

Birchanger *Village Magazine*

January 2007

Issue 49

2006 AND ALL THAT

2006 began with the bad news that the GP surgery at the Church Hall was going to be closed. The excuse given was cost. Apparently the Stansted surgery do not care what it costs Birchanger residents to visit them, that is if you are able to squeeze an appointment out of the staff there.

The year continued with a refurbishment to the school gardens and also by staff changes there. The school had a busy year with a wide variety of activities continuing.

The war memorial refurbishment was completed in the springtime and it was good to be able to read the names it commemorates at the remembrance day service.

St Mary's church saw the retirement of Joy Wright as church warden and Pam Lee being elected in her place. Later in the year our Rector departed for pastures new and as I write we are still waiting for a permanent replacement. The church in general seems to be stronger than in recent years with several events being organised to help raise funds and bring the church to greater prominence in the parish.

We enjoyed or endured (depending on your preference) one of the hottest summers on record and this resulted in a good turnout at the village fete, dry gardens and a fairly successful cricket season.

The summer concluded with the arrival of our three bin recycling system and all the controversy surrounding them. They now seem to have been accepted and are now the most visible evidence of Uttlesford District Council's existence.

There were two events in the autumn that I did not report on at the me. One was the house fire in Highview and the other was some excitement in Birchwood that resulted in armed police coming into the village. Both of these events were covered by the Herts and Essex Observer more quickly than we could and were old news by the time we went to press.

We now have a Parish plan and given the proximity of the airport it is a good thing to know the desires of the village in relation to the future development of the area.

It remains to be seen whether our wishes are given sufficient consideration as time goes on. Lets see what 2007 brings!

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July 2006

Issue 43

SUMMER FUN AT THE WILLOWS

The village fete returned to the Three Willows garden on Sunday 9th with an early threat of inclement weather. Happily the clouds parted and by 12 o'clock we were able to open with no problem thanks from the elements.



The Egyptian dancers

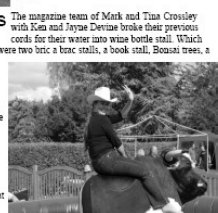
The magazine team of Mark and Tina Crossley with Ken and Jayne Devine broke their previous records for their water into wine bottle stall. Which means we can stay in print for another issue. There were two live, a book stall, a chocolate fountain and a huge raffle.

Tina Bishop took the mantle of Master of Ceremonies while music was provided from The Uttlesford Youth Bus. Another welcome distraction was a troupe of Egyptian dancers who entertained the couples crowd.

At the time of writing it is thought that some £1600 have been raised for village organisations which is quite an achievement.

Once again we have to thank Phil, Paula and Dave at the Three Willows for providing the venue and we all look forward to next year's event.

There were the usual attractions all raising funds for village organisations. Jay Leavers with his ever popular pig roasts did a roaring trade as did the accompanying barbeque. A welcome feature was the bucking bull which proved an unresistible challenge once the beer started to take a hold. There was the usual Cake stall run by Carol Yeoman, a Coconut shy by Pam and Elizabeth Godwin, a plant stall and tombola run by Pam Lee and Cheryl Dene. The Scouts ran an Air rifle range and Ken Sargeant was there playing his cards right.



Alicia takes the bull by the horns

Birchanger Village Magazine 1

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Birchanger parish plan has planning status

Last month Birchanger Parish Plan was adopted by Uttlesford District Council as material planning guidance. This means that in as far as it conforms to the District Plan, consideration must be given by both the Parish and District Councils to all matters in the Birchanger Parish Plan which affect planning issues in Birchanger.

This is a first for Uttlesford. The Planning Team received congratulations from all sides on their achievement, and members of the Parish Council could find themselves asked to give talks on how it was done to other Parish Councils. It is also to be put on the District Council's Web Site. It is already on the Birchanger Website.

We have a legitimate plan. It was formed by the people who live in Birchanger, and expresses their views as expressed in the questionnaires. The plan will be revised in three years time.

Airport update

In November those opposing further development at Stansted won a battle, but winning the war will take rather longer. The government made it abundantly clear in the update to the White Paper on Aviation, that it still intends that there will be further development at Stansted. That does not signify that the war will be lost, rather that a lot more effort must go in to the winning of it. That means support from everyone out there who is against further expansion at Stansted.

The announcement as to the preferred option for the second runway is expected shortly. The full planning application for this runway will be made in the second half of this year, with an inquiry for this expected in 2008. The inquiry into the expansion beyond 25mppa is expected to start at the end of May this year, and this is where support is needed first. The Secretary of State Ruth Kelly, will make the final decision after the inspector and his team have made their reports.

There will be pre-inquiry meetings open to anyone to attend. Those who want to make verbal representation at the inquiry should register their intentions at these meetings. You will also be able to write to the inspector, and it is vitally important that everyone who is opposed to expansion does do this. The inspector and his team are strangers to the area. They will have no idea of the feelings of the population unless the people make them abundantly clear, and why. They may think that this is a done deal, and they will quickly be able to go home and write their report in favour of expansion as the government expects them to do. It is up to everyone to show them otherwise. If there is apathy from anyone who is against further expansion, it will come as night follows day.

Never before has it been so much up to you.

Grant for a new bus shelter in Birchanger

The Parish Council has won a grant for a new bus shelter in Birchanger from Essex County Council. The siting of the bus shelter should be where most people congregate to wait for a bus, but the final decision rests with Essex County Council Highways Department. As yet there is no date for this to be installed.

A great start to Christmas

Christmas Dinner at Birchanger Club for the over Sixties Club is always a highlight of their year. It is eagerly awaited and planned, and has never failed to delight everyone who attends. This year was another vintage year. After a superb lunch, cooked by Julie, family, and friends there was the chance to reminisce with old friends and to enjoy a sing song with all the old favourites. There were 65 prizes in the raffle and the celebrations continued well into the evening.

As always everything ran smoothly, thanks to the Over Sixties Club Committee, and to Tony and Julie who with their team managed to produce a

delicious Christmas Lunch with a choice of menu, all served with great style. This year's event is already eagerly anticipated.

Don't miss "Song Cycle" next time

A select few gathered in Birchanger Church for a concert of Christmas Songs and jokes by the four man quartet who perform under the name of Song Cycle. They came originally from a choir in St Thomas Church in Brentwood, and decided to form their own quartet to perform to local audiences. The Church was candlelit, there was mulled wine and a buffet to enjoy as well as the opportunity to meet and talk with the choir. They will be back in the summer.

Picture makes £250 for Birchanger Church

Over 100 people attended the traditional Nine Lessons and Carols Service in Birchanger Church. After the service they had the opportunity to bid for a picture of Birchanger Church painted and donated by local artist Heather Brown. Most of the interest centred around the sealed bids which were opened after the service. The bid of £250 from Brian Ross beat all the others. Congratulations to Brian, and a very big "thank you" to Heather for donating the picture.

Switch off for Birchanger?

There has been poor response from the village to the planned switch off for the street lights in Birchanger by Essex County Council. The deadline for the responses has now passed, and lights in Harrisons, Birchwood, High View and some on Birchanger Lane, apart from the bends, are expected to be included in the switch off later this year.

The lights are expected to be switched off between midnight and 5am, and the program will start later this year. It is expected to pay for itself within 18 months, will save energy and cut back on light pollution. Unfortunately it does not include the lights at the airport which really do light up our sky.

Those who do want to make their views known now should write to the originator of the scheme, Councillor Rodney Bass at Essex County Council.

Speeding in the Lane

Speeding became a big issue in Birchanger Lane this Christmas. Buses seemed to go faster than ever, and there were reports of near misses throughout the village. The Parish Council has decided to begin the lengthy process of trying to obtain a 20 mph speed limit throughout the lane, as the way things are, it cannot be long before someone is injured.

Fire at the scout hut

Abandoned cars are a scourge in Birchanger, particularly when they are on privately owned land where it is expensive to have them moved. There is, however no excuse to take matters into their own hands, as some misguided individuals decided to do, and burn the car and inflict serious damage on the scout hut as well.

The scouts are a power for good in the village, and they do not need set backs like this. Perhaps those concerned might just read this and make some kind of reparation. Fortunately the prompt action by a nearby resident prevented the scout hut from being completely destroyed.

A NEW FACE ON MY TEAM

Michael Daw has joined my editorial team in place of Jayne Devine who resigned last month. Michael will be keeping his eye on the scene in Highview. Peter Reid has also been drafted in to help with the proofreading.

Ed

LOCAL NEWS ON TAPE

Would you benefit by hearing the Herts and Essex Observer on a tape?

Sally Tilstone investigates

A year ago I volunteered to join the talking newspaper but had until now been otherwise engaged. However I was contacted a couple of weeks ago to ask if I was still interested. I contacted the relevant person to see what was involved.

I went along to an address in Bishop's Stortford where I met the team of four ladies who had collected the Herts and Essex newspapers and were seated at a table ready to begin the task of putting together the news items ready for their readers.

There are six teams of four people and they took it in turn to produce the talking newspaper. The ladies all sat painstakingly cutting out each item of news and putting them to one side. Then when the whole newspaper had been cut and discarded (Photos and adverts etc were not needed) the individual news items were put into envelopes with these titles :- Front page news, Stansted, council news, schools, people in the news, Sawbridgeworth, accidents, villages, Saffron Walden, Dunmow, crime, fund raising, health and hospitals, the airport and Bishop's Stortford.

Then each lady took an envelope and read each article and carefully pasted it onto a piece of A4 paper. The text was cut so as to read in a downward column rather than across as apparently this aided the reader. We had to judge the amount of news to be no more than 3 minutes worth of reading. The title on the envelope was written on the top of each sheet.

We had to accrue enough pages for a ninety minute tape if it was all news or seventy five minutes if a feature was to be included. A feature was usually an interview with a local person in the limelight or who had done something interesting.

At the end of the pasting session the ladies left leaving the person in charge to go through the content checking for duplication and numbering pages etc.

The next step was preparing a sheet ready for the readers. This was headed up with Reader / Page number / category / time to read news, item and total time.

The pages were then sorted into four ready for each of the four readers. The reading would take place in the evening in the recording studio at Herts and Essex hospital.

I went along to see the next stages. I was met by four volunteer readers, two men and two women. They were seated in the recording studio in a row behind a microphone with the pages that we had carefully prepared, divided equally among them. I sat with the technician who briefed me on how they made the tape. The technician did a dummy run making sure that the voice levels were clear and recording.

Then the process of producing this week's tape began. After a countdown from 5, music was played and then the first reader welcomed the listeners and gave the date, announced the week's readers and that it was an all news tape this week. Then each reader in turn read out the page of news in their hand. I noticed that the cue that they

were about to end was a raised hand. This allowed the technician to log the time and cue the next reader. It worked well and the news was read out without a hitch.

I now realised why it was so important not to paste too much on the paper. Three minutes was enough for the reader and also the listener had a change of voice so that it did not become too monotonous. If a mistake was made or someone had a fit of giggles then the person raised his hand and the technician could stop and rewind the tape, ready to begin again. If a telephone number was read out for the police regarding a crime, it was repeated.

The recording went smoothly and then it was time to record the reverse side. At the beginning of side two lighting up time was announced. I asked what this was and the technician explained that if a blind person was listening he or she would not know when to draw curtains or put on lights as they were unable to see the transition from day to night.

The lighting up time would tell them and this would change weekly. I had never thought about this before.

The tape always ends with the sport, the readers said their goodbyes etc. The whole process took around two hours and then the readers left. Next the technician took the tape into the recording studio. There are five technicians on a rota. The main tape was copied twice and around 120 copies made. The cassettes are put into a small pouch and sent to the post office where they are then delivered to the listeners. The tapes are free to any person who has difficulty reading a newspaper, they are listened to and returned and re-used.

The whole process required teams of editors, newsreaders, recording technicians, interview technicians and distributors. The papers were collected on the day of publishing cut and pasted and read the same day and made ready for distribution to the listeners the next day.

If you or someone you know would benefit by using the service the number to contact the team is 01279 505654. Where they will be happy to advise you.

Business as usual for Birchanger Church.

An interregnum is always a challenging time for any church community. Since Andrew Spurr left the benefice for pastures new a great deal of work has been put in to make sure the churches keep functioning.

It has been a very busy Christmas for Birchanger Church. Christmas began with the traditional Christmas Fair, Christingle Service, Choral Evening, Coffee Morning, Evening Carol Service, Carol Singing, and ending with the Epiphany Lunch on January 7th. Those who have worked so hard to keep everything running smoothly deserve congratulations and thanks. The special services and events have provided a social as well as a religious forum which has been appreciated by everyone who attended. There has also been a considerable sum raised through these activities in the course of the year to help church finances.

School News

Christmas at Birchanger School

Children are always central to Christmas. They love to be involved, somehow cope with the excitement and to spread their own enthusiasm to everyone around them. This meant that December at the school was action packed from the start.

The first item on the agenda was the Christmas Fair, complete with all the trimmings. The trimmings had to be made, and formed one of the main endeavours for the first “Whackie Wednesday”, which was set aside for the bulk of the preparations. Instead of writing cards to all their friends the children wrote their greetings on a bauble which was placed on a specially designed tree in the entrance hall. The baubles could be exchanged on payment of £1.

Father Christmas made his annual visit, also a Secret Santa where children could buy a present for their parents and have it all wrapped up as well. There were fantastic raffles and hampers to be won by the record breaking numbers who visited the fair.

You might not have known that there could be a blue star, but there was one in Birchanger School, when the Key Stage One pupils performed their Nativity Play with a different angle called “Blue



Star “.

It featured a Blue Star, played by Ellie Pointer who is given a hard time by her fellow stars because of her colour and not allowed to play with them. As in all good Christmas stories the underdog comes out on top, and the Blue Star found herself helping to light the way to the stable for the Kings and Shepherds coming to see the new baby Jesus. Her

fellow stars son realised the error of their ways, and Ellie was allowed to join in their games. The production had everything with songs, helped along by the choir from Class 3, under the able direction of Jo Sherriff in her first production for the school, with dancing from an energetic group of fluffy white clouds, and the star of the show, Ellie herself. The story was told by narrators Curtis Bell, Jodie Smith, Matthew Hewins and Joshua Tierney.

The production was enjoyed by parents, grandparents and some specially invited guests from the village. Afterwards the children served tea and mince pies to everyone.

Next day saw the Christmas Parties for both Key Stages, while on Monday the school held their Christingle Service at the Church, complete with lighted Christingles which created a blaze of light on the altar. This was followed by a delicious Christmas Lunch provided by the schools resident chef and her team.

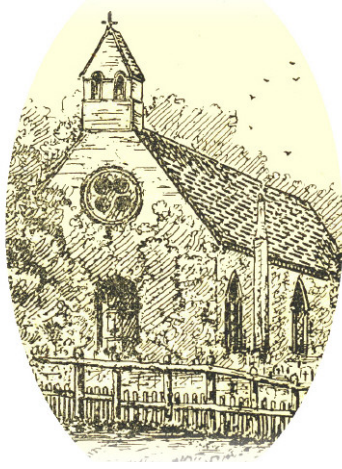
It was a very tired but excited school who embarked en-masse for a trip to see Snow White in Cambridge after an early lunch.

New language for the new Year!

All Key Stage 2 children are starting to learn French this term. This is ahead of the new government initiative to promote a second language in all primary schools. Birchanger will link with Hatfield Broad Oak Primary School in this, and the two schools will exchange visits, and plan trips together. Meanwhile Key Stage 1 children will have the opportunity to learn Italian in their own special Italian Club.

School fund raising in November

There were two fund raising initiatives in November. Pink Day when everyone wore pink raised £95.50 for research into breast cancer awareness, while the book week “Readathon” helped to raise £79 for new books for the school. The children looked so attractive in their pink attire that were some suggestions that the colour of the school uniform should change.



NEWS FROM ST MARY'S

Are you coming to church?

Over the festive season, it really was so heartening to see so many people in church. The Song cycle concert was a great success, one which will be repeated hopefully, in June. The Christingle service was well attended and the children from Birchwood Primary sang beautifully. Also the Evening Carol service was well supported. As you can appreciate, a lot of hard work went into making each service an enjoyable experience for all and many people expressed their thanks.

There was however, one blot on horizon and this was it - before the evening carol service started, one gentleman asked me if a vicar would be coming. I of course assured him that Caroline Currer would be present. He then said "When are we going to have a vicar full-time". I have to say that I was astounded by this question and did want to reply there and then. Fortunately, I held my tongue (for those who know me well, this is not something I am good at!) but I will answer him now.

There is only one way for St. Mary's to have a full time priest and that is for each and every service at the church to be packed by parishioners (over 100 people each Sunday is needed for that). Over the last year, attendance figures have varied but I think about 20 parishioners turn up regularly each week. So I say to the man that asked the question, who incidentally I have not seen in church over the past twelve months, if you want a full time clergy presence at St. Mary's then first you and many others need to attend regularly. Only if that happens and high attendance figures are maintained, will St. Mary's be able to justify a demand for a full time priest.

Do not get me wrong, I would love it if the church were packed every week but we all need to be realistic about our expectations and accept that we, and by that I mean everyone who wants to keep St. Mary's open, need to give our church our full support both by attending services regularly and giving generously to cover all necessary expenses.

Pam Lee

Carols around the village

A small but merry band set out on the evening of the 28th to sing carols and raise money for good causes. I am sorry if we did not manage to visit every one but we did do our best and managed to raise £122 for our efforts. These monies will be divided between charities for breast cancer, disadvantaged children, MS sufferers and St. Mary's.

I am sure that if we have more people involved, either singing or collecting, we could raise more next year!

BIRCHANGER CRAFT FAIR

It is hoped to stage a 2 day fair in the Church Hall on the weekend of the 18th/ 19th March 2007. Further details will be given as soon as possible. Some people have already said that they would like to take part but if I have not spoken to you about this and you do want to be involved, please contact Pam Lee now on 0770 2171744.

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. Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.



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Village Diary January 2007/ February 2007

January 2007

- 27th At the Club 8.00
Julie Nevada
- 28th St Mary's 11.00
Holy Communion

February

- 4th St Mary's 11.00
Matins
- 11th St Mary's 11.00
Family Service
- 17th At the Club 8.00
Mark and Louise
- 18th St Mary's 11.00
Matins
- 25th St Mary's 11.00
Holy Communion

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Birchanger Village Magazine

Present a

Music Quiz



To be held on 17th February
In the Church hall
At 7:45pm



Teams of 6-8
(Over 18's only)

Tickets £8.50 includes ploughman's Supper
Bring your own drinks

Available from the Editor 01279 816171
And Michael Daw 01279 814180

Uttlesford District Council

Meeting of

South West Area Panel

Thursday 1st March 2007

At 7.00 pm

Hatfield Broad Oak
Village Hall

Main Agenda Item:

Local Development Framework
Core Stability
Issues and Options Consultation

The meeting will start with a
Question and answer session
At 7.00 pm followed by
the main agenda items

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