

Birchanger

October 2008



Magazine

Issue 70

ART EXHIBITION IS NO TURNIP



Helen Holland Pictured at the Exhibition

The Art and Flowers exhibition held in the church hall over the weekend of the 20th and 21st September brought a refreshing change to the usual events held in the village and was organised by the Open Gardens Committee. Over the two days a steady stream of curious art lovers meandered around the hall admiring the works of several artists in a wide variety of artistic styles.

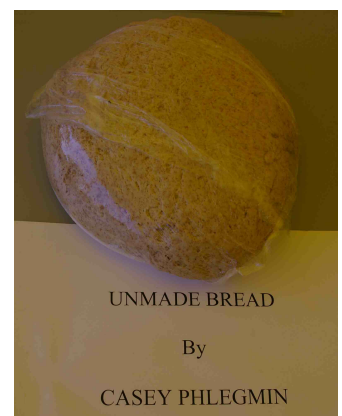
By lunchtime on the Saturday some fifteen works had already been sold, although the purchasers were not allowed to remove the works until after the show was over.

At the same time, in the Church, a part of the village photographic archive was on view. This had been set up hurriedly on the Friday afternoon, with the gallant assistance of Miles Godwin and Sue my wife, who I wish to thank publicly for their help. There was also a steady stream of interested viewers who made the trek to the church.

The events culminated on the Sunday with the award of "The Turnip Prize" and an Auction of produce that took place in the Club on the Sunday evening making some £600 for the Church.

The Turnip prize which was an alternative art competition with Eighteen varied entries from the village, was won by Casey Phlegmin with her entry "Unmade Bread", which you can see a photo of at the foot of this page. I am given to understand that Casey Phlegmin is an alter ego for Keith Williams so I hope he enjoyed his prize! The under 17 winner was Naomi Bates with her model of a plant in a pot. There were a number of other entries from children that were also rewarded with prizes. The competition was judged by our resident artists, Heather Brown and Brian Gough.

Over all, the event raised over £1000 for village funds. The organisers wish to thank every one who took part, or contributed to the event.





PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Stansted Airport Appeal Lost.

It is probably no great surprise to most people that we lost the appeal. It is still a big disappointment. The government have chosen to overlook the noise, health pollution, community cohesion, environmental and air quality concerns in favour of now outdated government policies and dubious economics. The genuine concerns of local people counted for little in the government's views.

Some of the costs have been awarded against Uttlesford District and Essex County Council, quite how much will be a subject of much argument in the months to come.

This must only strengthen our resolve to defeat the Runway 2 propositions. Although the appeal has been upheld, there were many things in the inspector's report which give an element of hope that Runway 2 could be, for this area, a runway too far.

Nowhere is safe from the threat of development

We have heard a great deal about Eco Towns and the prospect of yet more houses to be built in the south east, and it would be unwise to assume that despite the Rochfords Estate, that there is unlikely to be any more new housing in Birchanger in the next ten years.

The government has set high targets to identify sites in and around settlements for potential housing developments. This might provide a landowner's bonanza as they scramble to have their particular field or garden on the edge of a settlement considered. Listing a potential development plot would not necessarily mean that the site would be developed. There will be other criteria to consider.

Birchanger will feature on any potential list as it ranks fairly high in the sustainability ratings by

having a school and transport links. No more than 50 houses would be envisaged in any one location and the smallest development would be 6 houses. It would be very surprising if a development of 50 houses would be approved in a village situation.

The type of housing would be based on a Housing Needs Survey which is currently being undertaken. Birchanger has many young families who are desperate to have their own home in Birchanger and with the average house price in the Uttlesford District being at £298,625 higher than the average for the rest of Essex at £229,165, buying is not an option for most.

The requirements are that for market housing sites for over 15 new houses at least 40% must be affordable. Developers do everything they can to avoid providing this type of less profitable housing and suddenly it seems that there are a great many proposals submitted for developments of 12-14 houses. Affordable housing is usually provided by a Registered Social Landlord who works closely with the District Council. Affordable units should not be placed necessarily in one area, but spread throughout the development. The exceptions are special small housing schemes commissioned by the Rural Housing Trust, such as those in Newport which are built on greenfield land and are 100% affordable. All affordable units should be for rental only, and remain so in perpetuity. It is the right to buy which has led to the shortage of affordable homes throughout the country, as Housing Associations have not been able to keep up with the demand. Councils, despite their close connections with Housing Associations, have not been allowed to build homes for rental in recent years. The shared ownership schemes have not proved to be attractive and in the current climate are mostly no longer affordable. Realistically it is unlikely that there would be another Rochfords in Birchanger. The many young people on the waiting list for a home in

the village would tell you that there is a very real need for a small number of homes for really local families. This is something which whatever happens with the Elsenham development, will need to be considered in the months ahead.

Runway 2 Inquiry update

Birchanger Parish Council is a registered participant to the Inquiry into Runway 2 which is still scheduled to start on April 15th. It is not yet known whether the government will expect the District Council to fund the costs of the inquiry. Apparently government expects District Councils to fund the costs of inquiries in their patches, something which seriously disadvantages the smaller District Councils such as Uttlesford. It could even be said to be discriminatory and to prohibit the rights of smaller communities to appeal on any major planning application. Surely BAA would be expected to bear some of the costs? It was their idea after all!

The pre inquiry meeting at which Birchanger Parish Council will also be represented takes place at 10.30 am at the Hilton Hotel on Monday November 10th.

The good news is that as the inquiry could run for up to 18 months, so it is very unlikely that this government will be making the final decision.

“Burns Night” is back by popular request

Last January SSE hosted a groundbreaking Burns Night in the Church Hall. Those who were fortunate to attend enjoyed a traditional Burns Night Supper complete with pipes, drums and an accordion, all staged in the very best Scottish Style.

Many were disappointed as the tickets were strictly limited to 96, to match the capacity of the Church Hall. Nothing can be done about the size of the Church Hall but you can act fast to ensure a ticket for the next Burns Night which will be on Saturday January 31st in the Church Hall.

Tickets are on sale now and available from Elizabeth Godwin on 812793, Alex Stuart on 812303, Brian Ross on 814961, or the SSE office on 870558. This year the ticket price of

£22.50 per person includes a free bottle of red and white wine as well as a half bottle of whisky per table of 8. Additional wine will be available to purchase and glasses will be provided so there is no need to bring your own this time! You can also purchase as few or as many tickets as you like, but you will have to act soon to avoid disappointment.

Is this really a good new deal for those on incapacity benefits?

We are becoming increasingly uneasy about those in Government who seem to think that they know what is best for us. Is it really best for us when lifesaving drugs are withheld? Is it really good to allow fuel prices to go through the roof to the point where they have a serious impact on the most vulnerable in our society? Will it really be good for us to work when they are ill, something my doctor is constantly telling me that I should not do?

The government has now decided that there is a body of evidence to show that people are better off in work, not only through their pockets but also through their enhanced self esteem, seemingly irrespective of the job they are doing and the conditions in which they have to do it. They think that everyone should have the opportunity to work, agreed, but that those with an illness or incapacity should get the support they need to engage in appropriate work if they are able. I wonder how this concept will sit with a small employer when the employee rings to tell them they are not feeling too good today so will not actually be turning up until they feel better, whenever that might be.

The new allowance which will start from October 27th is called the Employment and Support Allowance, initially for new customers only. There will be personalised support for those suffering from a disability, imagine a friendly Employment Officer and an apparently vague number of other services. For those not suffering from a disability allowances appropriate to their needs will be paid while they look for employment. They will also be expected to attend regular meetings with their “Personal Advisor”. Sounds like a rehash of the old mix somehow.

Our new nursery building

As little as six months ago, our nursery, which is a registered charity, was in danger of having to close its doors for good unless we were re-housed. The old building had seen better days and was past the point of repair. The staff, parents and board of trustees were determined to save the much loved local facility and so set about finding out what could be done.

Valiant efforts were made by parents and staff at fund raising, but it quickly became obvious that we needed significant outside help to reach the £170,000 needed to clear the site and erect a replacement building. In the end it was a joint application from Birchanger Nursery Unit and Essex County Council's Early Years and Childcare services that was successful in being awarded a Capital Building Works grant from Sure Start, and building work started as soon as the summer holidays started. The whole project had to be completed within six weeks, to be ready for the children to start the new term in September.

Our grand opening on Wednesday 1st October 2008, with guest of honour "Elmer the Elephant" was a celebration of this outstanding achievement. The nursery, which is based in the grounds of Birchanger primary school, is an extremely well regarded facility, popular with families from Bishop's Stortford, Stansted and surrounding villages. We achieved an excellent Ofsted report earlier this year and the new building has meant that all the hard work put in by the nursery's staff in striving for accreditation through the Pre-School Learning alliance has not been in vain.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has been involved in this project. We now have a fantastic new nursery building which will provide a safe, stimulating environment for local children for many years to come.

To find out more about the nursery or to arrange a visit please call 01279 810800 or visit the web site at www.birchangernursery.org



School News

Autumn clubs in full swing

Football Club was top of many of the children's priorities again this year and it attracts both girls and boys. Steve Leak is in charge along with Coach Culpin. The small size of the current Year 6 has meant that there are opportunities for the younger children to star in the teams in the coming year.

Also on offer is the Computer Club run by Miss Chinnock, and an opportunity to learn Italian with Mrs Elam. Cookery Club proves to be very popular and some of the children found themselves on the waiting list. The Book Club is run by Miss Williams and is open to all the classes.

School extension set to start this winter

Not exactly the best time, but the school extension to the staff room and resources suite is scheduled to start this winter. The project should take three months and as it will involve knocking down some walls to enlarge the existing two rooms. There will also be increased disabled toilet provision and storage. There will be disruption but the space is badly needed and the disruption tends to be forgotten when the new space is in use.

Everyone helped to make the new banner

Every child who was in Birchanger School in the Year 2007/8 has helped to make a special banner depicting all the things the children liked best about the school. Every child contributed a silk square with a picture showing what they appreciated the most by way of a painting, embroidery, or a collage. Naturally every square is very different to its neighbours, but the whole contributes to a spectacular and interesting banner.

It hangs in the hall. See it when you are next in the school.

Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch in Birchanger has been running for about 10 years, so the time has come for a restructure of the network of co-ordinators to keep up to date with the new Community Police Teams. So I am appealing to all residents to consider if some of you can join the existing small team. Ideally, it would be nice to have about 20 co-ordinators the more there are, the less for each to do. The main duty at present is to deliver the quarterly NHW "Observer" newsletter. It may be that this newsletter will be incorporated into a new magazine from Uttlesford Council some time in the future, so this chore may disappear next year. In which case, our main purpose will be to maintain a contact between our neighbours and the CPSO's. If you haven't met PC Kelly Roberts yet, I can assure you that she is very pro-active in the village and very approachable. If you would like to become a co-ordinator, or want to know more, please contact me -Ann Kent- on 813204 or e-mail - annkent@btinternet.com - or come and talk to me at 357 Birchanger Lane. Please contact me by November 15th.

On a private note I would like to thank Elizabeth Godwin for her kind words in the August edition of the magazine.

Anne Kent

ANY QUESTIONS ?

It is a little reported fact that every week an activity takes place in Birchanger that has people racking their brains for answers. Those who correctly solve the conundrums enjoy elation and financial reward. Those that fail are fired with determination to try again. What is this enthralling event? It is the Quiz that takes place every Monday night at 9.00pm in Birchanger Club.

The current format allows for teams of up to four people to answer twenty general knowledge questions and then after a short break to answer a further twenty questions. The questions are purchased from an outside source, so they are unknown to anyone beforehand. Entrants pay £1 per head and the winning team takes the 'pot' less £5 which goes towards a "snowball" which is won if any team's score is the same as that selected by the Club's random number selector. Although always welcome these prizes are not really what attracts "quizzers". It is the opportunity to test their 'little grey cells' and plumb the depths of their memories for the trivia required by the questions. This and the atmosphere of friendly banter and gentle competitiveness that exists between the teams.

The Quiz requires no specialist knowledge just a willingness to take part. (Although it is necessary to be a Club member this only costs £15 in your first year and £10 a year thereafter and is easily offset by the competitive bar prices)
New entrants are always welcome whether as individuals or as teams, (if you cannot raise a team don't worry as it is nearly always possible to slot you in to one of the existing teams). So why not come along to the club any MONDAY just before 9.00pm and find out the appeal that keeps the quiz's competitors coming back for more?

Steve Hopkins

CALLING ALL BAKERS

Cake donations for use at
the Church Bazaar on Nov 22nd
would be very welcome

If you would like to contribute
some thing for a cake stall
please ring me
Sue Gilbey on 01279816171

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

On behalf of St Mary's Church

SATURDAY 22ND NOVEMBER

VARIETY OF FESTIVE STALLS
TEA, COFFEE, RAFFLE ETC

2 till 4 pm In the Church Hall

Dear Eddie,

We are writing in response to the article in last month's Birchanger magazine relating to Gypsies.

We would like to apologise to the local community for any alarm we may have caused regarding this matter. We are new to the village and therefore were not aware of the previous gypsy invasion. However, we would like it noted that the permission of the farmer, Will Streeter, was sought and granted well in advance for our family to park on the field on Saturday 6th September.

Kind regards

Naomi & Saul Saywood

News from St Mary's

The weekend of the 20th/ 21st September provided a highlight, not only because it was the village Art weekend, but it also saw our lovely church being used as the venue for a display of historical information about Birchanger.

Ed Gilbey spent hours setting up a wonderful display of photographs showing how parts of the village used to be, alongside more recent pictures of what we have now. It was fascinating to see how things have changed. Ed also provided a booklet continuing anecdotal information on village life - some of the people mentioned are still here!

The church was open to visitors all weekend and to make sure it was looking at its best, Rosemary Saward provided some additional floral arrangements.

As luck would have it, there was a baptism on the Sunday and some of the congregation took the opportunity to have a look at the exhibits. There were many other visitors over the weekend, some from out of the village.

The Sunday night auction at the Social Club was a resounding success. As the time to start the sale arrived, there was some concern that not enough people had turned up and that much of the lovely produce would be left unsold.

When the sale got underway, it soon became clear that that fear was unfounded. Everyone became involved. Boxes of vegetables and bags of apples seemed to be flying everywhere along with jams, cakes and bulbs.

At the beginning of the evening there were over one hundred lots to sell. After an hour and fifteen minutes, all but one jar of pickles had gone and £600 had been raised. What a fabulous night - certainly one to be repeated!

Thank you to everyone who gave so generously of their time, goods and money!

Other News

Pam Lee and Peter Odrich

Some thoughtless person(people) has been allowing their dog(s) to foul in the churchyard. It is not very pleasant to find dog dirt on a loved one's grave! Please do not allow your dog to foul in the churchyard or, at the very least, clear up after your animal.

There is a problem with the number of plants and floral tributes being placed on the memorial stones in the ashes area. Although the regulations state that no plants may be placed in a churchyard, a few people have planted shrubs and other items around the memorial tablets. This is creating a problem for the mower and can be upsetting where there is encroachment to neighbouring plots.

Missing Cat

I don't know if it is possible but if you have any room in the next magazine could you put in a request for any information on our missing cat? He is a British Shorthair (British Blue), male, blue/grey in colour with copper eyes. He was last seen on Saturday 13th September. We live in forest hall road, but he may well have made the trip across the fields into the village, or some of the dogwalkers may have come across him. We can be contacted on 01279 812136 or via email andreacutts@hotmail.com

Thanks for your help, as you can imagine we are missing him very much and would like to know where he is (even if it is unfortunately not good news)

Andrea Cutts

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Village Diary October/November 2008

October

- 26th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion
26th At the Club
200 club draw

November

- 1st At the Club 8.00
Cold Shots
2nd St Mary's 11.00 am
All Saints matins
9th St Mary's 10.45 am
Remembrance Sunday
15th At the Club 8.00
Dave Dawson
16th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service
22nd Christmas Bazaar
23rd St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion
29th At the Club 8.00
Jon Paul Vocalist
Allan Wallace Comedian
30th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

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Local Police contact numbers

Birchanger comes under Essex Police and is
Beat code C325E
Stansted Village Police Station 01279 812211
ext 484850
Stansted Community Mobile 07801 461666
Dunmow Police Station (our area main station)
01371871100
Braintree Police Station Service Desk (our
area HQ) 01376551312
Essex Police Non Emergency /Help desk
03003334444
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Christmas Bazaar

On behalf of Birchanger over Sixties club

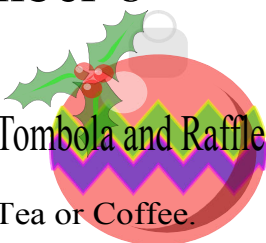
In the Church Hall

Saturday November 8th

2 till 4

Good as new, Christmas Gifts, Tombola and Raffle

50p entry which includes Tea or Coffee.



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