

ALL CHANGE AT THE CLUB

The wind of change blew through Birchanger Social Club in late October. The Club's popular Stewards Tony and Julie Lucas left the club to manage the Harvest moon pub in Bishop's Stortford after ten years service to the members. They were both sad to leave but see the pub as a fresh challenge. Currently Emma their daughter is teaching in South Africa and son Ben is at University.

If that was not enough of an upheaval, the club is currently running without the benefit of a Chairman in place as no one stood for election at the AGM on October 17th when the Previous Chairman Ken Wheatley stepped down after four years.

Peter Booker has stepped in as an interim chairman and it could be that the committee will elect a permanent chairman from within shortly.

The current Secretary is Keith Robins and the Treasurer is still Dave Woods.

The committee itself has also undergone some changes with Ken Sturgeon stepping down after some thirty years

John Curtis has also resigned as a trustee.



Tony Lucas the departing Steward

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS *Elizabeth Godwin*

Post Offices to be replaced by outreach services?

We have not had a post office facility in Birchanger for some fourteen years now. It has been inconvenient for most of us but it is something we have become used to over time. The post office is to establish new "Outreach" services which could help Birchanger if it was practicable to have such a service here.

The idea is that there is a hosted service provided by a fully trained sub post master and run on a part time basis from a village hall or shop, or that the business is run by somebody who already has an established business such as a pub or petrol station, and that this service could provide very basic access to stamps, bill payments, weighing and leaving parcels.

There will be consultations but these will be run from post offices which we do not have! It certainly could be possible that a village organisation might be capable of delivering a basic service. This of course is a matter for the individuals concerned. Meanwhile there are plans to close the Post Office at Little Hallingbury.

Pills for pests.

Someone has come up with the bright idea of giving the contraceptive pill to squirrels. The mind boggles. It is not as if they are going to form an organised queue to await their pills every morning. If it is to be given in scattered nuts, how are you going to prevent other species from eating the contraceptives as well?

Mind you it would be a very good idea if the rabbits, who are certainly doing what rabbits do naturally, got a load of the contraceptive nuts as well. The pigeons too come to that. It might prevent the annoying but necessary crow scarers, which seem to be more effective at frightening the humans rather than the wild life. What happened to the old fashioned shoot? Probably Health and Safety!

A timely reminder.

Some months ago I warned everyone about the latest parcel scam in this magazine. Unfortunately the perpetrators come Belize and are still in operation.

If you have been "hit" you will receive a card through the door from a company called Parcel Delivery Service or PDS claiming that they were unable to deliver a parcel and suggesting that you call them on 0906 6611911 to arrange delivery.

Whatever you do, do not call this number. The moment you hear the recorded message you will have been bill for £15 for your phone call. Instead please call the Royal Mail Fraud on 0207 239 6655, or email www.Ictis.org.uk. It is particularly important at this time of year when a great many of us might be expecting a parcel.

Inquiry ends on a sour note.

BAA lawyers slammed the District Councillors, both members and officers on the last day of the Inquiry into the maximum use of the runway at Stansted Airport. They insinuated that the councillors who heard the original application were biased and ill advised by their officers, and they should not go against government policy as outlined in the Government White Paper on Aviation, which BAA believes gives them the right to go ahead with increases at Stansted Airport regardless of the cost to the community.

The councillors were elected members who were experienced members of Development Control. Their interests had either been declared or logged and were certainly not concealed. They went into the inquiry with open minds, and listened from May until the decision in November to all those who had registered an interest in wanting to make their views known, whatever they were. BAA declined to speak on the date which had been made available for them. The councillors at all times listened to the advice from their lawyers and the experienced officers who were dealing with the case and followed all their legal advice implicitly.

The Inspectors have to have their report to the Secretaries of State before Christmas. When the ministers will announce their decision is anybodys guess but it is likely to be several months into 2008. What was very clear to everyone in at the inquiry is that of the issues in the Government White Paper on Aviation have moved on since 2004 and this does need addressing.

The Inquiry lasted over 16 weeks with 54 sitting days. 44 individuals gave evidence and the inquiry heard from 22 Parish Councils, two other local authorities apart from the 4 main councils of Uttlesford, Essex, East Herts and Hertfordshire. There were representations from 27 other organisations. There were 8 barristers involved and a further 38 professional witnesses were called by the main parties who were BAA Ltd, the four main councils, SSE, the National Trust, Saffron Walden and District Friends of the Earth, The Stansted Airlines Consultative Committee and Much Hadham Parish Council. Costs will be horrendous and BAA are suing the District Council for them.

All concerned are now preparing for the result of this Inquiry, and the Runway 2 Application, now believed to be lodged in the New Year. 2008 will be another very busy year for everyone again!

Stansted community trust has money to give away.

Last August Stansted Airport Community Trust gave grants of £45,000 to local organisations. This is a trust set up by the airport under previous planning agreements to bring some benefits to the communities around the airport. The invitation is out again for all Community and Voluntary Groups to apply for grants of up to £2000 for items of a capital nature which could include disabled access, heating systems, hearing loops, lawn mowers etc.

There must be at least one voluntary organisation in Birchanger such as the Scouts, the Village Hall or any of the many voluntary groups who could benefit from the trust. If you think it is your organisation please contact Stansted Airport Community Trust, PO Box 11, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1 LX, or email cclr.susan.barker@essexcc.gov.uk for an application form or advice.

Home swapper.

People who are social housing tenants from any landlord frequently find themselves in a property which either due to location or size no longer meets their needs.

Home Swapper is national organisation where anybody who is a social tenant with any landlord can register when they are looking for a more suitable home. Where the landlord partners with the tenant there is no charge to the tenant, but where there is no partner there is an administrative charge of £5.95 for three months registration.

As the organisation is nationwide, it has a large database. It uses Google maps for property locations, and works for both landlords and councils. It also gives instant access to swappers contact details.

Registration is quick and easy. Either ask your tenant representative to phone Home Swapper on 0845 8 822822, or you can log on to

www.HomeSwapper.co.uk

Choose your own home?

From this month those on the District Council's Waiting List will be offered the opportunity to bid for an affordable rental property when one becomes available in the area from any social landlord. They will be either sent or emailed a list of suitable properties in their area and will have a few days in which to register their interest.

The final decision will be made according to the number of points the applicant has, but it will give everyone a chance to see what is available. Officers will continue to look after the interests of those who do not bid, but it will give many the opportunity to consider alternative properties.

New insulation program.

The clocks are back, the evenings are dark and cold, but it is not too late to think about home insulation, and even your flu jab if you have not yet managed to have it! The District Council has formed a partnership with Miller Pattison Ltd to increase the uptake of grant funded insulation in the private sector.

Miller Pattison is offering both loft and cavity wall insulation from £199. Surveys are free and without obligation or deposit. The company's credentials are confirmed by the fact that the District Council will be giving a one-off council tax rebate of £25 for the first 100 residents to sign up to the scheme, in fact this will also be offered to those who prefer to sign up to alternative schemes this Autumn. There is no deposit required, and none will be requested. You should shortly receive a leaflet through your door explaining the scheme.

There are additional means tested grants available for those who are in receipt of most types of benefit through a scheme known as Warm Front, whether you own your home or not. To find out more about the schemes which Warm Front has to offer, please call them free on 0800 316 2817.

Peter Reid in memoriam

I feel I cannot let the sad death of Peter Reid pass without paying tribute to the many, largely unsung contributions he made over the years both to the Social Club and the Village at large.

Peter was very involved in events such as the Social Club and Cricket Club Centennials, he also played a leading role in the planning and organisation of the 2000 Millennium celebrations. He also had a long and much appreciated involvement with the Club's weekly quizzes and with his wife Pam's help the, Invitation nights. He served many years as Treasurer to the Cricket Club and was always ready to help out with any work needed on the field. For some time he also helped to deliver the Village magazine. He also found time to organise his former company's Pensioners' Society.

All these activities were carried out in his typically quiet and unassuming manner. You could always be sure that whatever problems arose they would be surmounted and Peter would be there at the end.

On a personal note I have lost a dear friend with whom I have shared unnumbered good times - we also shared our grief at the bad ones. I shall miss his cheery "Hello Boss" greeting and his companionship.

Peter was a principled and generous natured man who neither sought nor expected any plaudits for his efforts on behalf of others. His family and all his many friends will miss him greatly and consider ourselves the richer for having known Peter.

John Curtis

Christmas Bazaar

On behalf of Birchanger over Sixties club

In the Church Hall

Saturday November 24th

2 till 4

Big Raffle, Tombola, Tea and Coffee

50p entry which includes Tea or Coffee.

Craig Waterman

Craig the well known Chef from the Three Willows has decided after eleven and a half years to move on to pastures new.

Craig had lived locally for some thirty two years and worked at the Three Willows as the main chef since 1995. Craig moved with his young family to St Neots two years ago and had been commuting by motor bike every day.

He feels by working in his local area he will be able to spend more time with his wife and young children. I am sure everyone who knows Craig from the village and the Willows would wish him all the best in his new venture.

Christine Waterman

Whats on at The Club?

Saturday 1st December
Social Night
Members only
Julie Nevada

Saturday 15th December
Grand Christmans Draw

Christmas Eve
Stone Cold

Boxing day Lunchtime
Whisky Draw

Birchanger Nursery Unit

Presents

A Christmas Shopping Evening

At Birchanger Church Hall

Friday 30th November 7.00 pm

Beautiful Jewellery, Accessories, Toys, Cards,
Unusual Gift Ideas, Beauty Products and Cakes etc

Plenty for everyone!

£2.50 entrance fee includes complementary festive refreshments
(children free of charge)

A French Letter (or A Letter From France)

Our village in France is like England was 50 years ago. I know you've heard this before but it really is. People say 'Good Morning' as they pass you in the street. There is no graffiti. The telephone box isn't smashed up and no-one has peed in it. (Although why would they? It is a common sight to see men peeing on the road-side. Why use a phone box?). Life really is lived at a slower pace and it takes some getting used to.

A trip to the bakers to buy a croissant for breakfast can take half an hour. Florence has a chat with everyone. You find out about everyone's health and that of their family. She spends at least 5 minutes chatting to each customer and then goes through their change carefully because she is trying to collect one of each denomination of coin from each country using the euro. It is astonishing how much bread the French eat. I see an old lady who I know lives alone going up to the bakers twice a day for a fresh baguette and in the super-market housewives buy a sack containing 10 or 12 baguettes!

Similarly a trip to the bank is not quick. Caroline takes great care to give her customers a professional and friendly service while answering the phone. She too likes a chat. When it's my turn we talk about the weather on both sides of the channel and how the restorations are coming along. By the time I get back from a quick trip to the bakers and bank, the croissants are cold and I am starving but I have heard lots of news and am never left in any doubt that the customer is important.

When we took possession of our house it had not been cleared so a trip (or several) to the dump was necessary. I asked in the bakers where the nearest dump was and left with detailed instructions of how to find it. We loaded up the car and off we went. A notice on the closed gate gave us the opening times but of course it was shut for a two hour lunch break. Never mind. We only had a quarter of an hour to wait. As each car pulled up, the driver got out, walked along the queue, shook hands with everyone and enquired after their health. Then the dump manager (Stig) arrived. He too shook hands with everyone and had a chat. It wasn't quite 2.30pm so he stood outside the gate with the key in his hand. We were getting quite agitated. We knew we had several more trips to make that day and wanted to get on – but we were the only ones who seemed to care. The rest (including Stig) just carried on chatting to their neighbours, discussing their ailments and waiting patiently. Eventually at 2.45pm Stig opened the gates and we were let in. First we had to say where we lived so that he could accept our rubbish at his dump. Then he went through our rubbish telling us where to put it and making sure there was nothing he could salvage. And finally we had to write in his dump log who we were, where we lived and what we had dumped.

The next time we visited we noticed our old TV and easy chair in his cabin. And when we saw him in Inter Marché he shook our hands.

From Brenda Cook

Hi everyone

This month there is a lot of advertising of village events running up to Christmas so please make a note of the ones you're interested in because next month will be too late to include them.

On the subject of Christmas I would love to print some festive material from our younger readers next month. We are prepared to reward (WH Smith vouchers) the authors of any Christmas related stories or poems printed next month. (with or without artwork) So parents please encourage your children to participate. Any contributions we do receive must be in the Editor's hands by **Friday December 7th** at the latest for inclusion.

This month we have a contribution from one of our "Ex-pats" Brenda Cook, which will make a nice contrast. We also have our very first "amusingly shaped vegetable" photo from Dick Brown this is all the more welcome as it is the sort of thing village newsletters are supposed to publish. There is also an item from a lady who wants to board your dogs when you go on holiday.

Finally here is a word of thanks to everyone who contributed to the road safety issue over the last two months and for those letters of support I have not printed. Please remember I cannot print anonymous contributions.

Ed

A message from Derek Jackson

This year we are cutting down on the number of Christmas cards we send as it has become too expensive.

We wish all in Birchanger a wonderful Christmas and New Year. God bless you all

Janet and Derek Jackson.

Back to our Roots



As a contrast to the serious nature of last months content Dick Brown has submitted a photo of some amusingly shaped carrots grown in his allotment for which I thank him.

You don't get many of them to the pound do you? "Oh err Missus" as Frankie Howerd might have said!

Autumn Watch

In May 2006 we were astounded to see a Kingfisher, fishing our garden pond. It was warm, raining and all the fish were on the surface. The Kingfisher was helping himself.

He visited us several times during the next week and we didn't see him again, that is till this morning. Again, I couldn't believe my eyes! He was sitting on a bird bath inspecting the pond. For a better look he switched to another birdbath on the opposite side of the pond. Today his luck was out. A cold wind was blowing and the fish were snugly at the bottom of the pond. He flew off after about 10 minutes.

Eat your heart out Bill Oddie!!!

Jean Williams.

Christmas Bazaar

Saturday Dec 8th
2-4pm

At The School

A Village Invitation
to
“A Present for the baby”

**A Nativity Play
Performed by the Infants**

Tuesday December 12th
9.30 am

At the School

End of Term Concert

Friday December 14th
At 9.15

At the School

Christmas Coffee Morning

On behalf of the friends of St Mary's
At Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane



Tuesday 11th December
At 10.30 till 12.00



Birchanger School Christingle

Tuesday December 18th
At 9.30 am

St Mary's Church

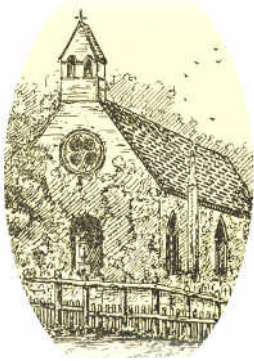
ST MARY THE VIRGIN BIRCHANGER

Christmas Bazaar

Saturday 1st December

IN THE CHURCH HALL

2 pm to 4 pm



News from St Mary's

Countrywide there has been a problem of theft of lead from church buildings and now we hear that church bells have been taken. Obviously, small rural churches such as ours are vulnerable and could be a target for these opportunists. Please be vigilant. If you see any vehicle in the churchyard, take the registration number and call me as soon as you can. If you see anyone moving anything from the churchyard please contact either me (07702171744), Peter Odrich (01279 323927) or the Rector Revd Paul Wilkin (01279812203). If you cannot get hold of either me, Peter or Paul then please, do not wait; call the police so that they can investigate.

We are underway with our enquiries into how facilities within the church can be up graded to provide a toilet and kitchen area. It is a slow process but the Archdeacon has already visited the St. Mary's so things are progressing. It will be some time before any work can begin but we must start now to look at ways in which we can raise the funds that will be required to cover all costs. We do have some money that can be used towards the work and there are various grants that we can apply for once we have completed a feasibility study. However, we will still need to raise a substantial sum to complete any work and I am asking you to consider pledging a sum of money now so that we can make certain that the project is financially viable. Your pledge should be made in a letter addressed either to myself or Peter Odrich. If you wish, your identity will be kept confidential as will the amount that you promise to contribute. It is intended that once the work is complete a commemorative plaque will be erected to acknowledge those who have generously supported the project, either financially or otherwise. We do need your help to make the project a success.

Pam Lee

**St Mary the Virgin
Birchanger**

Evening Carol Service

Friday 21st December

At 6.30 pm

Everyone Welcome

**St Mary the Virgin
Birchanger**

**Family Christingle
Service**

Sunday 9th December

At 11 am

**A traditional service
for all the family**

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

School News

Harvest festival with a difference.

The children took a very different approach to their Harvest Festival this year. Instead of the boxes of food to be distributed around the village by the children they spent the week thinking about all the children all over the world who were suffering through starvation or very poor diets.

This year they focussed on children the same age as themselves living in orphanages in Eastern Europe with no hope of ever finding a family, and who were existing at near starvation levels. They collected contributions of plain flour, dried pasta, dried rice and sugar which they packaged into special boxes provided by an organisation known as Harvest For the Hungry. The boxes were then collected to be taken by special vans to Bulgaria for final distribution. The school paid a contribution of £3 for each box which was collected towards the transportation costs.

Book week links to harvest.

Book week fell in the same week as the Harvest Festival and the theme of tales from all over the world linked well with the theme of children such as themselves who suffer from hunger throughout the world. Throughout the week parents and governors visited the school to read their favourite stories to the children. Class 4 produced and acted a play in a day with a travelling theatre company and there was plenty of opportunity for everyone to explore different stories and to write their own. They also made their own book covers and bookmarks and there were prizes for the best in each class.

The week culminated in a non uniform day when the children all came dressed as a character from another world. There were Red Indians, Pirates, Japanese ladies and a host of other characters. The overall winners, and it was very hard to choose, were a Red Indian, a Buddhist Monk, an Ancient Egyptian and Marcel Marceau himself. The children showed off their costumes to a special Harvest Assembly of Parents and Friends. As each child had put a great deal of effort into the project everyone was a real winner so everyone received a prize.

Sample lunches proved to be a big success.

The children invited their parents to join them for lunch to sample a school dinner which they had selected. Each class had a day to select their menu and to invite their parents to join them. Overall some 38 visitors came for lunch and enjoyed a school lunch which was very different from the ones available when they went to school.

There was a further chance to see what was on offer at the last assembly before half term, when parents were invited to sample more menus, and to view a typical school lunch box as well as a sample healthy one. They were asked which of the two boxes was the most expensive. It might have been a surprise but the healthy box was definitely the cheaper option.

Birchanger Cub and Scout troop

PRESENTS

CHRISTMAS BINGO

Sunday 2nd December 2007

Doors open 3.00 eyes down at 3.30

In the church Hall

Tickets available from Trevor (812994) and Elaine (815887)

Under 14s £3.00, OAPs £5.00, Adults £6.00

Includes afternoon tea Bring your own drink

Advertisement

My love for dogs.

'My love for dogs' offers home boarding for your canine friend. I am a dog lover, smitten with them and my home is totally dog friendly. I am delighted to open up our home so that whilst you are on holiday, your dog has a holiday in the comfort of our home, with a totally secure garden.

I am fully insured, police checked and have grown up with dogs all my life. Holly, our beautiful golden Labrador puppy, now 9 months old, loves to play with new friends.

Rest assured that your dog will have at least two long walks a day either at the heath nearby to our home, or in the fields surrounding our village. We also utilise on a daily basis our local village recreation ground and play ball games there.

Should you require any further details please do not hesitate to call **Amanda Bishop** on 07903806750

I am based in Steeple Morden, Near Royston and Baldock, Costs are £10.00 per night for a small breed of dog and £15.00 per night for larger breeds. Discounts available for long period bookings

USEFUL NUMBERS

Here are some useful telephone numbers. If there are any organisations who would like to be included in this list please forward them to the editor.

Birchanger Church of England Primary School
Head Teacher Mrs. Denise Howell **812362**

Birchanger Bowls Club
Secretary Elaine Wright **813473**
Birchanger Brownies
Jenny Jameson **815396**

Birchanger Cricket Club
Secretary Kevan Reid

Birchanger Nursery Unit
Enquiries to Tina Crossley **814037**
Birchanger Over Sixties
Secretary Bernie King **655497**

Birchanger Social Club **812810**

Birchanger Village Magazine
Editor Mr. Eddie Gilbey **816171**

Church in Birchanger
The Benefice office **815243**
Church Wardens
Peter Odrich **323927**
Pam Lee **07702 171744**

Church Hall **Janet Gage** **813507**

District Councillor
Mrs. Elizabeth Godwin **812793**

Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Mrs Ann Kent **813204**

Parish Council
Chairman Mr Phillip Hoy **812703**

Clerk to the Council
Mrs. Julia Peachey **503912**

Princess Alexandra Hospital Harlow **444455**

Cubs and Scouts
Trevor Stone **812994**
Essex Police **07801 461666**

Saturday Football Club
Ben White **02074536468**

Sunday Football Club
Mr. Neil Gilbey **816039**

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01279 813315 or 815946

Village Diary
November/
December 2007

November

25th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

December

2nd St Mary's 11.00 am
Advent 1 Matins

9th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Christingle

16th St Mary's 11.00 am
Advent 3 Matins

21st St Mary's 6.30 pm
Evening Carol Service

23rd St Mary's 11.00 am
Advent 4 Holy
Communion

30th St Mary's 11.00 am
Christmas 1 Matins



Café Masala

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Bangladeshi Restaurant*
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On presentation of this advert
10 London Road, Bishops Stortford
01279 505665 01279 505885



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AND CLOTHES TOO!

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CONVEYANCING | RELOCATION | HOME FILE | FRANCHISING | HOME STAGING

0845 450 5234

... making moves

Christmas waste collections in Birchanger.

There will be NO separate collection of kitchen waste and dry recyclables in the week beginning December 24th. Non recyclables (black bin) only will be collected sometime either on Thursday December 27th or Friday December 28th.

In the week beginning December 31st there will be collections for both dry recycling (green bin) and kitchen waste (brown bin) on Thursday January 3rd. It is advisable to place bins at the usual collection point on the evening before the collection date. Normal collections will resume in the week beginning January 7th.

On Saturday December 22nd the green waste, wood and dry recyclable skips will be at the Stansted Lower Street Car Park between 9am and 3pm.