

January 2008

Issue 61

NOW WE ARE FIVE

Happy New Year folks. 2007 proved to be quite a contrast to its predecessor, as early as February we had experienced some extreme changes in weather with rain, wind and snow assailing us. In April a new Rector was appointed, the school carried on with its tradition of sporting successes. Elizabeth Godwin was re-elected to represent us at the UDC with a staggering 90% of the vote, although for the first time for some years we did not have a winner of a Community Achievement award.

The summer was a complete washout with only a few sunny days to enjoy. Fortunately one of them was the day of the village fete, so it was not a total loss. By August building works had started at the Rochford's site and had its first effect on the village in December when the workmen cut through our main power cable. But the new Pesterford bridge was finished. And the pub and club survived the smoking ban!

I managed to upset the ladies at the school in the late summer over some road safety issues. Happily the controversy has now died down.

In October the club was in turmoil, with the departure of the steward and failure to elect a replacement chairman for Ken Wheatley. They seem to be coping and now supply Sunday lunches in addition to all the other things they do.

Christmas has come and gone with some bitter sweet memories for some of us. So to the new year. 2008 will see some changes at the magazine with new blood coming in and a makeover at least in terms of how it looks. Below you will find some pictures from the new year celebrations at the Willows. Once again Happy new year!



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS *Elizabeth Godwin*

Happy New Year!

By the time you read this probably, like me most of your New Year resolutions will be dim and distant memories or perhaps you never made any in the first place. Whatever the case 2008 is likely to be a tough year for most people. There will be financial constraints on all sides, and it may mean that everyone will have to cut back on those luxuries which make life easier, our homes may be colder, and we may not be able to go out as often as we once did. Some of us have been here before and know what it is like.

There are things that can help. Certain people are eligible for insulations grants, which cover a great part of the cost, there are agencies which can help those who find themselves in debt, and there are plenty of things which people can do by simple contact to meet people and to enjoy each other's company without having to spend a fortune.

What have we got in Birchanger? We have open space, woods and footpaths to walk. We have a club which serves cheap food and drink, we have a church which encourages fellowship as well as worship with regular functions such as coffee mornings, lunches, social evenings and other events to which everyone is very welcome. We have a school who welcomes visitors and a thriving nursery unit. We have a busy church hall whose regular functions are advertised outside the door, and these include line dancing and exercise classes for those who still have a post Christmas bulge. There is a thriving Cub and Scout Group, the start of a Youth Council and regular meetings and outings with the Over Sixties. And there is a pub! There is probably a great deal left out, please tell us about what you can offer in this magazine.

We have many people who need to get to know each other. People tend not tell anyone when they are in trouble and their problems only get worse. If you do find yourself with mortgage worries, tell your lender, they can often help as long as they know. The CAB in Bishops Stortford can advise and help on a wide range of issues, the District Council can also provide a great deal of support and information on grants and benefits. Or just talk to a friend? It is often worse to try to cope alone.

On a neighbourly level, the odd cup of coffee does not cost much and it is a great way to spend time with a friend or to make a new one. I am here too, and if I can help, please call me in confidence on 812793.

Parish Emergency Plan update

We have an emergency plan in Birchanger designed to try to help those caught up in an emergency in the village. A key factor in this are volunteers who do their best to help and reassure those who are affected and our list needs updating.

Volunteers do not need any special skills, but if you do have any such as carpentry, electrical, first aid or building it would help if you could tell us. Those who are prepared to help and have access to special equipment such as diggers, tractors or chain saws could also be very helpful to an emergency situation.

If you wish your name to be included or your details have changed, please call me on 812793.

Power failure on December 5th

On the morning of December 5th there was a power cut in the village with a sudden power surge, followed by a cut lasting up to three hours. This was due to a contractor cutting through the main cable in the Rochford's estate area. There were also several flash power cuts in the period leading up to Christmas caused by a faulty sub station.

Several people have reported that they have had items of electrical equipment damaged during the power cuts. These do include computers, and electrical motors. If you think that your equipment has been damaged by either the cut on December 5th or any of the other small power interruptions, you can claim on your household contents insurance. The electrical supplier will give you confirmation of these cuts for your insurance company if you call them on 0845 767 3673.

Crime update

The evenings are dark and late into the evening vandals have been abusing the recreation ground. It is hard to understand just how these people think it is smart to put young children at risk by smashing glass around the equipment, and twisting the swing chains so badly that the swings are made unusable. Police are stepping up their patrols in the late evening and vandals will be prosecuted.

Random speed checks will continue throughout the village. Several people have been caught and warned. Prosecutions will follow. You have been warned.

Garage sites may still be Sold

The District Council have been considering four parking areas off Birchwood for use for affordable housing for those who like living in Birchanger and need a home of their own. The two sites near the school are however really needed for parking, while the other two are barely used at all.

The Council has decided not to use the first two sites but to retain them for parking. However the other two sites have proved to be too small to interest a social landlord. They will now be offered for sale to a private developer once planning permission has been obtained.

A new helpline

Stansted Helpline has operated for sometime in Stansted but until recently there has not been anybody to co-ordinate the service in Birchanger. Angie Driscoll has now agreed to take on this role and the service she will be able to provide will include trips as necessary for those who are without their own transport and need to go to town to visit the doctor or hospital or other journeys which are necessary, but for whom transport is a problem.

There is a small charge for the trip, for instance a trip to Bishops Stortford could cost £3, but it is a journey made at a time to suit the user and with an approved volunteer driver.

If you would like to find out more, please call 07704553727.

Free Local Bus Service for Senior Citizens and the Eligible Disabled.

Now is the time to apply for your new local bus pass which can be used on any local bus service throughout the country. Sadly this service is not available for scheduled coach service such as National Express, and you will still need your rail card to travel on the railways. The new bus pass will cover journeys at off peak times, weekends and bank holidays.

All current holders will receive their bus pass in the post, unless they have had a request for a new photo, and have not yet provided it, but those who have moved will need to notify the council of their change of address.

If you would like to apply for a new bus pass please call the council on 01799 510608 for an application form.

Recycling figures are up

We may have all moaned about the inconvenience of recycling, but most of us are really getting into the idea, and recycling figures are up in Uttlesford. The plain fact of the matter is that EEC rules will soon mean that nobody anywhere will have any choice other than to pay up or recycle. This is unlikely to happen here as the council's figures for recycling show that Uttlesford was the most improved recycling authority last year and there has been a very good response overall. The council was second in the national statistics for the amount it sent to landfill, third best in household waste generated per head of the population, and 10th best for recycling green bin items.

Next year is expected to show even better results as there will be a full year's figures to work with, i.e. the whole of 2007, which should put Uttlesford in the top 10% in the country overall. The council would like to thank all the residents who have taken to the challenge of recycling so well.

Joy Wright

On Christmas morning Birchanger lost one of its most treasured residents as Joy Wright passed away unexpectedly. I have known Joy all of my life as she was the Mother of Peter and Pam who were two of my school mates and the Widow of Eric who was himself a village stalwart of the Cricket club.

Joy was well named as every time I encountered her that was the feeling I was left with when we parted. Joy essentially gave her life to St Mary's Church and retired from the post of Churchwarden in 2006.

I have received several tributes to Joy which I am printing here and a photo from 2006. A small lady with a great big heart.

Ed

Having worked closely with Joy over the past ten years or so, I feel that I must particularly acknowledge the great help that she gave in showing me how to approach the responsibilities of being churchwarden in this parish. Her dedication to her christian faith and towards maintaining an active church in this parish left no one in doubt as to where her allegiance stood.

As most of you will know, I took over the post of churchwarden when Joy retired. This did not mean that Joy would no longer be actively involved and between the two of us, we worked out an arrangement whereby Joy continued to do the things that she felt able to do and I took over those things that that she could not manage. This arrangement worked well for both of us and I came to enjoy our regular meetings (as well as the glass of sherry that Joy always provided).

I shall miss her cheeky grin, her occasional flirty comments and her unfailing support and encouragement.

God bless and keep you safe.

Pam Lee

This is sad news. Joy was such a lovely person, and she did a great deal for the parish. You will know far better than I how much she did to keep the church going in Birchanger through difficult times. God rest her soul.

Alastair Bone

And this from the Archdeacon of Colchester

Dear Friends and colleagues,

Thank you for being in touch. I was saddened to read of Joy's death and will be surrounding you all with prayer. Joy served her church so faithfully and did so much in the community and many people will miss her and be thankful for her care. Please can you let me know if there are members of the family I can write to?

Thinking of you all

Best wishes
Annett

Farewell to a true friend of Birchanger

The news of the death of Joy Wright on Christmas Day stunned the whole village. Joy had always been one of Birchanger's stalwarts, who was always there when needed, who always took the optimistic view, and had a quiet confidence that eventually everything would work out for the best. She could always be trusted and relied upon for help and support when things went wrong. She made light of any of her own illnesses and it seemed to everyone that she would go on forever. She was a true Christian and upheld Christian principles all her life.

Joy was born in Birchanger to one of the Gilbey families in 1920. Between the ages of 5 and 14 she attended the village school. She had a love of dance and music, in fact she played the organ and gave fellow villagers piano lessons. She married Eric Wright when she was 21 and they always lived in Birchanger with their two children Pam and Peter.

Joy's life centred round Birchanger Church and the welfare of everyone in the village. She served as Church Warden for 23 years, always making sure that the church was at its best for every occasion. When the Church was threatened with closure in 1996 and there was nobody to take the services on occasions, Joy rose to the challenge and undertook training so that she was fully equipped for the work. She continued to care for the elderly and all those in distress from whatever cause. She enjoyed all the social occasions, from the various lunches, her coffee mornings, bazaars, to the many other fundraising functions for the Church and other special causes. Her achievements were marked by the presentation of the Uttlesford Community Achievement award.

Joy always saw the best in everyone. Her faith was strong and she brought lightness and brightness to everyone. The bright yellow daffodils in the Church at her funeral and on the order of service said it all.

We shall always miss her and she will always be remembered by the rest of us who live on. Her memorial must be in continuing and expanding the work she started: to support, maintain and keep the Church in Birchanger, and to promote pastoral care for everyone in need. Joy's Coffee mornings will continue, as will the lunches and all the other occasions she enjoyed, along with new enterprises to bring more people into the Church and to enhance the fellowship there.

Elizabeth Godwin



Quadrille

In October a team of four riders, three from Birchanger and one from Dunmow set off to Addington in Berkshire to take part in an annual Quadrille event. The four best teams were then selected to compete at Olympia.

Sounds pretty straight forward then? When April Farr first thought about entering this event I don't think she or the others she press ganged had any idea what was involved. What is a 'quadrille' you may wonder?

Four riders are needed (plus reserves), a plan of the movements to be ridden,(choreography), an inspirational theme (April had this all worked out), music that fits the theme and the choreography and last but not least, costumes for riders and horses that reflect the theme and wow the audience.

Now none of us had ever done this before, hadn't watched any Quadrille riding and had no idea what the standard of performance was like. We were totally in the dark except for a couple of pictures in a magazine of the previous year's winners.

Our theme was 'Waking the Dead' and it was decided to dress the horses and ourselves as skeletons. Undaunted we started practising but only after a long delay due to finding a fourth team member. The three confirmed riders were April Farr, Eloise Robins and Jean Williams and eventually Jane Farrington agreed to complete the team. The pressure then piled on trying to fit in practises (very difficult getting 4 busy people together), sort out the music , working on costumes, lots of form filling, etc.



We didn't really have any arguments but we certainly didn't agree with one another without much heated debate when it came to the formation riding and trying to work out who should be where when and then trying to fit it to the music. The costumes proved very challenging in particular working out the size and shape of the bones and then cutting out what seemed like hundreds of bones and getting each one in the right

place on the costumes. Our wigs were attended to by Tina Crossley for which we are forever grateful and Lesley Robins rescued me from being buried beneath a heap of

silver bones at which stage I could happily have gone awol. This was a very expensive exercise and funding came from various sources, namely The Aunt Sally Stall at the Fete, sponsorship secured from some of April's business contacts and the 'Stansted Riding Club', who we represented.

Eventually the competition weekend dawned and ready or not, we set off determined to enjoy ourselves and do our best. There were 17 teams competing and what a fabulous spectacle they made. The costumes were amazing and the standard of performance awe inspiring. Some of the teams were old hands and looked almost professional. It was a great experience and despite our nerves, (ours and the horses), it all went well. We were not amongst the finalists but we all learned a great deal and broke new ground for the club.

Jean Williams



The team in action

Another French Letter

“Oh no! Ere comes that stupid English person oo sinks she can speak French”.

It seems that I have been doing Officer Crabtree impersonations! I have just asked for a postman instead of an invoice in the DIY shop. They were very nice about it and printed out the required document but I did feel a bit daft. You see, the words are very similar – facture and facteur. It’s all in the pronunciation which is where I went wrong. We all do it. My friend once asked for a wild boar instead of an ashtray in a local bar.

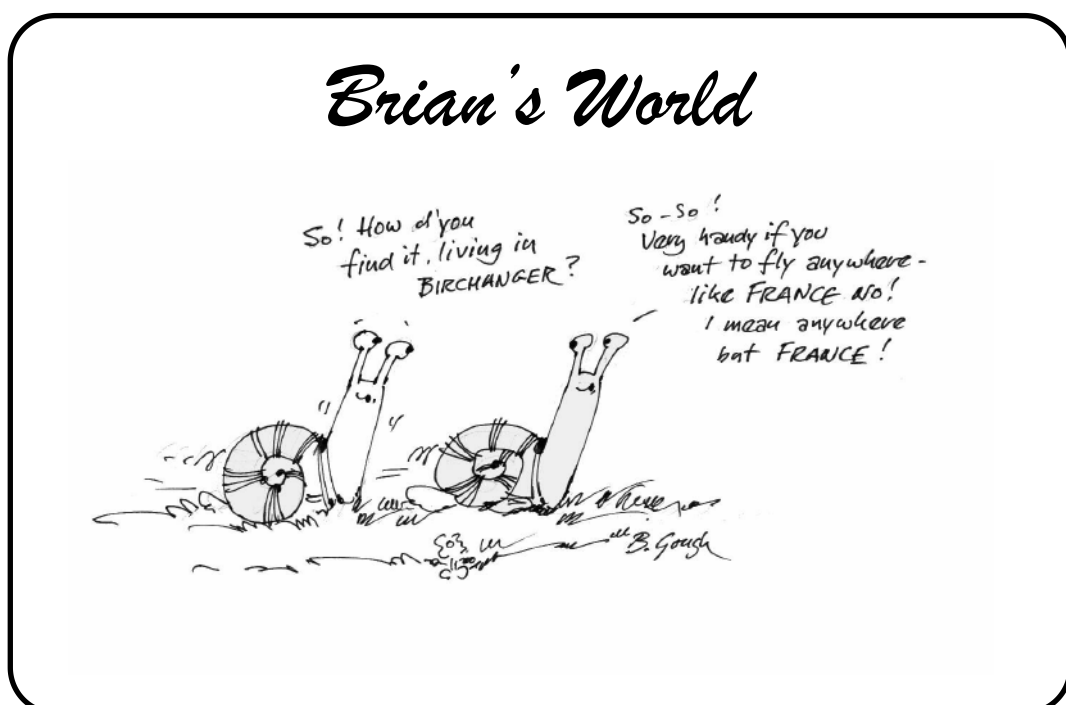
Ordure and odeur are two more that I mispronounce. One means rubbish and the other means smell. No wonder I got a funny look when I told the workman to get rid of a heap of smell. He thought smoking a Gauloise did that.

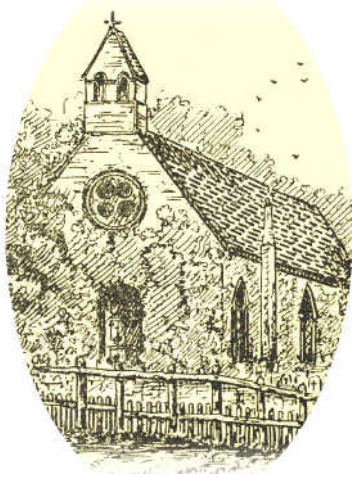
There are also words with several meanings that are pronounced the same making it difficult to understand. For instance the same word spelt slightly differently but pronounced exactly the same can mean glass, green, towards, worm and squirrel fur. Have you ever wondered about Cinderella’s glass slipper? Apparently it was a translation error made by one of Crabtree’s ancestors and the slipper was, in fact, made of soft fur. Much more comfortable for dancing ‘till midnight!

The same applies to phrases pronounced the same but with completely different meanings. For example ‘Vous êtes d’ou?’ and ‘Vous êtes doux’. The first means ‘Where are you from?’ and the second means ‘You’re kind’. Confused? Good. Because I certainly am. It seems you have to know what they are talking about in order to know what they’re talking about.

But the worst words which sound similar in French are those meaning penis and virgin. I was very aware of this when telling my neighbours about my visit to see the hanging virgin on the Basilica in Albert. Oh I do hope I got it right!

Regardes Brenda Cook





News From St Mary's

Evening Carol Service. It was so good to see so many people turn out to this traditional event and there was a very welcome return of the benefice choir. The church was full of smiling faces and, if the amount of consumed mulled wine is anything to go by, everyone was of good cheer. I hope that at least some of you will find your way to God's house on a "ordinary" service day; you will be made most welcome.

Christmas Bazaar. Sadly, this was not so well attended as last year but those who came were very supportive and together we raised over £300.

Thanks to Anne Kent

I wonder if it would be possible to put into the village magazine, a note of thanks to Anne Kent who found my son Jay's wallet and phoned us with the safe return. He is most grateful, as am I.

Helen Chant

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We are looking for more invigilators to help oversee our exams. Invigilators need to be reliable and punctual, highly flexible able to relate to learners and comfortable in a high pressure environment. It's a part time role, but one that can make a real difference

If you are interested in finding out more about being an invigilator please contact.

Loretta Headley

On *01279 813384*

Or write to *MM&CG, Forest Hall Road
Stansted, CM24 8TZ*



National Assessment Agency

New highways measures for Birchanger

Highways are to install double yellow lines in Birchanger following a long period of truly inconsiderate parking, blocked pavements and several near misses. Double yellow lines will be placed outside the Cottage Guest House, opposite the Old Post Office, on a stretch outside the Bower to just beyond Hillside End, and around the bend outside Churton.

The Parish Council has also asked Highways to look again at the possibility of a mini roundabout at the junction of Birchanger Lane with the B1383 since the completion of the Pesterford Bridge roadworks. As traffic lights have not been installed at Pesterford Bridge as originally expected we have a slightly better chance of getting a roundabout here.

As for the new bus shelter, it should be installed soon, and will incorporate a new notice board.

SUDOKU

As I've got a little space to fill, here's a brain teaser for you all. To solve it each column and row need the digits 1 to 9 filled in with no numbers repeated. In addition each 3 by 3 box also need the digits 1 to 9 with no numbers repeated in the same box. The solution is on the back page.

1							6	
9			6		2			4
8			9		1	7		
	9			4		3	8	
			8					7
	3			2		9	4	
6			3		4	2		
4			2		7			6
3							7	

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

Christmas at Birchanger School

Christmas is fun for everyone at the school even if it does mean a great deal of hard work for all the staff and many of the parents, who help the school on a regular basis.

Christmas really began for many proud parents and visitors who saw the Birchanger Infants Nativity Play. The children had worked hard for weeks and performed like veterans. There was a capable and clear choir, a charming Mary, a very dramatic Pharoah accompanied by accomplished dancers, under the guidance of the two narrators who told the story of "A Present For the Baby".

Unlike the accepted version this baby Jesus did cry, and despite all the rich and wonderful presents and the efforts of a delightful elephant troupe who did bring the house down in the traditional way, the baby was only quietened by a kiss from a little boy.

Musical director Mrs Sherriff conducted the children in a large variety of songs and Mrs Crossley produced spectacular costumes. It was an occasion which will be remembered happily for a long time. There was also the Christmas Parties, the Christmas Concert where the children performed on a wide variety of the instruments they were learning. These included everything from the piano to the African Drums. Then there was a beautiful Christingle Service in the Church, largely taken over by the children themselves, followed by a delicious Christmas Lunch prepared by Chef Gina and her team. The last day ended after an early lunch, when everyone jumped on to a coach which was taking them to the pantomime in Cambridge.

Hopefully they will remember these happy and busy December days when they have their own children, for whom they will be making a special Christmas in years to come.

Welcome to our School

Birchanger enjoys welcoming visitors to the school all through the year for a variety of occasions. As well as visiting for occasions such as fairs, plays and sports days the children would like you to join them for lunch to see just what a good meal is on offer and to meet the children. It is also possible that you have a special skill such as a craft, language or perhaps some very special stories to tell about the war and Birchanger of old.

If you do have something to offer or would simply like to have lunch and meet the children please call the school on 812362.

WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB

January

Saturday 19th Karaoke
with Cash Raffle

Sunday 27th 200 Club draw

February

Saturday 16th Valentines
Evening with Breeze

Sunday 24th 200 Club Draw

March

Saturday 15th Cabaret
Show

With Comedian Alan
Wallace And Vocalist
Melissa

Easter Saturday 22nd
Karaoke with Cash raffle

Sunday 30th 200 Club Draw

April

Saturday 26th Cockney
night With prize raffle

Sunday 27th 200 Club Draw

Don't forget Monday night
Quizzes, Bingo every
Thursday and the Tote is
drawn every Friday

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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Village Diary

January/

February 2008

January

27th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

27th At the Club
200 Club Draw

February

3rd St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

10th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

16th At the Club 8.00 pm
Valentine's Evening

17th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

24th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

24th At the Club
200 Club Draw



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Birchanger Social Club

Would like to remind members

That Subscriptions are now due

Subscriptions are currently £10

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May now apply for life membership