

## CLUB TO OPEN ON CHRISTMAS DAY

In a historic decision Birchanger Social Club overturned 118 years of its history by deciding to open on Christmas day.

At an extraordinary meeting of the members on December 1st those present voted by 24 votes to 2 to accept stewards Graham and Kim's offer to open the club between noon and 2pm on Christmas Day.

This is a first for the club, and the idea was entirely the stewards' own. The club has never opened on Christmas Day before, and for some it may be a useful alternative to the longer walk to the Three Willows.



Open on Christmas day

## MERRY CHRISTMAS ALL



So another year draws to a close. 2009 has been a varied year. The year began in a cold winter with snow on the ground from February 1<sup>st</sup> and persisting for a week. Fortunately this fell after the Regular Burns night which has become for the moment a village tradition. The village bus services were reviewed in 2009 and the club welcomed a new steward in May

I suppose the major story of the year was the resurfacing of part of Birchanger Lane which caused some disruption back in August. The demolition of Churton is still not finished and it seems the contractors have done something they should not have, so work has stopped for the time being. The School is losing two stalwart members of staff so a new beginning can be expected there.

We lost some real village characters in 2009 Val Law was the first followed by Rene Kadwill and then June Brown. They will all be missed.

So we look forward to 2010 but not before Christmas. So have a good one and a happy new year!



# PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

*Elizabeth Godwin*

## Electricity goes underground

Last month work started on laying a new electricity supply cable which will ultimately ensure that all over head electric cabling will be buried underground in future years.

Individual homes and junction boxes can be connected to this cable via smaller links in time. Hopefully this will also see the demise of inconveniently sited junction boxes, but that may yet be a step too far.

The cable may be installed but when the connections will be made and the ugly post removed is anyone's guess at the moment.

The police would like to see double yellow lines on both sides of the road. This alarms residents, some of whom have no parking of their own. Traffic lights might be possible but very costly, and even then parking would be more limited than it is at present. Tables and humps annoy residents with their noise and the local councils are prohibited by law from supplying car parking places to privately owned homes.

It would be nice to expect everyone to be extra vigilant, but everyone has met the irresponsible driver at the site who is not.

The options are few and impracticable. The situation is always under review, but please be very careful, there can be no miracle.

## 22 Acres future uncertain

Following the defeat of the community consortium in their attempts to purchase the 22 acres adjoining Forest Hall Road, there have been major concerns about the ultimate future of the land. The most recent purchasers appear to be a company who landscape and renovate sites for development in the South East, their current project being a hotel in the Battersea area.

Following a visit from the chief enforcement officer, who pointed out in no uncertain terms that the previous owner had not complied with the condition that the hard standing be removed and the gateway closed, it was pointed out that the onus to do this was now up to him. He also removed any illusion that with the development of Stansted Airport permission might be given for a hotel on this site. It was pointed out that the site was very firmly in the Green Belt and such development was not appropriate. He then suggested that he might run a nursery from the site, this too would not be allowed either.

The most likely use for the site seems to be growing trees and shrubs for use in company projects elsewhere. Whatever he does, he knows that the eyes of both Birchanger, Stansted and the enforcement team will be on him. If you see anything which concerns you please call the team on 01799 510554 as soon as you can.

## Another accident in the Bradley Common area

Once again the concerns about this area were voiced following an accident there last month. While everyone's sympathies are with those who were caught up in the incident, the focus is back on what can be done at this black spot.

## Parish boundaries to be reviewed next year

At the time of writing 150 new homes are occupied at the Rochford Nursery Site. An electoral review was scheduled to be held when the 200<sup>th</sup> home was occupied and Stansted Parish Council has requested that this review takes place.

It will not be possible to hold the review prior to the General Election, but it is hoped to start the consultation process next summer, when residents of both the parishes along with the new residents will be invited to give their views. It may well be that the residents of Forest Hall Park will decide to form their own new parish, with its own Parish Council as has happened in Felsted.

The complication is that only Parish Boundaries are decided by the District Council. Ward boundaries from which District Councillors are elected and the numbers within those boundaries are decided by the Electoral Commission. They will not act until after the parish boundaries have been decided so that for the next District Council elections the old boundaries will apply. Complicated isn't it?

## How is public transport for you? Your views needed

How do you find public transport? What would you like to see improved? Essex has just begun to prepare the new Local Transport Plan which will take effect from 2011. The questionnaire for those on line can be accessed online at [www.engageessex.org.uk](http://www.engageessex.org.uk) while queries can be answered and your views given by email at [Localtransportplan@essex.gov.uk](mailto:Localtransportplan@essex.gov.uk) If you would prefer

to give your views to our Transport representative on the Parish Council please contact Ann Kent on 813204.

## Free pens for all

Just back from a visit to my bank with another free pen, which let's face it, I don't really need but it was there for the taking. Picked up the paper only to read about the crisis in Indian schools, where the children have no toilets which they can use, the parents struggle to pay the fees and there are no supplies of paper or pens available either.

It is Christmas. Would it not be better if the banks, hotels and other businesses directed their pens to the developing world instead of supplying freely the likes of me who certainly does not need another free pen?

## Police cover over Christmas

Stansted Police Station will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, December 28<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>. All the police stations do have a button outside their doors even when closed which will connect the caller directly to the central switchboard via an intercom. Otherwise normal 999 procedures should be used for any emergencies as police patrols will operate as usual.

## Herts and Essex energy project

Last month I wrote about the project, and decided to apply myself. I did so on line, and received an acknowledgement but no further response. I decided to phone them up. They did not seem to have my application and took my details over the phone. They have promised to contact me again to arrange a survey in two to three weeks time otherwise I will have to contact them again. I will certainly do so and have told them I will keep a watching brief for this magazine. It is a worthwhile scheme and I do know people who used it successfully last year. If you have tried to apply and are experiencing difficulties please call Matthew on 0800 9806026.

## Sorry, but there are more conmen about

It seems that I am always on about some scam or other but for the elderly and those at home this is potentially a very real problem.

Unauthorised people are always trying to get into your bank account, or have details of your credit and debit cards. The general advice is never give these away to anyone whatsoever who casually calls on you or phones you up. It is a recipe for disaster. One of the latest involves an outfit who pose as Council Officials who call particularly on the elderly, to offer them the opportunity to pay their council tax by Direct Debit, Credit or Debit Card. They invite you to fill in a form giving these details then leave to help themselves to funds from your account. It is happening.

You may think this does not happen here, but last month an individual called on at least one individual

offering to look after the property in the middle of the night for 2 hours for a weekly sum of £20. If you sign up for that you will never see him or the £20 again. It happened in Birchanger to someone who very wisely declined the service.

## Do you know someone who deserves a MBE?

It is the time of year when I receive a letter asking me to nominate somebody for an honour in the New Year's Honours list. It is something any individual or group can do. Nominations maybe for anyone they know who is doing long term voluntary work or service in the community or who has been outstanding in their particular sphere. The individual should preferably still be doing the work or only just about to retire. I have some ideas, you probably have better ones.

If you do know someone or would like the form, please call me on 812793. It is a long time since we successfully nominated someone in Birchanger.

## Christmas fairs galore

There was certainly no need to leave the village to stock up on supplies of cakes, Christmas decorations and gifts last month. It is hard to imagine that a small village could actually manage to support three Christmas fairs in as many weeks, but that is what happened. Business was good with the church reporting record breaking takings. Every afternoon proved to be a welcome and friendly pre Christmas occasion. Business was good and enjoyable afternoons were had all round. Hard work for the organisers, but very worthwhile.

The school took over £2000 and counting at its Christmas fair, another record breaking total. congratulations to the the PTA

# Festive songs

## As seen by Health and Safety

### The Rocking Song

***Little Jesus, sweetly sleep, do not stir;  
We will lend a coat of fur,  
We will rock you, rock you, rock you,  
We will rock you, rock you, rock you:***

Fur is no longer appropriate wear for small infants, both due to risk of allergy to animal fur, and for ethical reasons. Therefore faux fur, a nice cellular blanket or perhaps microfleece material should be considered a suitable alternative.

Please note, only persons who have been subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check and have enhanced clearance will be permitted to rock baby Jesus. Persons must carry their CRB disclosure with them at all times and be prepared to provide three forms of identification before rocking commences.

### Jingle Bells

***Dashing through the snow  
In a one horse open sleigh  
O'er the fields we go  
Laughing all the way***

A risk assessment must be submitted before an open sleigh is considered safe for members of the public to travel on. The risk assessment must also consider whether it is appropriate to use only one horse for such a venture, particularly if passengers are of larger proportions. Please note, permission must be gained from landowners before entering their fields. To avoid offending those not participating in celebrations, we would request that laughter is moderate only and not loud enough to be considered a noise nuisance.

### While Shepherds Watched

***While shepherds watched  
Their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground  
The angel of the Lord came down  
And glory shone around***

The union of Shepherds has complained that it breaches health and safety regulations to insist that shepherds watch their flocks without appropriate seating arrangements being provided, therefore benches, stools and orthopaedic chairs are now available. Shepherds have also requested that due to the inclement weather conditions at this time of year that they should watch their flocks via CCTV cameras from centrally heated shepherd observation huts. Please note, the angel of the Lord is reminded that before shining his / her glory all around she / he must ascertain that all shepherds have been issued with glasses capable of filtering out the harmful effects of UVA, UVB and Glory.

### Little Donkey

***Little donkey, little donkey on the dusty road  
Got to keep on plodding onwards with your precious load***

The RSPCA have issued strict guidelines with regard to how heavy a load that a donkey of small stature is permitted to carry, also included in the guidelines is guidance regarding how often to feed the donkey and how many rest breaks are required over a four hour plodding period. Please note that due to the increased risk of pollution from the dusty road, Mary and Joseph are required to wear face masks to prevent inhalation of any airborne particles. The donkey has expressed his discomfort at being labelled 'little' and would prefer just to be simply referred to as Mr. Donkey. To comment upon his height or lack thereof may be considered an infringement of his equine rights.

### We Three Kings

***We three kings of Orient are  
Bearing gifts we traverse afar  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain  
Following yonder star***

Whilst the gift of gold is still considered acceptable - as it may be redeemed at a later date through such organisations as 'cash for gold' etc, gifts of frankincense and myrrh are not appropriate due to the potential risk of oils and fragrances causing allergic reactions. A suggested gift alternative would be to make a donation to a worthy cause in the recipient's name or perhaps give a gift voucher. We would not advise that the traversing kings rely on navigation by stars in order to reach their destinations and suggest the use of RAC routefinder or satellite navigation, which will provide the quickest route and advice regarding fuel consumption. Please note as per the guidelines from the RSPCA for Mr Donkey, the camels carrying the three kings of Orient will require regular food and rest breaks. Facemasks for the three kings are also advisable due to the likelihood of dust from the camels hooves.

### Rudolph the red nosed reindeer

***Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer  
had a very shiny nose.  
And if you ever saw him,  
you would even say it glows.***

You are advised that under the Equal Opportunities for All policy, it is inappropriate for persons to make comment with regard to the ruddiness of any part of Mr. R. Reindeer. Further to this, exclusion of Mr R Reindeer from the Reindeer Games will be considered discriminatory and disciplinary action will be taken against those found guilty of this offence. A full investigation will be implemented and sanctions - including suspension on full pay - will be considered whilst this investigation takes place.



# School News

## Sport continues despite the weather

The dark evenings may mean that football is over until the spring, but other sports continue. One of the talents the children are discovering is their ability in Cross Country running. Inter school events have been held at which the Birchanger teams have found a place in the top three, with other individuals receiving invitations to participate at events further afield.

At an assembly last month children from the three older classes displayed their ballet skills at the Friday assembly in preparation for the coming exams, and produced a very impressive display, complete with costumes.

Ballet Classes continue throughout the term at the Church Hall on Tuesday evenings, with tap and modern dance taking place on Wednesday evenings. The classes are open to everyone and there is a good uptake.

## Operation Christmas Child

There was a bright display of attractively wrapped shoe boxes ready for collection to start their journey to some of the most deprived children in the world from Stansted Airport last month. A total of about 25 boxes were collected and they made an attractive feature in the newly decorated and much lighter entrance hall. The children had also made and painted a series of poppies to mark Remembrance Day and the pictures by Class 3 were extraordinarily good.

## Children create their own special Armistice day

Class 4 have been studying World War 2 this term and Armistice Day proved to be a special focus for their work. They had already created and drawn pictures of poppies which adorned the walls of both their own classroom and the entrance hall. Next they created their own special Armistice Commemoration November 11<sup>th</sup> with a special school assembly, first at the war memorial at 11 am where they kept the silence and where their own special thoughts were expressed and prayers were offered. This was followed by a special service in the church itself.

In the afternoon churchwarden Peter Odrich visited Class 4. He told them how he grew up as a child in war time Germany, together with a very moving account of what it was like when, at age 7, he and his family were taken prisoner by the Russians and he was kept apart from his family alone in a large hall for 6 weeks.

It proved to be a day that Class 4 will never forget, and that children of Birchanger do think about and consider the great wars in very great depth.

Want to raise money? Wear your clothes back to front and inside out

Many years ago coming to school looking like the ultimate scruff bag would have resulted in a stiff letter to parents and a detention at least. This was not the case when Children in Need came around children and staff all carefully put their clothes on inside out in order to raise money for the appeal. During the course of the day they all made cakes under the watchful eye of Mrs Boniface and a staggering total of £150 was raised for Children in Need, not mention the fun that was had when the cakes were eaten.

## A last day tinged with sadness

As the children prepare to go on their annual Christmas treat, the Pantomime at Cambridge on the last day of term, there will be feelings of sadness as they say their final farewells to two staff members who are retiring after many years at Birchanger School.

Mrs Elam who has taken Class 2 for many years is to retire at Christmas after a period of ill health. We would like to thank her for everything she has given to the school, particularly her care for all the children in her charge, to wish her all the very best in the future and to assure her she will be much missed.

For Head Teacher Mrs Howell it is also her last day at the school. She has been with the school for more years than she cares to remember and has taken the school through a period of stability since she became Head Teacher following Mrs Cowan's move to a very large school in Newham.

The school has grown in every way under her leadership. As well as an increase in numbers there has been a large increase in the number of support personnel to ensure that every child has the best possible start which the school can give them. Strong community links have been forged and good relationships established with all our neighbouring schools. The children are renowned for their courtesy to visitors, as well as their good manners in school and on all school trips. She initiated the sharing assemblies which welcomed the parents into the school at the end of most weeks, to witness their children's achievements. Under her guidance the school became a happier place despite the onslaught of ever changing government initiatives, targets and new policies. School hours have become longer with after school clubs and on line work which must be completed to strict schedules.

We would like to wish Mrs Elam and Mrs Howell happy retirements, warn them just how busy so called retirement can be and hope they will find the time to come and see us, often.

# Christmas at the Club

Here are some details of the entertainment scheduled for this Christmas at the Club along with the Christmas menu

Christmas Eve  
At 8.00 pm  
Julie Nevada

Boxing Day  
At 12.30 pm  
Whisky Draw

New Year's Eve  
At 8.00 pm  
Stonecold

## CHRISTMAS MENU

### STARTERS

**HOMEMADE CREAM OF ASPARAGUS SOUP**  
Served with a crusty roll and butter

**HOMEMADE PATE**  
Served with a seasonal salad and French toast

**HOMEMADE APPLE, PRAWN AND CELERY SALAD**

### MAIN COURSE

**TRADITIONAL ROAST TURKEY**  
Served with roast potatoes, peas, carrots, Brussels sprouts, Yorkshire pudding, stuffing and gravy

**TRADITIONAL ROAST BEEF**  
Served with roast potatoes, peas, carrots, Brussels sprouts, Yorkshire pudding and gravy

### DESSERTS

**HOMEMADE STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE**

**HOMEMADE CARROT CAKE**

**CHRISTMAS PUDDING**  
Served with cream

**CHEESE AND BISCUITS**  
Cheddar & Stilton

£14.95 per head.

Please ask for a menu at the bar.  
Bookings and pre order only  
Please return menu with your name, date of dinner and choice of meal  
From THE 25<sup>th</sup> November till 23<sup>rd</sup> December, Wed, Thurs & Friday lunchtimes only. Other times by arrangement.



## News from St Mary's

By now every home in the parish should have all received a leaflet from Paul and the PCC wishing you a Merry Christmas and Peaceful New Year. The leaflet also contained some brief information about our lovely church with details of services over the Christmas period. For those new to the village, we included guidance on how to find St Mary's and we look forward to seeing some new faces over the next few weeks.

Over the last year there has been much activity in the church and churchyard. Thanks to the Friends, the lighting has been up graded and new guttering is now in place. Come the New Year we hope to progress our plans to improve the drainage around the church but for the moment, we are very pleased with what has been done.

Many people have helped through the year with fundraising and we thank everyone for their ongoing support. The Bazaar raised an unprecedented £700 !!!! and Joy's Christmas Coffee morning at Moorswood produced a further £180. Fantastic!!!!

God bless you and your families this Christmas.

## Christmas Refuse Collection Arrangements.

Wednesday December 23<sup>rd</sup>. Black Bin Only.

Wednesday Dec 30<sup>th</sup> Green and Brown Bins.

Normal collections will be resumed on January 4<sup>th</sup>

### *What's Going On at the Hall?*

There's plenty going on in the Church Hall in Birchanger Lane... Whether you want to keep yourself active and fit, or just want to make new friends, why not check out some of the things on offer in our village?

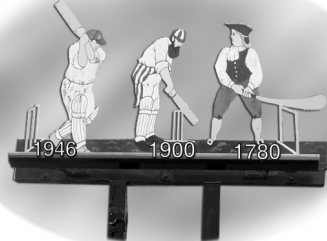
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		Morning <b>Tap Classes</b>		Morning <b>Pilates</b>
	Afternoon <b>Ballet</b>	Afternoon <b>Ballet, Tap &amp; Modern</b>	Afternoon <b>Line Dancing</b>	
Evening <b>Ballroom</b>		Evening <b>Line Dancing</b>	Evening <b>Brownies</b>	Evening <b>Karate</b>

The Hall is also available for private hire at weekends for Parties, Christenings, Quizzes, Bazaars, etc.

*If you would like to find out more, please contact Janet Gage on 01279 813507.*

THE THREE WILLOWS

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## Village Diary November/December 2009

### December

20th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Family Christingle Service

24th 8.00 pm At the Club  
Julie Nevada

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

26th 12.30 pm At the Club  
Whisky Draw

27th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

31st 8.00 pm At the Club  
Stonecold

### January

3rd 11.00 am St Mary's  
Matins

10th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

17th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Family Service

24th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

31st 11.00 am St Mary's  
Matins

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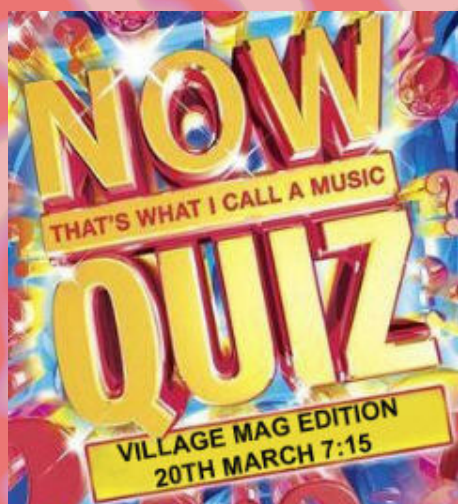
### Birchanger Social Club

Requires a Cleaner

For details contact  
The Steward

01279 812810

TICKETS  
£10  
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JAYNE  
814723



TEAMS OF  
EIGHT.  
ENTRY  
INCLUDES  
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