routines.

Over the last year I have learned a number of dances including sequence dancing which I thoroughly enjoy. I come home brimming with pride that I can do a Saunter, a Mayfair Quickstep, Rumba, Square Tango and Cha Cha Cha. I can Waltz but find the Foxtrot and Quickstep a little hard to follow.

The group has grown to around thirty people and come from all around the villages, sadly there is only one couple from Birchanger. We break for tea and coffee midway through the evening and we have a special treat if it is somebody's birthday or anniversary.

Everyone enjoys the evening so much, whether you are young or old. A couple or on your own. No one is made to feel awkward. They are a lovely bunch of people.

If you would like to get out on a Monday evening and enjoy dancing, come along. It is a very enjoyable and sociable evening from 8pm to 10 pm and the cost is only £2.50.

School News

December is an exhausting month for many, and it is a particularly demanding time for the staff at the School. They want the children to enjoy and to contribute to Christmas, while the children are excited and full of anticipation of the main event to come. The Autumn Term is also a very long one and one in which a great deal of routine work is done. As well as preparations and making things for the school play and Christmas Bazaar, practising for the School Concert and Carol Service, arranging the Key Stage parties, enjoying a wonderful Christmas Dinner and finishing off on the last day of term with a trip to the pantomime in Cambridge. To complicate matters, the builders were in, doing the messiest part of the outdoor play area. A heavy program in which everyone is involved and there is no such thing as taking a break. You did it all. Congratulations everyone.

Christmas Bazaar's change of day

It is very easy to have a clash of dates for village events in December and early on in the term it was discovered that the club had arranged their children's Christmas party on the same date as the proposed Christmas Fair. The PTA made the decision to change to the Sunday and this proved to be a very good decision from the point of view of the customers, who packed the school throughout the afternoon.

Business was brisk, and some stalls sold out very quickly. It was a good chance for visitors to enjoy

some refreshments, to see the art displays around the school and to try their luck to win one of the numerous prizes and raffles. Father Christmas had a stream of young visitors and all the hard work by the PTA and children paid off to the tune of over £1300.

Christmas around the World

Class Three children led a celebration of Christmas around the world in the Church on the penultimate day of term. Wearing the colourful costumes of the country they were representing, and using the style of music associated with that country, they conveyed the Christmas Story in song under their musical director, Mrs Mortishire Smith. The songs though different from the usual carols soon had the congregation tapping along and applauding enthusiastically. In the words of the Rector, it was the best carol service the school had ever arranged in the Church. Then it was back to school for Christmas Dinner for everyone.

Thieves target the School

The Key Stage One Outdoor Play Area is nearing completion, but the project was a target for thieves who made off with a mini digger on the night of December 14th at around 7pm in the evening. They accessed the school from the set aside, breaking down the perimeter fence in the process. Please tell the Stansted police if you saw anything that might help them in their efforts to apprehend the gang, who regularly target building sites in the area. They are seen on camera, but it could be your description of a particular vehicle, or someone acting suspiciously that might clinch an arrest. Did they also use this to pinch the Henry Moore Sculpture a few days later?



Another popular winner at the Bazaar

Key Stage 1 Nativity play

This is one of the guaranteed tear jerkers of the year. The youngest children happily and with great confidence performed their Nativity Play, entitled Manger Mouse, to a packed house of parents and visitors again this year. The play took a different slant to the Christmas story. It told the story from the perspective of the mice who lived in the stable at the time Jesus was born, their take on the unaccustomed visitors to their home, with scenes of local life at the time. The scene setting was boosted with new technology from the whiteboard.

The actors were confident in their roles and the children's lines were clear. The choir surpassed themselves singing newly learned songs enthusiastically and well. Everyone seemed to enjoy their roles. Congratulations everyone. It was definitely not to be missed this Christmas.



Harley Beck, Andrew Hewins and Samuel Roberts



Charlie Truscott, Charlie Saunders and Ronan Willis

Closure of the Birchanger drop in medical facility.

The closure of the Friday morning facility run by The Stansted Surgery has been a bitter blow to many senior residents in the village. It was a service which they depended upon for routine check ups, medication problems, and acute illnesses. It had operated in the Church Hall for over 30 years. The practice manager is intractable, despite all the many problems the residents have in actually accessing the surgery, and representations from many sides.

Excuses are many, ranging from the difficulty in conducting physical examinations, inability to access medical records which could lead to unsuitable prescribing, all leading to the plain fact that they do not consider it a proper service any more, even if it was a lifeline to many.

There may be help for those who simply need repeat prescriptions. Next time you collect your prescription from the chemist in Stansted, ask about their Managed Repeat Prescription Scheme. This is aimed at those whose prescription has not changed in the last three months, and who take medicine on a regular basis, with a regular review date. You can give the pharmacy consent on your behalf to order your regular prescription. It will then be ready for you to collect from the Stansted Pharmacy every 28 days. You will only need to see the doctor for a review of your prescriptions as indicated on the form you receive with your medicine.

ARCHERS OFF TARGET IN DEFENCE OF SENIOR INTER-DIVISIONAL CUP

SC Birchanger 2-2 The Archers
(aet)
Birchanger Won 4-3 on pens

The Archers made a miserable defence of the G H Wilson Senior Inter-divisional Cup when they crashed out in Round Two at SC Birchanger on Sunday. In a repeat of last year's final, in which The Archers triumphed 4-2, the Premier Division leader's started brightly and lead 1-0 at half time after a powerful finish from Darryl Emerson on the half hour.

However, Birchanger, currently fourth in the Premier Division, battled back well in the second half and midway through, a well struck volley from Rob Tyler following a partially cleared corner saw the hosts draw level. The Archers were rueing an amazing miss from Malcolm Ward shortly after the equaliser. He managed to turn a high cross just wide from a yard out with the keeper beaten.

This gave Birchanger belief and they began playing some good football despite the poor surface. Some fine stops by The Archers goalkeeper kept the holders in the match and the final whistle came with the underdogs on top. The first extra time period provided a healthy crowd with two more goals and it was Birchanger who provided the first.

A lovely through ball from Lee Dare enabled Rob Tyler to coolly slot home his second of the match only 5 minutes into the first period. But The Archers showed why they won three major cup competitions last season and replied within five minutes. A well floated ball into the box was flicked on at the near post and Kim Smith just managed to beat the defence to head home a simple chance.

The second half of extra time failed to find a match winner and penalties were required to separate the teams. Paul Tyler comfortably slotted home Birchanger's first before Ross Leavers crucially saved The Archers first from Barker. Five of the next six penalties were scored. Rob Morgan was Birchanger's only player to miss when his kick was saved low down to the keeper's left. With the score at 3-3 in the shoot out it was effectively sudden death when Birchanger's Mark Munton stepped up to thump home the host's advantage.

With The Archers needing to score to force another penalty kick the pressure became too much. The ball was blasted over the bar and the holders were out. SC Birchanger now look forward to a quarter final tie with Division One pace setters Chesterford Villa.

Ross Leavers

BIRCHANGER SOCIAL CLUB

WOULD LIKE TO REMIND ITS MEMBERS
THAT SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOW DUE

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE CURRENTLY £10 PER YEAR
AND MAY BE PAID ANYTIME
THE CLUB IS OPEN DURING JANUARY

THOSE CLAIMING LIFE MEMBERSHIP
FOR THE FIRST TIME THIS YEAR
SHOULD DO SO NOW!

WAR MEMORIAL UPDATE

There were no responses to my appeal for information on the accuracy of the names on the war memorial last month. I intend to use the list as it appears in the church, since the names on the war memorial itself are now illegible.

Pim Godwin

A Christmas Dinner To Celebrate Epiphany.

Fifteen members of the congregation of St Mary's Church celebrated Epiphany with a delicious Christmas Lunch at the Dog and Duck at Stansted. The food was fantastic and there was Christmas pudding on offer for those who could still manage it. It was an opportunity to talk and relax while being well looked after by the landlords, Steve and Terri Hopkins.

Being a Christian is not just about going to Church. it is also about fellowship and care. The Pastoral Committee of the Friends is very keen to promote this and plans to organise further opportunities for all Birchanger residents to get to know each other better in the year to come.

Appeal for witnesses

After parking my car outside the social club for a few hours on the night of Friday Jan 6th. I was annoyed to find that some kind person had driven out of their parking space and into my passenger side front door causing an extensive amount of damage. This unknown assailant then drove off without leaving any details or trace of their identity.

I would ask that if anyone saw this incident involving my car (a small black hatchback) or if the party concerned has an attack of guilt to please contact the editor who can pass this information back to myself.

Alan Stone

AND FINALLY

Joy and I would like to say a big "thank you" to everyone who was involved in making the St Mary's Carol Service a wonderful success, especially the Birchanger School Choir with Rachel Mortishire-Smith, all readers and sides men, the "tea-ladies" and Mr Martin (organist). Over 110 people attended the service, far more than we had anticipated.

We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and we hope everyone else did too.

From Joy Wright and Pam Lee



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Village Diary
January/February 2006 2005

January	
29th	St Mary's 11.00 Matins
February	
5th	St Mary's 11.00 Matins
12th	St Mary's 11.00 Family Service
19th	St Mary's 11.00 Matins
26th	St Mary's 11.00 Holy Communion

The winners of our
Leisure Centre giveaway
are:-Lynne Dorsett and
Joanna Massingham-
Lamprell both of
Birchanger Lane.

**Mountfichet Romeera
Leisure Centre**

Gymnasium	5 a side Football
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Volleyball	Body balance
Body Combat	Body Pump
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Parties	Arts and crafts

