

## WOT, NO WATER FEATURE?

In time to welcome the spring, the garden at the entrance to the school has been completely refurbished this winter. The eye catching design of contrasting gravel and pebbles is laid on a plastic matting base for low maintenance. There is new edging and a variety of contrasting colour plants which include cordylines, camellias, lavender, broom, and other evergreens have been planted. The

setting enhances the silver birch, and it is a real eye catcher as you come into the school.



### A view of the refurbished garden

February saw the completion of the long project to refurbish the Key Stage 1 Outdoor Play Area.

It has taken three months, and unfortunately happened at the worst time of the year for weather. A big "thank you" to all the staff, parents and children of both the school and the nursery for their patience in struggling through some pretty rough conditions. It has been worth it, as the school has a valuable resource for outdoor activities all the year round.



And from the opposite end

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In the interests of peace and quiet we are not printing any cartoons this month!

# PARISH COUNCIL NEWS FROM

*Elizabeth Godwin*

## Runway 2

Most of you by now will be very familiar with the consultation on the preferred location for Runway 2. The consultation came about following the High court case last year where the government was found to be too prescriptive on the location for the second runway. In some places it could be viewed as an opportunity to shunt the problem to your neighbour's back yard, by selecting the version which affects you least.

Dumping the proposal onto someone else might have a small benefit in that there would be marginally less noise, but the overall disadvantages remain exactly the same. There is a very real danger for Birchanger that the North West Option, Option D, will be the one "preferred" by those who do select an option, on the grounds of less land take, but selecting any option for whatever reason is hard to do and possibly risky if you are against a second runway anywhere. Selecting an option is exactly what BAA want you to do. They will then turn it into a statement saying that this is what the people want, and a Second Runway does become a possibility in 2013. Setting communities against each other is a trap we must recognise and avoid.

The consultation is entirely flawed. Central to all of this are transport and very real environmental issues. Environmental effects are not quantified as yet, and no transport problems are recognised, or solutions offered. The widening of the M11 northbound has been cancelled, and the Highways Agency at the time of writing, have not yet released the figures as to how they came to that decision. They could not have taken a major airport expansion into the equation. The County Council has figures which show that all roads and the railways are at capacity, yet Mr Prescott wants all these new homes, with Harlow as a designated growth area. Nothing adds up.

There is no mention of the employment or noise impacts, or diagrams as to where the flight paths would be. There is no mention of water supplies, employment or housing requirements either. It is

very difficult to respond to a consultation where so much has been left out.

All the local councils, Uttlesford, East Herts, Herts and Essex are against the proposals. The four authorities are working together on this, and Essex County Council is to invest a considerable amount of money into providing assessments necessary to inform an inquiry.

The consultation period closes on March 24<sup>th</sup>. If you oppose the second runway, be very careful how you respond. The response that the councils will take is that they oppose the Second Runway, they will not go into the business of preferred options, but they will present a case which will inform a subsequent inquiry. Meanwhile homes in Birchanger suffer from additional blight due to Option D. We do need to say something about that.

## Airport noise line

The airport noise line, telephone number 0800 243 788 still functions, and is actually manned during office hours by a real person. Details of the noise event are taken, as is the callers name address and telephone number. Where possible the offending aircraft is identified, and you are sent details of the aircraft along with its flight path and wind direction. Where an aircraft has not kept to the correct height or flight path without a good reason, such as adverse weather conditions, a fine of £500 is imposed. This money is then used to support local good causes.

Night noise affects a great many of us in Birchanger so tell BAA about the planes that wake you in the middle of the night. It can be done the next day, but try to be accurate about the time.

## Inconsiderate school parking leads to a complaint to the Police

Most people either working at the school or bringing their children to school, park correctly in the car parks or on the road. Parking has been difficult due to the work being carried out on the outdoor play area which has meant that staff been

forced to park elsewhere. This has made life tricky for everyone, but most people co-operated well until problems arose last month, and the police were called.

It is incredibly frustrating when somebody blocks your exit for even a minute when you need to get out. It is maddening when you cannot get out all day, as has happened. Please do not do this to anyone when you park in Birchwood. You would not want it to happen to you.

There are frequently car park places available for the earlier arrivals at the school. Please use these spaces first. If you do have to park in the road please never block anyone's driveway, or park across the pavement as this puts pedestrians at risk. One person does this, and immediately it seems that a whole line of cars follow suit, creating a risky situation for those arriving at school on foot.

## Home help and Shopping

Age Concern Essex runs a housework and home shopping service for those who find it difficult to carry out these day to day tasks. The service is not free, but it is affordable. Please contact 0208 504 7357 for further information.

## Chip and Pin Signature Cards

The new chip and pin system may be a boon to many, but for those who have sight impairment, or have arthritic fingers, they are not the easiest things to use. Banks and credit card issuers have realised the difficulty, and have brought out chip and signature cards. They look the same as the pin cards, but the difference is that the microchip will inform the cashier that the customer will verify the transaction by signature rather than by pin number. This special card is available on request from your bank or your credit card company.

## If you have a mobile phone

Beware a phoney messaging service which is netting those who run it a fortune. Everyone gets missed calls, and usually track them back to contact the caller. If the number shown starts with 070467 delete the call immediately. Should you respond, you will be forwarded to a messaging service which rings for a while then tells you that

the caller is not available at that number and they will try another and so on. Checks with BT have shown that these calls cost 47.5p per minute and a great many people do respond. Be warned.

## More about the new waste collections

While some people welcome the proposed wheelie bins, there are between 10 to 15% of properties in Uttlesford for whom wheelie bins are not practicable, and exemptions will be granted for those properties. For those whose properties are suitable there will be three wheelie bins which will be distributed free of charge to every household in the district which does not have an exemption granted by the council.

One 240 litre bin with a green lid for all dry recyclables, which will include all types of paper, cardboard, clean plastics, and steel and aluminium cans. They must be washed, and must not overflow the bin. The range of recyclables will be extended, and when this is possible a note will be placed on your bin.

The brown 140 litre bin is for kitchen waste. This includes fruit and vegetable peelings, cooked and uncooked food waste, and paper and cardboard soiled by food. The food may be wrapped in paper or special bio bags, but plastic containers must not be used.

The grey bin is for residual waste but hazardous materials, clinical waste, dead pets, tyres, car batteries, or other hazardous materials and garden waste must not be included.

Those who gain an exemption from the council will continue to use the boxes and black bags, but it will be a challenge for everyone in the early weeks.

## Fete Date

There will be a fete at the Three Willows for the third year running on Sunday July 9th, If you would like to have a stall at the fete please contact Paul or Paula at the pub as soon as possible. The fetes held in the previous two years raised a great deal of the money for the youth shelter, and was a very enjoyable event for everyone.

# Las Vegas love it or loathe it

By Sally Tilstone

I recently visited the famous Las Vegas strip to celebrate my birthday. What an eye opener. My first impression was that it was a massive concrete jungle and that it was not going to be my cup of tea.

We were driven to our hotel “The Bellagio” a five star hotel with five star decor. Inspired by the village of Bellagio on the Italian lake Como, with its own lake and famous for the fountains which shoot water as high as 240 feet into the air to music.



The hotel shops were the finest featuring all the top designers such as Prada, Armani, Gucci and Chanel.

The casinos were buzzing with people eager to play the house at blackjack, roulette, pai gow and craps. I was lucky enough to book to see Celine Dion at Caesar's Palace on the eve of my birthday and it was well worth it. What an entertainer!

I was going to make the most of our four days and we walked down the strip to view the other hotels. Every hotel had a theme and came alive at night when they lit up the night sky and put on displays and shows.

## The Bellagio Hotel

The Luxor with its Egyptian theme, the Excalibur with Merlin the magician, New York New York with a roller coaster ride on top, the Venetian with its gondolas, Treasure island with its pirate battle between two ships and so on.

There were weddings galore and of course the famous Graceland wedding Chapel where an Elvis impersonator will marry you and your partner.

I booked an excursion to see Lake Mead and the Hoover Dam and of course the Grand Canyon. It certainly deserves to be one of the seven wonders of the World.

This huge crack in the earth is overwhelmingly beautiful with its colourful layers of sandstone and shale.

I flew over the canyon in a small fifteen seater aircraft and wore headphones to listen to the commentary. The sun was setting in the sky and the rock was a brilliant red, the sky was breathtaking. My sister desperately wanted to sample a horse riding experience with the cowboys on a ranch. I reluctantly agreed to go with her, although I had never ridden a horse in my life before! So we were up at five in the morning and away to the ranch. It was like something out of a movie, wagons, dogs, cowboys strutting around in their boots, spurs and cowhides.

We were allocated a horse according to our experience, Karen's was called “Painted Lady” and mine was called “Honeybun”. We saddled up and moved on out.

We were told to ride with one hand and one hand free to shout out “Yee ha”. Can you imagine it?.

One cowboy rode alongside us and we chatted. As we came to a steep drop the cowboy told us it was called “Suicide hill”!

I asked him if he carried a gun and he replied that indeed he did, he had his pistol at the ready to shoot any rattlesnakes. Did I say it was like a movie?

Two and a half hours later we came to the hut where we were going to eat lunch with the cowboys. Yes flies a plenty, cans in a barrel of ice, hot dog rolls, barbequed beef, frankfurters and beef burgers etc. Good ole American food.

I can honestly say that I felt like John Wayne for a while following that ride but I enjoyed it.

The cirque de soleil "O" show is on at the Bellagio and is the only one in the World done over water. It was booked up solid, but I stood for two and a half hours in the cancellation queue and purchased the top price tickets for that performance. It was well worth it.



Cirque du Soleil's "O show"

We certainly saw and did all we could in a short time. My gambling experience was sadly only on the one arm bandits as I felt that I was too inexperienced to gamble at the tables. We were talking Mega money bets there!



Another view of the "O show"

I bought back a few mementos but you really did need to have a pot of money to buy the things in the shops.

The holiday was over now and we boarded our Virgin flight for the ten hour journey home. Richard Branson gave a brief talk on video about making suggestions to improve his service. Well Mr Branson I suggest you sit in a window seat economy class for ten hours and see how much sleep you get!

Over all I did enjoy the experience but I won't be going back. There are too many other places in the world to see!

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## Community Service Achievement Awards

Congratulations to two members of the Birchanger Community who are to receive their Community Service Achievement awards at a presentation reception to be held at the Council offices on February 23rd. They are Betty Gilbey (well done Mum) and Andrew Cameron who have both served the Birchanger Community in different ways over many years and continue to do so. Thank you both for everything you have done.

More next month Ed!

## Runway Resurfacing.

Work on resurfacing the runway starts on February 20th. The good news is that there will be no night flights between midnight and 6am on Saturday and Sunday nights. The bad news is that there will probably be increased aircraft movements up to that time. On Monday Tuesday and Wednesday nights the operational length of the runway will be reduced. Work will concentrate on the western end between February and July with the eastern end to follow from July to November. On Thursday and Friday nights the runway will be open as normal.

During this period the take off space will be shorter and planes will make tighter turns, as they did during the period of the Afghan highjacking. This meant that more planes overflowed the village, and there were noise issues. If you do have any questions or complaints, please call 0800 243 788.



# School News

## Budding Public Speakers

Four children took part in the Stansted Mountfitchet School Public Speaking Competition again this year. Coming third out of ten schools. The competition is arranged not only as part of the induction process into secondary school life, but also as a forum where children can meet their peers from other local schools, and challenge them in a debate. The speakers were Matthew Looker and Hannah Robeson in Year 6, and Elspeth Monro Smith with Ellie Raynor from Year 5. Lucy Haggerwood Bullen acted as a reserve speaker, and all of Class 4 were there to support and listen to the debate.

### 1st Birchanger Cub & Scout Group

Invite you to our Music Quiz

Saturday 4th March 2006 at 8pm

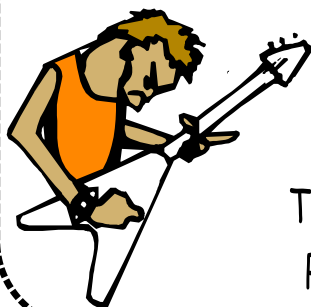
In the Scout Hut Wood Lane

Tickets £6.00 each (concessions £5)

Includes Ploughman's Supper

Bring you own Drinks

Tel Sally 812994, Dave 814311, Elaine 815887,  
Pauline 831811 or Linda 814938 for Tickets.



### Adjustments to the Timetable For Trains Stopping at Stansted from Feb 6th.

Monday to Friday.

Additional stops at Stansted Mountfitchet London bound are,  
06.43, 07.43, 08.45, 09.45.

Stansted bound.

16.55, 17.55, 18.25.

On Saturdays there will be an additional stop every hour for the Stansted Express at Stansted in both directions.

Work on Pesterford Bridge throughout the year may mean some Sunday cancellations.

There is a plan to increase services through the year back to their normal level by December, but check first!



## St Mary's Birchanger Decorate an Easter egg competition

This competition is open for all children in Birchanger to enter. Here's how:-

First collect your egg at the the Mothering Sunday Service at St Mary's on **March 26th**. (These are special white painted eggs all of the same size) Alternatively eggs can be obtained from Pam Lee or Cheryl Dare on 815938.

Then decorate your egg. There will be two prizes, one for the best traditionally decorated egg and another for the most imaginatively decorated.

Next hand in your decorated egg either at the Palm Sunday Family Service on **April 9th** or to Pam or Cheryl before the service. Make sure you include your name, age and a contact number. All entrants will win a prize.

The winners will be announced at the Easter Sunday Service on **April 16th**.

### Birchanger Bowls Club

Is having an Enrolement Night

On 15th March at 7:30 pm at the club

For all new and existing members

Those who wish to know more should  
Contact Paul Wright on 01279 813474

### BARPERSON REQUIRED

TO WORK ALTERNATE SATURDAY NIGHTS

PLEASE SEE TONY AT THE CLUB  
FOR FULL DETAILS



OVER 18 (ON CARDS)

### KITCHEN HELP REQUIRED

TO WORK ALTERNATE SATURDAY NIGHTS

OVER 16 YEARS OLD

PLEASE SEE JULIE AT THE CLUB  
FOR FULL DETAILS

### St Mary's Birchanger

Joy Wright Invites you

To a Coffee Morning

At Andrew Cameron's house

277 Birchanger Lane

From 10.30

Wednesday 15th March

### Birchanger PCC

Annual Meeting

March 13th at 8.15pm

in the Church Hall

Village Diary  
February/March 2006

February

26th St Mary's 11.00  
Holy Communion

March

5th St Mary's 11.00  
Matins

12th St Mary's 11.00  
Family Service

13th Church hall 8.15 pm  
PCC Annual meeting

15th 277 Birchanger Lane  
10.30 Coffee Morning

19th St Mary's 11.00  
Matins

26th St Mary's 11.00  
Mothering Sunday  
Holy Communion

April

2nd St Mary's 11.00  
Matins

9th St Mary's 11.00  
Palm Sunday  
Family Service



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