

BURNS NIGHT BONANZA

Birchanger village has a reputation for its ability to throw a really good party on occasions and last month's celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns most famous Scottish Bard proved to be no exception.

The tickets were the hottest tickets in town, having sold out as soon as they were on offer with a paid up waiting list. For the fortunate 100 the evening did not disappoint, as the true Scottish traditions were upheld when the haggis was piped in and the traditional toasts were made by both the Scottish and Sassenachs from in and around the village.

It was then time for every table to make their own contribution to the fun, and they did so by way of favourite poems, recitations and songs written and sung especially for the occasion.



The address to the Haggis



Members of the editorial team

The event was planned as part of a long running programme to fund the case against runway 2 by SSE. In any event nobody allowed the planes or the threat of airport expansion to dominate or to mar the evening.

Rumour has it that the event may return on the actual Burns Night of January 25th next year, but you will need to watch this magazine for details later in the year and book very early to avoid disappointment.

AND THEN CAME THE SNOW

As Winters go 2008 to 2009 has proven to be one of the colder ones in recent years. With Sub or near zero temperatures continuing since early December. We have become used to the mild conditions that have become prevalent since the 1960s.

Snowfall always catches us unawares as locally it has become an unusual if not unexpected event. The snow that fell on the night of February 1st did not stop falling until around 7 am the next day and still only reached about 150mm or 6 inches at its worst locally. The deepest for 18 years!

Falling as it did on a Sunday night ensured that the response to the fall would be at the least effective level. So it was no surprise that transport difficulties were the order of the day for most of Monday 2nd. Happily by the following day things had by and large returned to normal.

The most predictable response was the complaints and recriminations about the gritting and snow clearing that were quickly trotted out in the media on Monday before most people had even left their beds. (What was unpredicted was the fact that snow fell and laid locally on and off for the next week but that's another story.)

Now if we lived in say Canada or Norway or some Alpine ski resort I can see that we would need to be better prepared. How much grit do we really need to stockpile against an event that happens at the very worst once in a year? How many snow ploughs should stand idle for two or three years to ensure the schools can stay open? And how much council tax are we prepared to pay to ensure that it couldn't possibly happen again?



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Another stab at Generation 2 programme planning

Having hopefully learned something from his first shot at inquiry programming for the Generation 2 Public Inquiry, the Inspector made his second attempt last month. The SSE supporters were out in their usual good form for the press, and for the heavy police presence who managed to take pictures of everyone who attended the inquiry as well.

The lion's share of the proceedings went as expected to BAA, with pertinent comments and interjections by Brian Ross in his new well researched but strictly unqualified legal representative role for SSE. There were representatives from most of the usual suspects including the National Trust and the CAA. Two of the parties present, Legal and General and Stansted Airlines Consultative Committee announced that they would be bringing alternative proposals involving less land take to the inquiry.

There was a move by SSE and SACC to move the start date of the inquiry back to September. There are too many reports and decisions expected in the next few weeks which will make it difficult for the parties to produce their case. The final decision from the Monopolies Commission, proposals for M11 and Network Rail improvement are all awaited. BAA maintained that a change in ownership would not affect the inquiry, but this view did not find wholehearted support from all the parties. Nevertheless, as in most things, the Inspector must appear to rule.

In the event that the inquiry were to be aborted after the commencement would place a heavy burden on the smaller players such as SSE and the local councils, as would the proposed concurrent hearings for some topics. It is hoped that despite the Inspector's pressure for the concurrent style, there was no support for it around the table and it will be dead in the water.

It is proposed that the inquiry will be topic led and calculations on the length of time it will take ranged from the inspector's initial estimate of 6 months to the time calculated to different lengths by the participants around the table, of a year to 18 months. This did not please the inspector who will have to give this news to the Secretary of State who sets the finish date for the inquiry. It is unthinkable that the inquiry should ever conclude without all the representations being heard.

Everyone who wishes to participate in the inquiry has until March 10th to register and to submit their statement of case.

Open Gardens might be able to help your village group

Last September's Art Exhibition which was run by the Open Gardens Team proved to be very successful. After the bills were paid there was just under £1000 left. Most of this is available for those who run projects in the village with a view to providing the extra something which is needed but the funds are not available. An amount will be left in the account to provide the starter fund for the next project. If you have a project in mind and need that extra cash, please call Sheila Devereaux on 813843, or myself on 812793.

There are no plans to stage the art exhibition next year, but there will definitely be one in years to come. Open Gardens may have ultimately lost its appeal because the gardens became too familiar. The same thing could happen with the art exhibition as well. If anyone does have any other fund raising ideas the group would be happy to consider them.

They've done it again

Despite protests from the Parish Council when the first tranche of names for the roads at Rochfords were chosen by Stansted Parish Council without reference to Birchanger, it seems that Stansted has done it again! Six more roads were to be named but Birchanger Parish Council had not even seen the list again this time.

The Building Surveying Department has had their ears well and truly burned over this one. They are supposed to be sending the list to the Parish Council but whether their choice will be accepted at this late stage is uncertain.

It is very hard to choose a name fairly from those who worked at Rochfords Nurseries without any real knowledge of the people, how long they worked at the site and just who did what job. Any information would be appreciated. Meanwhile some of the favourites include those whose names are also on the war memorial. The final choice is made by the district council from the selection submitted.

Where did the gates go?

Essex County Council usually install good quality gates to the entrances to their bridle paths in order to allow farm vehicles to pass and for easy access for pedestrians. This was certainly the case at the entrance to Digby Wood until

a Saturday in December when these gates, which are heavy, completely vanished. Nobody has seen them or the gnomes which also vanished from a nearby garden.

The result is unfortunate. It does not take long for fly tipping to start in Digby Wood and this has already become a problem. It could be a bigger problem than you think, as if this continues the land owner will simply block up the wood. He has a right to do this as it is a private wood. People are allowed to use it as long as it is not abused, and right now that is exactly what is happening.

Footpath maps

There is a great deal of confusion for many as to just what is a footpath or a bridleway and what is not. The definitive map is a massive scroll and will not fit into the new Bus shelter. The older one, which does not show junction 8a has been placed in the bus shelter.

A new proposal for the Stansted surgery site

You may be forgiven for wondering how often you have seen this headline before. As the site was never going to be in Birchanger Village. The location was probably academic because residents here were always going to need transport of some sort to access the surgery from Birchanger.

It does seem that the militant minority in Stansted may have got their way, as the latest proposal is for a site on London Road. Hopefully it will have plenty of parking and the poor doctors and their team will not have to continue to endure their impossible conditions for too much longer. It will also mean that the Rochfords site could be used for more housing.

Community travel for everyone who needs it

Living in a village with bus links which do not necessarily go to where you want to be is one of the downsides of a more open environment. Many people feel somewhat cut off when they are alone all day without means of transport and do not want to bother friends and neighbours.

Well there is a service which is very happy to be bothered, whether it is for the odd visit to the doctor, a shopping trip, a hospital appointment, whatever the need, Uttlesford Community Transport is happy to step in.

The community transport team run a varied fleet ranging from specially equipped buses for the disabled down to individual car drivers. There are also mini buses for groups and they are happy to arrange regular pickups for a club to transport members to meetings or functions. The transport provided is for the community and it welcomes new customers. Why not give the service a try? Please call 01371 875787 for further information. Monday to Friday 9am to 1am.

Another NHS shake up

Just as we thought the West Essex Primary Care Trust was getting established, comes news of yet another Government re think. This will mean that the Trust will have to split in two as it can longer be a commissioner and a provider of services. Just what this will mean to you and me I hate to think.

Meanwhile GPs are going to have to rethink their hours to make them more user friendly for their working patients. This will mean earlier or later surgery opening hours with the possibility of Saturday openings. Patients will all be seen within 48 hours with the opportunity to make follow up appointments up to two weeks ahead.

Road casualties are still high in Uttlesford

Despite a small decrease in the figures serious road casualties and fatalities remain far too high in Uttlesford. Police are launching a "Don't Drive Tired" campaign along with an initiative to focus on speeding, drink driving, use of a mobile phone while driving as well as the failure to wear a seat belt. They are going to step up their work in schools and they have found the Cycling Proficiency Training in Schools like Birchanger to be effective with over 500 10 year olds passing the test in Essex last year.

They have also found that speed calming measures are largely ineffective and in some cases cause more harm than good. The speed limit may be varied upwards or downwards in some places, with an increasing number of 20mph zones in built up towns and villages. Community speed watch schemes do work well in the locations where they are used. Perhaps we should start looking for volunteers for a scheme in Birchanger?

Big focus on community crime

Essex Police have resolved to clamp down on crime in the community this year. Essex was the first police force to sign up to a Police Pledge which sets out in detail the standards they can be expected to adhere to in their work. There will be more Beat Surgeries witnessed by the presence of the police van in the Church Hall car park on Friday mornings, and you can expect a knock on the door at any time from an officer who is simply there to discuss any issues you might have.

The police need more community intelligence, particularly as they need to step up their work around terrorism. It is often a seemingly very ordinary event which can prove to be of great value to them. The police have had some very good results from information from the public about drugs. They need to discover more about the new communities that are forming everywhere, particularly those that involve immigrants. They need to know about any situation which might pose a potential risk. In short they are looking for a new partnership with the public in an effort to stop crime and to create a safer living environment for everyone.

Birchanger Boogie Bedazzles

On Thursday 29th January, children from years 5 & 6 took part in a dance and gymnastics extravaganza at Saffron Walden High School.

Music

The event brought together children from 15 Uttlesford primary schools, performing self choreographed pieces of dance and gymnastics set to music, in front of a large audience of pupils, parents and teachers.

Thriller

Birchanger's piece was a faithful re-enactment of Michael Jackson's 1983 smash hit "Thriller", Choreographed by teachers Miss Williams and Miss Chinnock, wardrobe by the parents and with hair and make up by mums Tina Crossley and Jackie Roberts.

Outstanding

Although this was not a competition, the overall standard of the displays was very high and as usual the boys and girls of Birchanger did us proud while having a thoroughly good time to boot!



Cold Weather Tips

Never allow fuel to fall below half a tank full, should you get stuck, you can keep warm, for a longer period with the engine running

If you are stuck in traffic, turn off:- Head lights, CD or Cassette, heated rear screen and Windscreen wipers They all run the battery down, in no time.

If necessary:- Use side lights, Radio, Heater blower, these are less draining on the battery,

In an Emergency to regain traction to the driving wheels:

Let the driving wheel tyre pressure down to 10 p.s.i. (normally 30 p.s.i.)

A rough guide is you will have about 1" of tyre wall at the bottom of the tyre.

Use a biro or a pointed object to let the air out of the tyre valve.

Do not drive above 30 mph, until the tyres have been re-inflated, as running the tyres nearly flat will damage the tyre walls. Plus the handling of the vehicle will be seriously impaired,

Wrap up a bottle of Lemonade and a large packet of sweet biscuits in a blanket or duvet; together with scarf, gloves and a good book etc. Keep in plastic bag, in the boot of your car. Do this now. Don't wait to get caught out.

Conserve the battery on your mobile phone.

Stay on main roads, avoid side road where possible in extreme weather. Do not leave your vehi-

School News

Chinese New Year fun

Birchanger School is always very good at welcoming in the Chinese New Year and this year was no exception. A full Chinese meal was served which included Sweet and Sour Pork, Prawn Crackers, Noodles, Lychees and Fortune cookies. The theme of the day was definitely dragons, with Class 4 producing a giant dragon with smaller versions flourishing throughout the school.

Class 1 experimented with Jasmine Tea and Noodles, Class 2 wrote a Happy New Year Message in impeccable Chinese characters and learnt the story of the Willow Pattern Plate. Class Three learnt about the animals which characterise the Chinese New Year and researched their own animals. Every class did their own research about China and the Chinese people. The school was brightly decorated with Chinese lanterns and despite the appalling weather, indoors it was a good day.

Building work starts

At last the builders have moved on site at the school to start work on the extension to the staff-room which will include a new resources centre, a toilet which can be used by the disabled, as well as space for office equipment. Disruption will be kept to the minimum but as everyone knows all building projects tend to bring their own brand of problems. The work is expected to be completed in June.

Children learn about fire, from the experts

It is well known that the prompt actions of young children have saved lives in several fires, and it seems that knowledge about fire is best taught from an early age.

Last month children in Years 3 and 4 learned all about fire, what to do, and what definitely to avoid from the men who knew, the firemen themselves. This is a vital part of their education and the session was instructive, impressive and enjoyable. The school appreciates this link with the community and indeed welcomes everyone who

might have a skill or an interest to share with the children.

It is good to be green

Every year the school has a Friendship and Anti-Bullying Week which re-affirms the school's strong policy of welcome and friendship for everyone. It is also a time to reaffirm the standards of good behaviour which are expected from everyone in the school.

This year the school revisited the traffic light scheme for good behaviour. This time the emphasis was on green, with the chance to redeem bad behaviour with good, and the reinstatement of the lost green light. Those who remain in the green without any slips into the yellow or red zones will be rewarded in a weekly draw for a prize, with prizes for individuals remaining in the green to be awarded both at each half term and at the end of term.

Bird Watch

The nest box was prepared, the children were ready and the school again welcomed the RSPB representative to guide them through Bird Watch again this year.

Last year a large family of blue tits was raised in the nest box and hatched in April, their every move eagerly watched by Class 4 who had a camera in the nest box linked to the computer screen. It is early yet but the interest is there.

Snowfall causes closure

Birchanger School was closed for two days due to the adverse weather conditions, and the probability that both staff and parents would experience hazardous conditions attempting to access the school. This type of decision is never made lightly but was supported as it was in the best interests of everyone at the school. The children enjoyed a very special two days play, in many cases discovering the fun that fresh white deep snow brings. Lets hope they enjoyed it!

This Month's Recipe

Winter warming Beef Stew and Dumplings

PREPARATION TIME 20 MINUTES
COOKING TIME 2 ½ HOURS Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

1 kg/ 2lb 4oz stewing beef cut into 2.5 cm / 1 inch cubes
flour for dusting
3 onions, sliced
3 tbsp sunflower oil
4 carrots, sliced
2 celery sticks, chopped
1 bay leaf
2 fresh thyme sprigs
425ml or 1/2 pint beef stock
¾ pint stout
1 tbsp light muscovado sugar
1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
salt and pepper

FOR THE DUMPLINGS

100g/ 4oz self raising flour
50g/2oz bread crumbs
50g/ 2oz shredded suet
2 tbsp mustard seeds
2 tbsp chopped fresh herbs, such as thyme and parsley

METHOD

1 Toss the beef in the flour. Fry the onions in the oil for 10 minutes. Add the beef until evenly browned. Add the carrots, celery, herbs, stock and stout. Bring to the boil, stirring.

2 Add the sugar, Worcestershire sauce; season. Cover, simmer for 2 hours.

3 Make the dumplings: mix the flour, bread crumbs, suet, mustard seeds and herbs. Add 5 to 6 tablespoons of water and mix into a soft dough. Divide into eight, shape into balls and add to the beef. Cover and cook for 20 minutes. Serve with mash.

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 655479

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

News from St Mary's

It is over a year since we began the process of up-dating the lighting in the church and, in November, I indicated that the new lights would be installed the following month. Well, there was a delay and we struggled through December.

I am very pleased to be able to say that the spot lights have now been installed - they brighten up the main aisle beautifully.

St. Mary's annual General Meeting will take place on the 9th March 2009. If you want to join the electoral role or become a Parochial Church council member, you need to complete an application form and return this to the PCC Secretary before the 9th March. Application forms can be obtained at any Sunday service in church.

The next Coffee Morning at Moorswood is on the 3rd March 2009 at 10.30am.

Pam Lee

Could you save a stroke victim?

You could, if you read this. A neurologist has said that it is possible that the effects of a stroke can be totally reversed if the patient received medical attention within three hours.

This is not easy, as first of all you have to recognise that the victim has actually had a stroke. There are 3 simple steps "STR" which a bystander can use to recognise a stroke.

S. Ask the victim to smile.

T. Ask the victim to talk and see if they can speak a simple coherent sentence.

R. Ask them to raise both arms.

If the person has difficulty with any one of these tasks, call 999 immediately and describe the symptoms. Another test is to ask the victim to put out their tongue. If they cannot do this or it lolls to one side or another, this is another symptom of stroke.

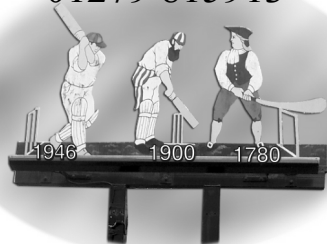
Keep this information safe. You never know when you might need it.

LOST MOBILE PHONE

A Mobile phone was lost on Monday 2nd while there was snow on the ground probably in the vicinity of the allotments. The phone is precious to its owner as it has lots of photos on it. If anybody finds one could they please contact Sue on 816134.

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Village Diary

February/March
2009

February

22nd St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

March

1st St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

3rd Moorswood 10.30am
Coffee Morning

8th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

15th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

22nd St Mary's 11.00 am
Mothering Sunday

29th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

29th Church Hall 12.30 pm
Spring Lunch

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BIRCHANGER CUB AND SCOUT TROUP PRESENTS

SPRING BINGO

IN

BIRCHANGER CHURCH HALL

ON

SUNDAY, 22nd March, 2009

Doors open 4.15 p.m. eyes down at 4.45p.m.

Tickets available from Sally (812994) or Elaine (815887)

Under 14s £3.00; OAPs £5.00; Adults £6.00

Includes Ploughmans supper, Bring your own drink

New Pilates class

There is a new Pilates Class in Birchanger which is run in the Church Hall at 9.25 every Friday morning. If Pilates is a new concept for you, there is certainly nothing daunting about this class. In fact Lorna takes you through all the movements with full explanations with at every stage. Most of the attendees felt the difference after Class 1, and they certainly knew about all the faults in their own posture.

Pilates will help to strengthen your back and to will firm your back and stomach muscles. Something we probably all need after Christmas, whatever our age or weight. It is peaceful and somehow calming. Interested? Contact Lorna on 304578

St Mary's Birchanger

SPRING LUNCH

SUNDAY 29TH MARCH

IN THE CHURCH HALL

12.30 PM

TICKETS £10

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.