

MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYBODY

Birchanger Magazine

December 2008 Issue 72

BAZAARS OPEN THE FESTIVE SEASON



People at the church Bazaar

The Church Christmas bazaar on November 22nd was another well attended event with all of the stalls doing brisk business. The cake stall in particular was groaning under the weight of home made Christmas puddings, and a wide variety of cakes. Cheryl Dare attracted a steady stream of punters old and young to her tombola while Lesley Hayward sold tickets for a Christmas hamper prize draw. As usual tea, coffee and mince pies were included. Over all the event raised £485 for church funds So thank you to all who participated and contributed by coming along.

The Over sixites also held a bazaar but I have received no details on how it went.

School Christmas Fair is also a big success

It might have been thought that having a Christmas Fair at the end of November just after two very successful fairs in Birchanger might have meant that people were rather either overspent or not interested in coming to yet another Christmas event. Despite the competition the bazaar raised over £1200.

In fact the fair was very well atended and the new layout worked very well. There were arguably the best ever Christmas hampers to win, and all the usual favourites were there, including Father Christmas who had a record breaking afternoon.

Everyone from the very youngest children upwards had made something to sell and there was plenty there to buy. Tea was excellent providing everyone with delicious cakes and a chance to relax and to catch up with friends.

Even the newest generation, in some cases just days old were there, although two were making their entry into the world just too late to join in. Numbers in the school are rising, and 2008 has seen a record number of new arrivals in Birchanger, a happy note on which to end 2008. Welcome everyone.





PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Has the Threat of the Eco town been lifted?

After all the hype and anguish the residents of Elsenham have had to endure in the last year, it appears that the decision as to whether there is to be an Eco Town in Uttlesford will be left to the local planning process to decide.

The much heralded government led Eco Towns project turned out to be a bit of a damp squib. All but one of the sites had varying degrees of unsuitability. Some of the developer's ideas and proposals were ill thought out or downright bizarre, then the minister in charge of the project Caroline Flint was moved elsewhere. The government will now make recommendations but leave it for local authorities to decide through the planning process.

Where will this leave Elsenham? Certainly nobody wants the full Eco town, and the Eco settlement is unwanted by most. This could mean that for the District Council it is back to the drawing board. The government expects us to provide at least 8000 new homes in the area, some of which do already have planning permission. We will have to have these houses in the district somewhere but it seems that most people agree that a large settlement is out. The likelihood is that eventually everyone will have to take a small share of new development across the district. The government will expect the Eco Town to feature in the options list. It is then up to local people to rule it out through the planning and consultation process.

Uttlesford Community Travel

Uttlesford Community Travel provides door to door transport services for individuals with their Book-A-Ride service. They also have Hospital Car Volunteer drivers with their own cars who are available to take people to medical appointments and minibuses for hire either with or without a driver.

They offer a tailor made service which can take people all over Eastern England and into London. The buses also can be used by groups to transport their members to their regular meetings on a door to door basis. They

can also be used by people who need to make either single or regular journeys whether local or further afield.

Next month Uttlesford Community Travel will be launching a recruitment drive to attract more individuals who might benefit from the use of their services. They are particularly anxious to contact those whose lives are made difficult for lack of appropriate travel facilities. They do have vehicles equipped with lifts and proper wheel chair access. They are supported in what they do by all the medical agencies and a great many clubs. They are anxious to extend their services to all who would benefit from them.

Uttlesford Community Travel can be contacted on 01371 875787.

Uttlesford's Recycling programme places the council in the top ten!

Uttlesford has found itself in the top ten league of local authorities for its recycling program. The much maligned wheelie bins are doing their job, albeit the fact that they are not universally popular.

The facts are that Uttlesford came 2nd for the best dry recycling rate, 6th for composting, even though there is no doorstep service for garden waste, 8th lowest residual waste sent to landfill throughout the country and was rated the 10th most improved local authority overall.

There are plans to pilot a 3 month trial in selected areas (not Birchanger) of small 40 litre caddies for food waste. The council is aware that these may not suit everyone. It seems that Essex County Council may be prepared to fund these caddies should the trial be a success.

So this is how 2008 came to an end !

It has been a good year for some, but the signs of recession in Uttlesford are here.

Council Housing Lists have doubled.
Homelessness is up.
Planning applications are down.

Searches for home sales are down
There are more stray dogs about.
There are more cars stolen in villages than London or Liverpool

How will it be in 2009?

If you need help, please call me on 812793, I can't guarantee I can do anything, but I could know a man who can.

Children in China

At this time when the focus is very much on children in the Western world, it is hard to remember that the majority of children in the world will not be celebrating Christmas for a variety of reasons. Many of the reasons are on religious grounds, but for some poverty and poor living conditions will mean that for many Christmas will simply pass them by.

There are Christians in China but they are very much a minority group. Buddhism is growing quickly among younger people, and thanks to the strong British influence there are many churches in China, but for most it will be business as usual. The big celebrations will come later at the Chinese New Year.

In fact in the main cities in China children are conspicuous by their absence. When they do appear they are quiet and very well behaved especially in the north of the country. Babies and toddlers are carried, and a buggy is a relatively rare sight. The children are usually beautifully dressed and look very well cared for, even if the parents appear neat but shabby by comparison.

The one child policy obviously has something to do with this. It is now a policy which is having repercussions in unexpected ways. The Chinese still have a strong tradition of caring for elderly parents, and this now means that a couple can have the responsibility of caring for four elderly parents on their own. This could also mean financial support as healthcare in China is not free.

Increasingly couples are finding their resources impossibly stretched. This has led to the relaxing of the one child rule for couples who are themselves both singletons. In rural areas this rule has never applied as it has been recognised that children are needed to work on the farms.

Home for most children who live in the vast Chinese cities almost inevitably means a high rise flat. New flats are a vast improvement than those erected in the sixties and seventies, but many people cannot afford to live in one of these. These may mean that there is less than 10 square feet of living space per person, with no lift before the 8th floor, and communal toilets and washing facilities anywhere in the building. Life is improving slowly but for most there is a long way to go.

Parents work all hours. With the retirement age at 50 for women grandparents are frequently involved in childcare and can be seen out and about with their

charges. Babies and young children wear open trousers still in a great many cases, and the laws of hygiene seem to be far stricter for dogs than they are for human beings.

If Granny is not on hand the parent's only option is to send their child to a nursery until they are three when they can attend Kindergarten. Both these facilities have to be paid for as education is not free until the child is six years old. I visited a Kindergarten in Beijing where at least two thirds of the children were boarders. They would arrive on a Monday morning early and not be collected by their parents until after 5.30pm on the following Friday.

It was easy to spot the boarders in the kindergarten I visited. They appeared bright and happy, but whereas the day pupils had elaborate hairstyles and smart clothes, the boarders were clearly in communal clothes which did not co-ordinate and frequently did not fit. Vast numbers of cots were crammed into the dormitory area, mostly touching each other but spotlessly clean and ready for the night.

Here again the children were well behaved but there was not the noise or the numbers of small groups of children all doing their own thing as is seen in British playgrounds. Instead the children appeared to be organised into an activity in large groups doing things such bouncing a ball or playing in the sand. There was little imaginative play to be seen.

The school was a government neighbourhood school where zoning is strict. The playgrounds were reasonably well equipped as opposed to the parks which seem to accommodate adults more readily. However there was a lack of perceived equipment in the classrooms, and the site appeared to be very small for the number of children purported to be using the kindergarten.

At weekends the parents appeared to enjoy taking their children out, even if it was just to the local park, market or to the many cheap noodle bars. Children did not appear to be playing in the parks or to be on the streets on their own. Teenagers, particularly girls went around together in very small groups. There are no major toy shops to be seen in China. All the family members, while out with their children appeared to take great pride in them. The children themselves nearly always appeared to be happy, confident with far higher standards of behaviour than is seen in the average British family while out in public. Whether this is good or bad and there are worldwide lessons here only future generations will tell.

Club Matters

Club misses out (Just) on Catering award

Birchanger S&S Club were recently nominated finalists for three categories at these prestigious awards for the club industry. Community Club of the Year, Catering Club of the Year & Sports/Fitness Club of the Year. Sue and Dave Woods attended the lavish black tie ceremony hosted by Roy Walker; well known to TV viewers through the ITV games show Catchphrase. We arrived to be greeted by a complimentary cask ale village (not very enjoyable!!) and various other drinks were made available.

After the call for Dinner and the Formal Welcome we tucked into a delicious 4 course meal culminating in the awards themselves. We eagerly awaited the categories we were nominated in, but on this occasion we did not walk away with being best in show (it felt like we were at crufts!) anyway we came second in Catering Club of the Year behind the eventual winner BBC Club, White City, no mean achievement.

The entertainment continued with Bobby "the dazzler" George the king of darts and also the UK's World 8-Ball Pool Champions taking on selected attendees. We I hasten to add were not one of them.

Anyway, I'm sure a great night had by all and we will win next year!

Dave Woods

Dear Editor

The article in your November issue by Ken Wheatley does nothing for the goodwill of the Birchanger Sports and Social Club and I would like to remind him and the rest of your readers of the hard work put in over the last two years by the previous committee, especially the lady members.

The Club has been running up to October like a well oiled machine. So there is no need for such trite remarks like, and I quote "The people of this village have shown that they will not let cherished institutions fail."

Or the more original remark "Old Guard steps up to save the club." No question of thanks to the previous committee which only goes to show the true picture. That the people of Birchanger, take everything for granted.

Yours Sincerely. RSW Brown.

The article was intended to show that, despite what Mr. Brown might think, the people of Birchanger do NOT take everything for granted. The fact is that the Club came within six hours of having to close. It cannot operate without a committee, and until lunchtime on the day that nominations closed there were only two nominations. At that point several members stepped in to ensure that the lights would remain on. I intended to write a feel-good piece about what a good place Birchanger is – and I think most people read it that way.

I agree that the Club had been running well over the previous two years. I said so at the AGM; at the trustees meeting; and on several other occasions to anyone who'd listen. I am very happy to make the point once again in these columns. They were an exceptional committee whose hard work, ideas and enthusiasm will probably never be bettered.

But that part of the Club's history came to an end, and we found ourselves in serious trouble. But, thanks to the people of Birchanger, disaster was averted.

KW

School News

School council chalks up its first successful event

At their first full meeting of the new School Council the members focussed on Children in Need Day, and how they could support the event. They came up with the idea that whereas the children would not wear uniform on the day and fund raise on the strength of this, the staff would have to come in school uniform instead. Non compliance by the "pupils" or some rather dubious ties could result in detention!

All the pupils brought their teddies or favourite soft toy, many dressed up for the occasion. Class one made special Pudsey Bear biscuits and a day of fun was had by everyone, while still remembering those less well off than themselves.



THE SCHOOL COUNCIL 2008/9



PUDSEY MADE FROM COINS

The children made the outline of a Pudsey Bear in the hall and everyone came and filled it with small change. This was duly counted by the counting machine in Tescos and a staggering total of £150 was recorded. The collecting buckets were out again at the school assembly where more money was collected.

The children had also brought their Christmas Shoe Boxes to the school for collection later that day. They looked really inviting as they were stacked in the entrance hall to await their departure. They will join thousands of other boxes which will be distributed to children who are in need throughout the world, in time for Christmas.

Christmas waste collection

Wednesday December 24th Black Bin Only
Wednesday December 31st Brown and Green Bins

Poppy appeal

It has been reported that the Poppy appeal in Birchanger raised over £3000 this year. A truly magnificent effort. Well done to all involved.

1901 and all that

I have recently completed downloading the complete census for Birchanger from 1901. As a result I have been analysing its contents and below are some findings.

To set the scene, 1901 was Queen Victoria's last year, by the time of the census she had been succeeded by Edward VII. The prime minister was the Conservative Marquis of Salisbury and the Boer war was still going on in South Africa.

Birchanger still had no running water or sewage system. The roads were not tarmacked, and there was no gas or electricity.

At the time there were 751 inhabitants occupying 167 properties through out the village. Of the inhabitants 361 were males and there were 390 females to keep them company. This was a significant increase from the census of 1881 at which time there were 472 inhabitants 249 males and 223 females living in 100 properties. Giving an increase of 279 (59.1%) people in just 20 years in an extra 67 properties.

The majority of the new properties were built at Stoney field common to accommodate the expanding workforce.

In 1901 there were 132 married couples in the parish along with 14 households where the head was a widow and 12 where it was a widower. There were 149 unmarried adults and 222 children(3 to 15 year olds) of whom 161 (21%) are described as Scholars, 61 of the children had various jobs There were 74 infants.

There were 307 (41%) people in some sort of employment. Six people lived on their own means, seven are listed as "Retired" while 11 were on Parochial relief, there were also two "Club Pensioners."

The largest single employer was the nursery with 40 employees in the village but it should be pointed out that there were many nursery employees who did not live in Birchanger. There were 65 villagers employed as "Domestics" in the larger houses or farmhouses. Varying from Grooms to Housekeepers, Housemaids, Parlourmaids, Gardeners, Coachmen and Cooks. Some of whom lived in and some at home with their families. Most of the live in staff have origins that were not local.

Agriculture was the next largest employer with four farmers, and 49 others in various roles. There were ten females employed in a factory, picking, cutting or insulating "Mica." The Brickfield in the village also employed 11 men in various roles. The Great North Eastern Railway employed six men.

The Birthplaces of the villagers is also revealing 259 (34.5%) were born in the village, 100 in Stansted, 47 in Bishop's Stortford and many more from the surrounding villages. London was the birthplace for 37 villagers and 13 came from Cheshunt! Other individuals originated in Florence, Berne and Berlin.

Surnames had not changed much, there were 36 Blake, 35 Banks 33 named Reed, 29 named Gilbey and 20 named Vale. One in five of the total population shared one of these names. The caretaker at the club was Edward Sayzeland while Elias Gibson ran The Three horseshoes and James Emerson The Three Willows.

I will be publishing the census on a CD in due course along with additional information relating to the War Memorial.

News from St Mary's

Some of you will have noticed how poor the lighting in church is, particularly since two of the reflective shades are missing. Hopefully, it will not be too long now before all that changes as an application for a faculty, to upgrade the lights, has now been submitted by the PCC - let's hope that this can be done in time for the Christmas celebrations.

On a more sombre matter, there seems to be some misunderstanding about who may be buried or interred in the churchyard and the whole subject can be upsetting for someone trying to make arrangements for a loved one who has died. The situation is that if the deceased lived in the parish of St Mary's or was included on St Mary's church electoral role, then they are entitled to have their remains laid to rest in the churchyard. It is not enough to say that they did live in the parish but then moved away although there may be an exception where someone has moved from the parish into a nursing home (this is then a matter for the Rector's/PCC discretion). Nor is it enough to say that they attended St Mary's services once or twice a year.

Services are held in church every Sunday at 11am and everyone is welcome to join the congregation. Whilst at church, you can obtain an application form to apply to join the church electoral role.

Our Renewal of Baptism vows service has become an annual event. The next one will take place on the third Sunday in January.

The Rector is introducing a new special service to celebrate marriages that have taken place in this parish. This special service will take place at 4pm on Sunday the 15th February 2009. Invitations will be sent to all those whose details appear in the church marriage register - going back over 60 years!! The invitations will include family and friends of the happy couples. Refreshments will be served in the church hall immediately following the service. If you know the address of anyone who was married in the church but has subsequently moved away, please pass details of the new address to a PCC member asap.

Finally, some one is allowing their pet to foul in the churchyard and is leaving the evidence there. This is not acceptable. If you do walk through the churchyard with your pet, please, keep it on a lead and do not allow the animal to run free over the graves and memorials. If your dog has an accident then, clean up after it!!

Pam Lee and Peter Odrich

A tribute to Dad

A tribute to Dad – George Dennison

Dad was born in 1923 and lived all his life in Birchanger; he attended the local village school when Mr Lightwood was headmaster we often used to hear his stories about him and his cane.

After leaving school at 14 years old he had two brief jobs before settling for a career with British Rail, working his way up to a driver. He loved his job driving up and down the local railway lines. He used to take his breakfast of bacon and eggs and cook it over the fire on his shovel. I used to enjoy going to work with him driving up and down to Liverpool Street.

He married Mum Ethelwyn at Birchanger church in 1948 then moved into their house right next door to the family home

Dad liked his sport he played football for Birchanger, and used to regularly take me up to Tottenham to watch the game; I had to take a stool with me to stand on so I could see. Later he took up bowls with Mum and I we played for Stansted bowls club. He did a lot of work for the club taking on the role of captain and president he was also a trustee. Mum and Dad were regulars at Birchanger club at the weekends until recently when he wasn't so well.

He had spent the last 14 months bravely fighting his illness but sadly passed away on the 30th November. We will all miss him greatly.

Colin and Susan Dennison

Watch out for broken bottles

Broken glass has become an additional hazard for those who exercise their dogs in Digby wood.

The glass, thought to be from broken bottles, has already caused gashes to the feet of dogs exercised in the woods resulting in expensive vets bills for one villager.

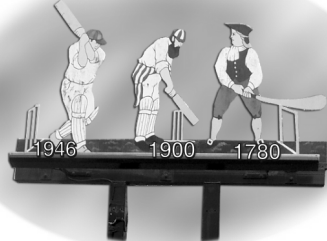
Digby wood is private property and there is no right of way in the wood. Therefore anyone using the wood does so at their own risk as the parish council has no responsibility for what goes on there.

Equally there is no right to dump rubbish especially hazardous waste in Digby wood. Access to the wood is in the gift of the owner which could be withdrawn if the woods are not used responsibly.

If you exercise your dogs in Digby wood please be aware of the hazard and clear any broken glass you find that that might cause injury to your pets.

THE THREE WILLOWS

01279 815913



More than just
your village Pub!

THE THREE HORSESHOES

HAZEL END

FOOD AVAILABLE ALL DAY EVERYDAY

OPEN 11am To 11pm

AUTHENTIC SPANISH FOOD AND TAPAS

FINE WINES ,BEER AND ALES

FAMILY FRIENDLY PUB

BOOKINGS TAKEN

01279 813429

Village Diary

December 08/
January 2009

December

19th St Mary's 7.00 pm
Evening Carol Service

21st St Mary's 11.00 am
Christingle Service

24th At the Club 8.00 pm
Julie Nevada
Female Vocalist

25th St Mary's 11.00 am
Christmas Day
Holy Communion

26th At the Club Lunchtime
Whisky Draw

28th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

31st At the Club 8.00 pm
Dee Gaynor
Female Vocalist

January

4th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

11th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

18th St Mary's 11.00 am
Renewal of Baptism
Vows Service

25th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

**ALL BUILDING AND LANDSCAPING
WORK UNDERTAKEN**

**FENCING, PAVING, DECKING, DRIVEWAYS, DRAINAGE,
BRICKWORK, EXTENSIONS AND CONSERVATORIES**

For a local service call Sean on
07703 115079 or 01279 813818



D Bonney & Sons

Motor Engineers

MOT TESTING, SERVICING
DIAGNOSTIC, MECHANICAL REPAIRS

SELECTION OF NEW AND USED CARS

Yew tree corner Manuden

Ring Malc or Neil on
01279 813315 or 815946

Say Farewell to Christmas in Style

Come and join your friends

For an Epiphany Lunch

Sunday January 4th at 12.30

In the Church Hall

Tickets at £10 each from Pam Lee on 815938

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.gilbey@btinternet.com (Please note the change of address) Elizabeth Godwin, Ken Wheatley, Michael Daw Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.