

DEMOLITION OF CHURTON BEGINS

Demolition work began late in September at Churton, 300 Birchanger Lane. The Victorian property has been under threat since an application to redevelop the site was made by previous occupant John Gibb.

The original planning application for a replacement property plus six others was granted in controversial circumstances in 2006. Over forty letters opposing the scheme became “misplaced” and were not considered by the Planning Officer and all of our Parish Councillors and District Councillor were initially prevented from speaking at the hearing.

In the meantime Mr Gibb’s health has declined and the property sold on to the development company. This is rather ironic as Mr Gibb’s service on our parish council was characterised by his opposition to similar developments in the village.

Previous occupants of the Property include in 1901 Mr Walter Pinder a Bank manager from Norfolk and in 1906 Mr Charles Humphreys a Stock Jobber and their families.



The rear of the house

NEW HEAD TEACHER APPOINTED

Birchanger School will have a new head teacher from January 1st. The in-house selection process at the school saw the candidates spending the day meeting staff, children and all the governors and were kept busy doing presentations and assemblies as well as answering children's questions. At the end of the day the governors were delighted to be able to appoint Mrs Shirley Warbrick as the new head teacher and she was happy to accept.

In the next few months the headteacher, staff and children will be seeing more of Mrs Warbrick when she visits the school before she takes up her appointment. It is also a time tinged with sadness as the school prepares to say farewell to Mrs Howell having been at the school for approaching twenty years.



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Amenity land bid is out, for now

Last spring a group of residents in Stansted and Birchanger along with the Parish Councils put in a bid for a combined purchase of the 22 acre site which had become available again last month. Their bid was pipped at the post, only managing to come third in the running, but the prospective purchasers suddenly decided to market the land again last month.

The consortium hastily consulted about the feasibility of making an offer again, but the terms of the sale and the lack of clarity meant that the local authorities could not participate and the prospect might have been not only a great deal more expensive but a great deal less secure for the rest of the consortium. Who knows, the property may yet come on to the market again on more favourable terms.

Loss of a landmark

The very emotive subject of Churton on Birchanger Lane came to the fore again when the demolition work started last month. It was bad enough when a large part of the hedge and landscaping was demolished, but the loss of the house was particularly hard. So much of the furniture had not been removed and for many the memories came flooding back as walls were torn down and the room contents, many as the owners had left them were exposed. Whatever you may think about the development it is happening and eventually new residents will be in the homes. The bend will be opened up with better visibility and what was there is gone forever.

Uttlesford is growing

According to the national statistics office, Uttlesford grew by some 1200 people in 2007/8. The total now living in the area has swelled to 73, 700 odd residents.

The increase can be explained by the fact that the new airport related housing sites were starting to be occupied, along with the influx of a number of migrants to work at the airport. It is anticipated that

the population figures will continue to rise in the foreseeable future as the new estates come into occupation.

What will happen in the next few years is anyone's guess. The government continue to push houses on to the district, but apart from necessary affordable homes, these houses are not welcomed by the population at large. People are already being housed in the district from Harlow and London, not always to their liking.

Now there are outrageous plans for a massive increase in housing along the A 120. Whatever gave them the powers that be the idea that this would be a good place to dump the extra houses? The airport could not possibly accommodate their employment needs, and other employment would need to be provided which would lead to a huge urban sprawl. And Uttlesford is one of the best places to live in England. At this rate, not for long.

Decision time looms for the new Stansted Surgery

Crucial Decisions are due to be made on the site of the new Stansted surgery. The preferred option is the London Road site, although parking will be a huge difficulty for the many who live too far from the surgery to access it on foot.

Highways have raised some objections on access and parking grounds so plans have been amended and it is hoped that they will approve the latest batch. The District Council has also been consulted and their suggestions are incorporated in the latest version of the plans. It is hoped to bring these formally to the council in the New Year.

Swine flu inoculations ready soon

It is hoped that the swine flu jabs will be ready to be given with the routine flu inoculations by the end of October. These jabs will only be available to those with long term health conditions, expectant mothers,

very young infants and the over 65s. There is as yet no reliable information as to any possible side effects for these inoculations.

Swine flu cases in the West Essex PCT area have dwindled from the 200 per day who were given Tamiflu to just 12 in September. However this number is expected to rise dramatically during the winter months, and the staff who have been temporarily stood down will be recalled.

At the moment the collection point for Tamiflu is inconveniently situated for us at Epping, but it is hoped to arrange collection points at Dunmow and Saffron Walden when the virus returns. At present there are no plans for a collection point in Stansted.

Once again sufferers will need support of family, friends, and neighbours should they be unfortunate enough to have the virus. Please contact me if you are experiencing any difficulty.

An Invitation to take part in a village event

The Open Gardens Group first met in 1994 and has been meeting regularly since then. Gardens may not have been open in the past few years but the group has stayed together and was entirely responsible for the very successful Art Exhibition last year.

The success of the exhibition has prompted requests for the event to be repeated. However this and any other fund raising project for the village does not happen without a great deal of hard work by a great many people, including actually opening their gardens again, should this be the preferred decision.

It is possible that with the right level of support we may be able to stage another exhibition or another event in 2010, but that is largely up to you. Whatever it is, the project will need ideas and input from a large number of individuals from the beginning of the year.

If you are interested in participating in any event next year, or have ideas for a suitable project you are invited to a Bring Supper at Moorswood on Saturday January 16th at 7.30 pm. Everyone from all friends who have regularly participated in the Open Gardens Group to the newest arrival in the village is very welcome to attend if they would like to become involved.

If you can come, please call Sheila Devereux who is the Open Gardens Secretary on 813843 or myself on 812793 for further information. You will be very welcome.

Pavement parkers still causing problems

They are at it again, those few thoughtless individuals. They park all over the pavements, making it impossible for people to pass with a buggy and driving pedestrians out into the traffic.

They are actually committing an offence, endorsable with three points and a fine. The problem is we complain to the wrong people. We need to complain to the police immediately. If we contact the police on their mobile number 07801 461 666, they will do their best to attend and deal with the problem, but they do need to deal with it at the time and actually see the offending vehicle.

Buffy Bus is back, for now

I am afraid the Buffy Bus service is likely to withdraw from the village unless there is a better uptake of the service. The bus gives play socialising opportunities to mothers of all children under school age at its weekly sessions in the village. The timetable for the visits is on the notice boards and the usual visit is on a Wednesday afternoon at the entrance to Harrisons.

It would be sad if the service was to disappear from the village altogether, but there are a lot of villages out there who would appreciate the fun the bus brings, and there is no point then in leaving it here with insufficient use. There is time to remedy this. If you have a baby or a toddler at home, pop in and see all the bus has to offer. You will be surprised and also very welcome.

Burns Night Saturday January 23rd.

Just as you are in danger of sinking into the gloom which seems to characterise January, comes Burns Night which has given a welcome uplift to those who are lucky enough to obtain a ticket. The good news is that the tickets are on sale again now, but space is limited and you must act now. There were 30 people on the waiting list for last year alone. Tickets are available from the SSE office, telephone number 870558, and cheques must be made payable to SSE. Unfortunately due to the pressure on numbers, tickets cannot be reserved unless they have been paid for first. The price is £25 per head which will include a full four course dinner, a bottle of both red and white wine per 8 people as well the provision of whiskey to accompany the haggis. There will be the usual Burns Night entertainment and much more. An evening not to be missed, but you must act fast.

Guiding in Iceland

Iceland has been described as the Land of Nature's Greatest Mysteries and my guiding of Visually impaired People took me there.

Most visitors go to see the magnificent glaciers, waterfalls and volcanoes. I looked at the reviews from previous trips and little was said about it except that it was an experience.

I met a young lad named Alex at Stansted Airport and was his guide to a check in desk at Heathrow, then I was paired up with Julie, who was partially sighted and partially deaf, we were room partners for the week.

The first day was spent travelling and transferring from Keflavik airport to our hotel in Reykjavik. It was basic and a little way out of town which meant travelling by bus or taxi

Day 2 began with a half day tour of Reykjavik where around half of Iceland's population live. I was fascinated by the different styles of houses.

The Hallgrímskirkja is Iceland's largest church. It has a magnificent wing shaped tower but it was unfortunately covered in scaffolding when I visited it later in the week.

We visited the Pearl a domed shaped observatory with wonderful views over the whole city, a photographic exhibition by local photographers and the saga museum depicting Icelandic sagas, and also the local sculpture gardens.

A local guide told us about some of the sculptures which was very helpful as the Iceland tourist board has yet to put any information in English or any other language other than Icelandic.

The water in Iceland contains sulphur and smells like rotten eggs, but we soon got used to it. The benefits are that it leaves your skin feeling wonderfully soft and your hair fine and silky.

On day three there was an excursion out trekking for three hours, I had opted to stay in Reykjavik. Three visually impaired people also opted not to trek so I looked after all three. Belle, Martin and Richard all wanted to go to the zoo. I was told by the hotel receptionist not to expect too much as it was a domestic zoo, with seals, pigs, horses, reindeer, and arctic foxes, a strange selection.

Belle is a young lady born blind but was a radio presenter from Wales and had brought her tape recorder to record the noises of the animals. She also interviewed both Richard and Martin for their views on holidays as VIP's and me for my view as a guide.

They all seemed to enjoy the zoo, the botanical gardens and lunch. Later I took Belle onto a ship moored at the harbour that is set up as a whale museum. I asked the staff to let Belle hold a small stuffed puffin, a gannet and whale's teeth and bones. Then we sat listening to the noises that whales make on a short video.

Day 4 we boarded a coach to travel to the Blue lagoon. We called at the local stables to see the Icelandic horses and then travelled through the lava formed terrain to the hot spring area. We bathed in, the blue lagoon waters filled with the aroma of sulphur. Outside the temperature was around 7 - 10 degrees but in the water it was like a hot bath. We had to take showers to wash the

sulphur off our skin as it dries to a white powder

Days 5 and 6 saw us visiting beautiful waterfalls with colourful rainbows, a nature reserve the Thingvellir national park and the golden circle tour. We walked down a ravine to the site of the first parliament assembly and stood at a pivotal point where the Earth's tectonic plates are in the process of separating. The hot Geysers erupted skywards and hot volcanic mud pools lay all around us. One such geyser caught us unaware and Rita my blind companion and I ran when it erupted. Rita is seventy years old but laughed and skipped along like a teenager. We touched the plants and lava rock formations and chatted.

Days 7 and 8 we went horse riding and whale watching. We rode in a line for an hour and a half and I am not a keen horse woman. The blind people enjoyed this experience although one lady seemed a little worried when her horse decided to leave the line up to have a few mouthfuls of shrubbery along the way. The horses occasionally broke into a trot and I was more than glad when we arrived back at the stables.

The whale watching was supposed to include fishing and eating your catch but a good few people were sea sick. An incident aboard led to the captain and crew to leave the boat bobbing on the waters. We were given a running commentary about whales whilst at sea and the blind people could ask questions and go into the Captain's cabin.

It was hilarious trying to spot the whales, and by the time the captain shouted "Minke whale at two o'clock" or "Dolphins at eleven o'clock" they were submerged under water and were impossible to see.

Iceland has various bars and nightclubs and the Icelandic food included Plokkfiskur a kind of stewed fish, whale, Hangikjot smoked lamb, dried fish and puffin. There are lots of events throughout the year and a jazz festival week was on while we were there. I listened to some Icelandic music and bought a cd of Icelandic blues.

Posters of John Lennon were on the streets and the Imagine Peace Tower erected in 2007 by Yoko Ono is lit periodically. Yoko chose Iceland for her tower because it is powered by green energy and has no Army.



Reading the local newspapers I was surprised at the outrage and demonstrations by the Icelanders at the collapse of the banks. Some of the houses owned by the people responsible were attacked with red paint, and there were some demonstrations in the city. The Icelandic people are very outspoken in the newspapers and t-shirts were printed with words that I would not print.

The aurora borealis otherwise known as the northern lights can be observed at certain times of the year. Unfortunately I did not see them while I was there. My sister had visited Iceland at a different time of the year and spent her time dog sledding, and walking on glaciers etc. Our photos will be very different.

I was a little exhausted at the end of the holiday but concluded that it was an EXPERIENCE.

Sally Tilstone

School News

Essex cracks down on term time holidays

Following a government announcement Essex County Council has a zero tolerance attitude to holidays taken by pupils in term time. It is insisting that every school follows the policy and this will be reinforced by regular checks on attendance in all schools by a welfare officer.

Where the welfare officers find a pupil has had a period of absence which is unexplained by illness or necessary medical treatment, a close bereavement or for a legitimate reason authorised by the head teacher, the parent could be fined between £50 and £100, and persistent offenders could find themselves in court.

Unauthorised absences include holidays taken in term time which are not made necessary due to parents work reasons a family crisis or prolonged family illnesses. This means that routine family holidays taken in term time will be rated as unauthorised absences and dealt with as such by way of fines or other measures in cases of persistent offending.

For some parents this will come as very unwelcome news, especially in the days of cut backs, and it will seem that parents are being harshly penalised by being forced to take their holiday at a time when everything is at a premium. This must be a matter which the government should be forced to consider and the holiday industry itself must take some responsibility in this.

Class 1 are assembly stars

At their second only sharing assembly Class 1 proudly and confidently showed off their work to the rest of the school and the parents last month.

The theme they had been working on all week was space, and in addition to creating a great deal of pictures and information about space to adorn their classroom walls, they created their own models of space ships, rockets and flying saucers which they proudly showed to the assembly. They have all settled in very well and seem to be enjoying their first ever experience of school.

News from Birchanger Nursery

It's hard to believe that it is a year since we moved into our lovely new building and once again we are delighted to announce that we are able to make even more improvements to the nursery, this time to the outside space.

We have received some generous donations from various local organisations including 'Birchanger Open Gardens', Photosound Communications Ltd and the parents of children who moved on to school this term. We have also worked hard with fund-raising events over the past few months and this together with a grant of £2000 from Uttlesford District Council allows us to now go ahead with our plans to renovate our garden area.

Later this month we are going to install a new sensory garden with planting, a pergola and some seating, there will also be two further raised beds which will be used for the children to grow various plants, fruit and vegetables. In November we are installing a canopy along one side of the building which will enable the children to play outside whatever the weather and give parents and siblings some shelter while they are waiting to collect the children.

This term the children are learning about animals they will be listening to books and songs about animals and learning how to care for and respect them. Later on this term, 'Zoolab' will be visiting with some small animals for the children to handle including a rat and a snake!! However, even more exciting, at the beginning of October we took delivery of 12 hen's eggs and an incubator, within a couple of days the children were able to observe the baby chicks hatching and have thoroughly enjoyed watching them grow, feeding and handling them. This service was provided by a company called 'Living Eggs', who brought along all the necessary equipment and will be collecting it along with the baby chicks before half term.

As Birchanger Nursery goes from strength to strength and our good reputation spreads we now have a very long waiting list. Whilst it is our policy to give priority to children who live in Birchanger, to enable us to do this, we need to know about village children sooner rather than later, so if you have a baby or very young child and there is even the slightest chance they might like to join us in the future, please contact us to arrange a visit and put their name on the list as soon as you can.

Tel:-01279 810800
birchangernursery@btconnect.com
www.birchangernursery.org



Ruby and Jessica enjoying a cuddle!

Local Traffic Requirements, Help Wanted

Years ago those who lived in Birchanger were given the opportunity to indicate what highway improvements they would like to see in or around the village to help to manage the increased traffic from the new Rochford's Estate as it then was. Highways have asked us what you think is needed now or will be needed in the future as the development continues to grow.

A crossing outside Mounfitchet School has already been provided out of the section 106 money allocated for Highway Matters. There is still a considerable sum to spend and some work will not be considered until up to date traffic surveys have been completed. Also in the Section 106 Agreements there were trigger points when certain measures could begin to be considered. These have not yet been reached, but they could be in the next few months. Health and Education improvements are subject to completely separate Section 106 Agreements.

It is important to start to get ideas now as people's ideas of what may be necessary may have changed since the houses have started to be occupied. It is also very important that the occupiers of the new homes have their say as well. It also takes time to collate responses and to undertake traffic surveys. Then new measures have to be planned and consulted upon. This will all take time.

After a lengthy consultation process last time the original Section 106 list was drawn up as follows.

1. Silver Street/ Chapel Hill/ B1383 Junction Improvements.
2. Church Rd provision and widening of footway.
3. Forest Hall Rd various measures including possible closure, traffic calming and re-alignment of adverse camber.
4. B1051/Lower Street/ Station Rd- Junction improvements.
5. Tot Lane – traffic survey, one way working and traffic calming.
6. West Rd/Water Lane/Station Rd-footway/cycleway upgrade.
7. Birchanger Lane- traffic survey and traffic calming.
8. Enhancements to bus stops and facilities within the village of Stansted and at the station.
9. Bus priority measures at the B1383 and A120.
10. Controlled pedestrian crossing on the B 1383 near Chapel Hill.
11. Any other scheme that the County Council in consultation with the parish councils considers necessary to enhance highway safety, capacity, public transport or amenity in the parishes of Stansted or Birchanger.

Some of these may be outdated or unnecessary there may be many others which you feel should be included. For instance Birchanger Parish Council would like to consider a traffic order which would ban HGV lorries from Birchanger Lane, except for access. We would also like to consider an illuminated sign showing drivers speeds as they go through the village. These signs were not available 8 years ago.

We do want to hear from you so please call me on 812793 or email Philip Hoy at philiphoy@isc ltd.co.uk before the end of this month.

News from St Mary's

Another Successful Harvest for the Church.

Church funds received a welcome boost to their funding last month from two very successful events both related to the harvest.

The first was a very successful auction of fresh produce at the club. The fact that the beer festival was in progress at the club may have helped to boost the church funds as well but it certainly helped to boost morale and the relaxed atmosphere was a real bonus.

There was fresh produce available which was truly local and included grapes grown in the village as well as apples, pears, courgettes, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuces, marrows, potatoes and much more. There were also plenty of homemade cakes and pies as additional temptation.

It all made for a very relaxed and enjoyable evening as well as an opportunity to get to meet Father Giles, our new curate who had agreed to be the auctioneer for the evening.

At the end of the month around fifty people including our Rector Paul Wilkin attended a Festive Harvest Supper in the Church Hall, which consisted of three homemade courses, wine on the table and Piano accompanied entertainment which all resulted in another memorable evening for everyone. The harvest auction raised £389.

Gardening for pleasure – whatever the weather

I find the four seasons cover such diversity that each holds a fascination for me.

Over the last 16 years the garden at 'Meadow View' formally known as 'The Step House' has evolved and matured. The garden now has fruit trees and fruit bushes, a vegetable patch, pond, wild area, a water feature, a woodland walk, flower borders, lawn, green house and a few compost bins.

I should like to extend my gardening skills beyond my own garden. If you would like my help to plant bulbs, prune, divide plants, weed etc. Please call 01279 812246 and ask for Linda.

Linda Pocklington

Christmas Bazaar

On behalf of Birchanger over Sixties club

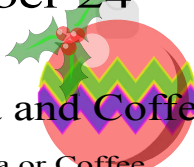
In the Church Hall

Saturday November 24th

2 till 4

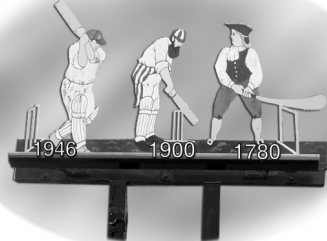
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Village Diary October/November 2009

October

25th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

November

1st 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

8th 11.00 am St Mary's
Remembrance Sunday

15th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service
With baptism

22nd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Comunion

29th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

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