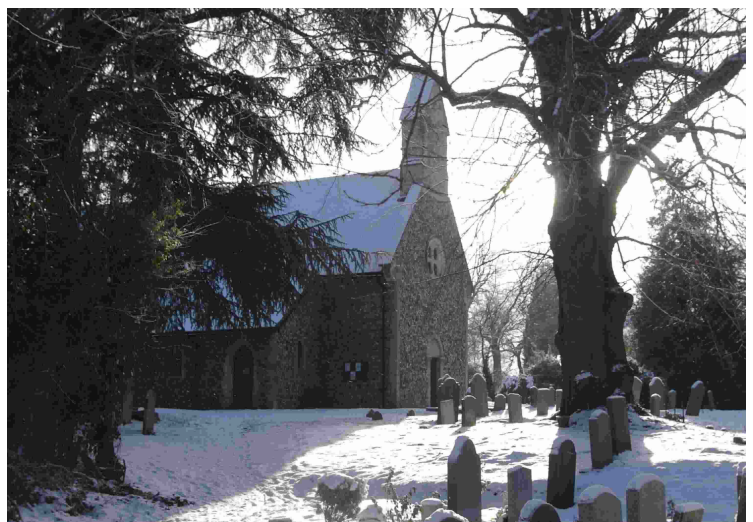


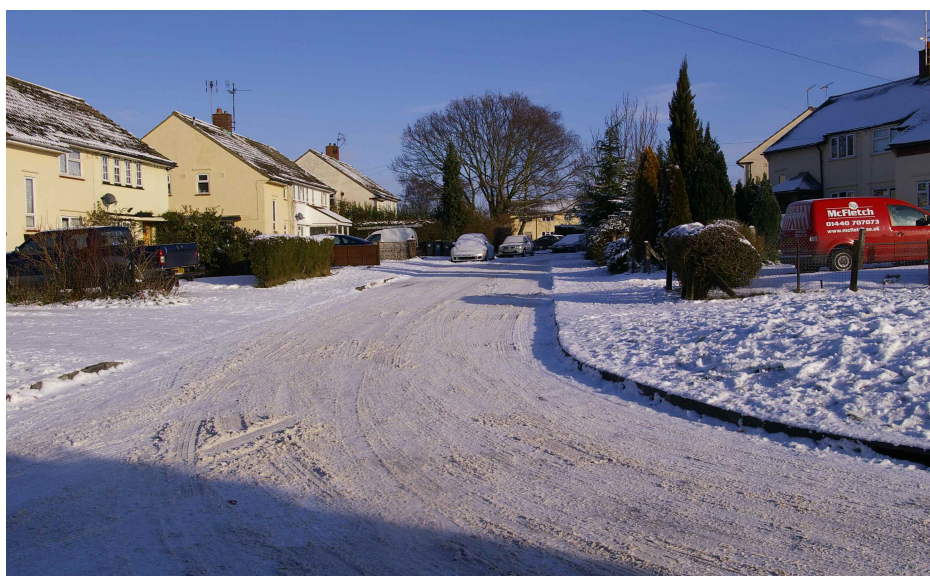
# THE FROZEN VILLAGE

Snowfall came to the village in the week before Christmas giving a traditional look to the festive season. Mercifully it had all but gone by Christmas day allowing most people to enjoy their usual festivities. It was the first time I can remember going to the annual carol service with snow actually on the ground.

The cold snap however has continued and fresh snowfall on January 5th is still on the ground as I



St Mary's bathed in Winter sun



write. It is unusual for snow and ice to linger more than a couple of days in these parts. But I am sure there are some of you who remember 1963 and some who can recall 1947. We are not suffering a winter as severe as either of those yet. So Kids, get out there and enjoy it while you can!

## A very chilly Birchwood



# PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

*Elizabeth Godwin*

## Do you want to be part of the Olympics?

No you don't have to be an athlete, you just have to register your interest in becoming a volunteer to have a part in some capacity at the 2012 Olympics. Although the official volunteering recruitment drive does not start until July, interested potential volunteers are invited to register their interest in volunteering to help at the Olympics now.

Volunteers may be asked to help at sporting events or to run facilities within the village itself. Medical volunteers will also be required. The venues are many and varied and there should be something to suit those who are interested somewhere.

Some volunteers have already started. They are known as the Trail Blazers, and are working up to one day a week. Duties include taking visitors around the Olympic Stadium, working at the London office to organise publicity photographs, assist at pre Olympic events, to look after overseas visitors, and to help agencies competing for Olympic contracts. There will be much more and varied opportunities as the games draw nearer. It certainly will not be all office based either.

Interested? Register now on [www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php](http://www.london2012.com/get-involved/volunteering/index.php)

## Christmas Fun

Birchanger residents do have something of a reputation for enjoying themselves at Christmas. It was fun to stroll through the village after dusk to see the Christmas lights which certainly put the airport into the shade for the Christmas period. Thank you to everyone who created some really very effective displays for the benefit of all. The snow came a little too soon, but was enjoyed by the children just the same.

After the very successful Christmas Fairs of the previous month it was time for a different kind of entertainment. All age groups were catered for as the month started with the visit to the pantomime for the children. There was then a Christmas coffee morning which was both enjoyable and it was good to welcome some new faces to the event as well as the regular supporters.

## Over Sixties Christmas treat

The Over Sixties Christmas Lunch generously provided by Birchanger Club was again a big success. 45 members attended the event where soft drinks and

wine with lunch were again free to the guests. Club Stewards worked on their day off to produce a lunch which was pronounced excellent by the guests with a choice for all three courses.

A mammoth raffle of some 56 excellent prizes followed the meal and the party continued with songs and the opportunity to dance until well into the evening. It was an occasion definitely not to be missed by members. A big thank you to Stewards Kim and Graham for giving their time and to the staff who contributed to a really happy occasion as well as to Bernie and his team for ensuring that the whole afternoon ran smoothly. Birchanger over Sixties Club meets at the pavilion behind the club on the first and third Monday afternoons, Bank Holidays excepting. Many outings are arranged in the course of the year along with a holiday in Paignton as well as the bi-monthly meetings. To find out more, contact Bernie on 655497.

## Second runway danger receding?

I wish I could be confident about this. The odds are gradually being stacked against it but we are by no means out of the proverbial woods yet by any means. The announcement last month by the Select Committee that Stansted is unsuitable does not mean that BAA will necessarily want to go along with this. They are noted for their stubborn and ruthless approach to the community around them, and they are not going to concede defeat until the odds seem to them to be totally insurmountable. We are not yet at that point, although it is hoped that the eventual Competition Appeal decision will help them to make up their minds.

Meanwhile there is a great deal to do. The White paper of 2003 is totally out of date and does not make provision for proper effects of noise and climate change for a start. It needs to be totally withdrawn in the light of the current climate. Then it will be up to everyone to have their say in future plans for aviation in this country. The problem with white Papers is that they only rely on historic information and research data. They tend to try to set in stone the opinions and knowledge of the immediate past without consideration of the future and the environment.

## Please be safe this year

Many people walk Birchanger Lane after dark, and their routes may take them through areas without pavements. This brings its own risks, but these are more than doubled if the pedestrian is wearing dark



clothing and is not using a torch. There have been many reports over the Christmas period of near misses and narrow escapes.

It is up to everyone to take special care for their own and others safety. Pedestrians after all have no protection.

## Traveller menace is still a threat

Gypsy style invaders from the south of the county are casting their beady eyes over Uttlesford and have actually told some residents of their intention to move in to a site in Birchanger. They hail from the Billericay area and are said to be connected to those who are already encamped at Little Hallingbury.

No piece of vacant land is safe from these intruders. They do not care who owns the land, if it is in the Green Belt or the Countryside Protection Zone, whether it belongs to someone or has been cultivated land. If it is free, it is up for grabs is their philosophy so move in and argue later. Argue they will. They know every trick, dodge and legal loophole. They know exactly how long they can stay before things get tough and leave havoc in their wake. Memories of the trouble on the land behind the DIY stores are only too clear in most people's minds.

What can be done about it? First of all watch and report anything strange or suspicious to the District Council Enforcement Team on 01799 510510. If it is out of office hours tell the Stansted Police on their duty mobile phone number 07801 461666 or dial 999 immediately. Prompt action is vital. The travellers' favourite arrival time is after 4pm on a Friday afternoon when offices are closing for the weekend and it is difficult to get an injunction. By Monday they will be well entrenched. If all else fails, call me on 812793.

If you are a landowner, ensure that your accesses are secured by the strongest locks and gates anyone can provide and that your fences and hedges are intact and without gaps.

At some point the District Council is going to have to provide 25 additional pitches in Uttlesford, but that will be after a proper consultation process.

## Make an allotment your new year's resolution

For many people, myself included, New Year's resolutions are just a dim and distant memory already and best forgotten. Some wiser folk have decided not to make any resolutions at all so there is nothing to break, while some may still be wondering if they should try to do something new now that the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has passed.

It is still cold, dark and very miserable out there but there are plenty of enticing catalogues dropping through the door and they do include several on gardening. Could this be the year when growing your own vegetables and soft fruit becomes a reality?

If the thought does tempt you now is a very good time to find out more as there are still a few freshly dug over allotments available. The actual rent is a mere £10 per annum and there are plenty of fellow allotment holders to advise you on your way.

The member of the Parish council in charge of the allotments is David Holder. He will tell you more about the allotments on 813393.

## Angela Driscoll joins the Parish Council

There has been a vacancy on the Parish Council which was advertised during the summer. Although nobody came forward at the time, there were some subsequent inquiries, and at the Parish Council Meeting in December it was decided to ask Angela if she was still interested in the post.

Angela agreed and is no stranger to the Parish Council, husband Geoff having been a member for many years, until his work commitments meant that he could no longer fulfil the role.

Angela will be given her own areas of responsibility. Since her retirement she has worked with the CAB and her knowledge and experience will be invaluable for Birchanger. She may be contacted on 817376.

## New Boiler Scrappage Scheme.

The government is offering households £125 to change their old boilers for a new A rated one, which should save about 25% of the gas used annually. The offer is on a first come first served basis for the first 125,000 households to apply. The boiler must be the old G rated models, and for those who are under 60, the boiler must be working.

You have to have the make and model of your boiler, then contact the Energy Saving Trust on 0800 512 012. If your boiler is deemed to be of the right type and energy category, you will need to get a quote for work, and the accreditation number of your plumber. After receiving the voucher there is a twelve week window in which the work must be completed. Vouchers will start to be issued from January 18th.

A rather cumbersome process, but worth it if you start now. For those on line you can find out more on <http://www.governmentboilerscrappagescheme>.

## Birchanger Social Club

Requires a Cleaner

For details contact  
The Steward

01279 812810

# School News

## The last day of term

Birchanger children always include the outside world. At the beginning of December they took home a candle for the Children's Society to fill with coins. These were happily exchanged for a Christingle Orange at their special Christingle Service in the church. The candles made a memorable sight when they were lit, then extinguished all too soon in the interests of health and safety. The Christmas parties were enjoyed by everyone as was the Christmas Lunch complete with delicious turkey, provided by the chef, Mr Tilley who received a resounding cheer as the children showed their appreciation. Then on the last day there was a special School Assembly with parents where everyone said goodbye to Mrs Howell on her last day at Birchanger School. She was presented with a range of gifts which included a digital camera with accessories which included a special viewing screen. Most people managed to get to school despite the seasonal snow.

A quick pack up ready for the school holidays was followed by an extra early lunch to take into account the weather conditions, before everyone boarded the coaches for the annual visit to the pantomime, Dick Whittington in Cambridge.



## A New Year begins

It is a really new start for Birchanger School this term. After the hectic days of last term with the excitement Christmas always brings to Primary Schools combined with the departures of Mrs Howell and Mrs Elam, it is back to work with a vengeance for everyone under the leadership of Mrs Warbrick. This is the term when a great deal of hard work is done for the coming SATS tests in May. There are not so many outdoor

distractions so there is really no excuse for not facing the vexed problem of homework.

The subject always brings controversy. Some parents are very much in favour of homework, others just as much against it. Most children would probably not do it at all, given an honest choice.

Whatever the feeling, homework is a very necessary part of the learning process, unless of course the school day is made longer and homework must be done before going home in the evening.

The problem is, children most days will not exactly look forward to doing their homework. Parents whether in favour of it or otherwise simply do not always supervise it or provide a suitable place where it may be done. If children are to reach their full potential homework has its part to play whatever you may think about it, and the way things are in education these days, it has to be done.

## Farewell Mrs Howell

It is always a sad time when a well liked Headteacher leaves. Mrs Howell has brought her own brand of creativity into the school and under her leadership the school has become a place where children are polite and well mannered and links with the community are very strong. She has instigated many improvements to the school premises and always strived in every way to try to make things better for everyone at the school.

It is not an easy time to be a Headteacher. The bureaucratic demands are almost overwhelming. The government has set standards which bear very little resemblance to what schools and the children in them really need. The curriculum as set nationally does not fit all and yet must be complied with. Standards are continually rising with unrealistic targets set. It seems that sometimes the actual child is forgotten.

Mrs Howell has somehow managed to strike a balance as much as it is possible to do in a nearly impossible situation. At times the workload must have seemed overwhelming, yet somehow it has been done. We all wish her well in a well earned retirement and hope she will come back to see us very often.

## And Mrs Elam

Mrs Elam who has taught Class 2 for many years also retired at the end of the Christmas Term. Her artistic, linguistic and gardening skills will be very much missed. Mrs Elam instigated the school garden and did a great deal of work in the Gardening Club which she used to run. We wish her well in her retirement and hope she will come back to see the progress of the children whom she loved to teach. The children also made a special book which contained their pictures which will give her a lasting memory of the children she taught in her five years at Birchanger School.

Her place will be taken this term by Mrs Sherriff who is well known to the children having taught music at the school for several years and who has been providing additional classroom support.

# ALIENS LAND IN THE VILLAGE

Nowhere was Christmas more celebrated in the village than Birchanger School. The last week began with the certain show stopper in the Infants Nativity Play. The theme this year was Aliens meet Humans when their space ship breaks down near earth. The aliens are befriended by the children who invite them to watch their Nativity Play. The aliens marvel at the angels and the Christmas story, miraculously their space ship is repaired and they leave with a better understanding of humans and the Christmas Story. The children spoke clearly, the songs were well learned and sung with enthusiasm and the performers well photographed and deservedly congratulated by all.



Tributes to the Key Stage 1 staff who produced the play and to Mrs Souter who made the aliens costumes, it was a happy and memorable afternoon. Then there was the concert where many children happily showed off their musical prowess, including the new string group. The concert was made more magical for the youngest children

## Birchanger Primary School

### **Table Top Sale**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2010 2.00pm – 4.00pm**

Are you in spring cleaning mode? Do you need to make room for all those new Christmas gifts?

If yes – sign up for a table at our forthcoming Table Top Sale

You can sell anything you like!

Tables are £10 for one (measuring approximately 23" x 47") or £15 for two

***Please also just come along, browse or have a cup of tea!***

We will be serving refreshments during the sale

If you would like to book a table please contact Selina Rankin

Tel: 01279 813388 or email: [info@chimneysguesthouse.co.uk](mailto:info@chimneysguesthouse.co.uk)



# Sally Revisits Paris

Here I go again, guiding my fellow blind and partially sighted companions in Paris.

As you may recall I have been to Paris many times, but I had booked this trip because it was the bi-centenary of Louis Braille and also because I was to meet and guide a young lady who I have planned to guide on a one to one basis next year in Australia.

I made my way to St Pancras station to meet everyone to travel on the Eurostar where we were given preferential treatment as it was a special celebration on that day. We were taken to the first class lounge area where we ate cake and drank champagne.

We arrived at the Gare Du Nord and transferred to our hotel in Pigage

The next day we had a guided tour of the Latin Quarter, the Notre Dame l'île St Louis and St Chapelle.

Our guide told us about the area and we absorbed the unique Parisian atmosphere by sipping a crème cafe. A band was playing on the bridge and we danced in the street. We visited a garden in one of the oldest houses in Paris dated 1425. It was like a castle with turrets and diamond shape glass windows.

In 1163 Pope Alexander III laid the first stone to create the gothic masterpiece the Notre dame cathedral and contains the largest organ in France. In the interior, there are many sculptures and paintings

In the afternoon we visited Coupvray the birthplace and museum of Louis Braille. He lost his sight at the age of five after an accident in his father's workshop. His father was a saddle maker and the furniture and tools etc from the cottage were on display.

Louis' father made the original alphabet in wood and nails, he



attended the village school and also the Royal College for the Blind. He played piano and cello.

By the age of thirteen he had invented Braille, it is made up of six dots in two columns of three, a combination of all the letters of the alphabet, punctuation can also be represented.

Blind people have achieved so much thanks to Louis Braille. In later years, a twelve dot system was used by the army to pass messages in the dark between troops.

The next day we visited the Pantheon where Braille is buried except for his hands which are buried in Coupvray. Louis Braille died of TB aged 43.

Here is where the greatest citizens of France are buried including Voltaire, Hugo and Marie Curie.

Our afternoon was free and I found myself guiding a small party of eleven to the Rodin Museum. With the help of a fellow guide "Jacques" from Belgium we walked through the Jardin de Luxembourg to the Musee where we had a tour of the lovely mansion and grounds in the elegant St Germain area. We described the collection of sculptures including "The thinker", "The kiss", "St John the Baptist" and the "Gates of Hell"

The blind people were allowed to touch the sculptures and Jacques made us laugh with his portrayal of "The thinker".

We used the underground metro system and I found it very interesting that the stops were lit up above our heads in the carriages and went out once you reached the destination. Not all stations are announced which is not helpful to the blind people, but we went on and off in small numbers and told each other how many stops and the station to disembark.

We ate the French food, continental breakfast, snails, mussels, "croque monsieur" and "croque madame" etc. We enjoyed the wine and sat in the bars and restaurants while listening to music! I was given French lessons by the hotel reception. I must remember it's "la clef" not "le clef".

We saw the wonderful Christmas decorations in the famous stores from the windows of the coach and above all we had fun!

On day four we visited the Sacre Coeur, another beautiful cathedral and Montmartre, the artistic centre of Paris. Artists such as Monet, Van Gogh, and Picasso among the artists had gathered there to paint. In the afternoon we visited the Eiffel tower and most of us went to the top to see and describe the wonderful views. To end the day we went on a boat trip on the River Seine viewing the many bridges and other landmarks.

Paris is a beautiful vibrant city and although I have been many times, I would still visit Paris again,

On the morning of the last day we were given free time to do last minute shopping and I found myself guiding my partner in red light district near to Pigalle. I made her boo when I said that I would rather not describe the shop window displays. And the Moulin Rouge was passed by in amusement

It was about experiencing Paris and all that the city had to offer And the Parisians are not shy.

We headed back to the hotel to meet up for the journey home and on the way back to the Gare de Nord we all broke out in song. One evening we had made a top ten list written on a napkin incorporating the name Amar

We made him laugh as we sang such songs as "show me the way to Amar rillo".

Once home I found that a fellow guide had cleverly doctored our songs adding the original and put them on face book

I have now added even more names to my Christmas card list but I love it

# SPICY COCONUT CHICKEN

Preparation time: 10 mins

Cooking time: 35 mins

225g (8oz) onion  
75 gr (3oz) creamed coconut  
1cm (½ inch) piece of fresh root ginger  
6 chicken breast fillets with skin, about 700 gr (1lb 8oz)  
1 garlic clove  
2.5ml (1/2 level tsp) ground turmeric  
5ml (1 level tsp) each ground cumin, ground coriander and mild curry powder  
pinch hot chilli powder (optional)  
225g (8oz) can chopped tomatoes  
30 ml (2 level tbsp) poppy seeds  
300 ml (10 fl oz) chicken stock  
salt and pepper  
30 ml (2 level tbsp) Greek natural yogurt  
chopped fresh coriander to garnish

1 Finely chop the onion. Coarsely grate the coconut. Peel and finely chop the ginger. Tuck the ends of the chicken breasts under to shape into neat rounds; tie with string.

2 Heat 45ml (3 tbsp) oil in a pan and saute the chicken fillets until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper

3 Add the onion, crushed garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, 1-2 min. Add spices. Cook for a further minute, then add tomatoes, coconut and poppy seeds. Cook for a further 1 min. Add stock. Bring to the boil, simmer for 2-3min.

4 Replace the chicken, cover simmer for about 20 mins or until the chicken is cooked through.

5 Skim off any excess oil, adjust seasoning. Off the heat, stir in the yogurt. Serve garnished with fresh coriander.

**NOT SUITABLE FOR FREEZING SERVES 6 270 CALS PER SERVING.**

## ITEMS FOR SALE

1 For sale A Pro-team Retro turntable with Stereo Radio and CD player this Item is as new and cost £120 sale price £60 ono.

2 For sale an Aiwa DVD 5.1 Home cinema system with FM radio. This is in fabulous condition costing £300 when new sale price £80 ono. Includes set up for two wall mountings.

3 For sale Hitachi Video plus recorder in good condition. Costing £50 when new £20 ono.

All these items include remote control handsets and are in good working order. I expect them to fly off the shelf so don't delay ring today Micky Daw 01279 814180. Resident of Birchanger for nearly twenty years.

## YOU ARE INVITED TO A CHOCOLATE PARTY

IN AID OF 1<sup>ST</sup> BIRCHANGER CUBS & SCOUT GROUP

VENUE: BIRCHANGER SCOUT HUT - WOOD LANE

DATE: MONDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2010

TIME: 8PM

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED

PLEASE BRING A FRIEND

## DELIVERER REQUIRED

The village Magazine needs a new deliverer for Birchwood and Wood Lane. This involves delivery once a month of about 75 copies to all of the houses in Birchwood as well as Wood Lane. It takes about 40 minutes.

If you are willing to give a little time each month to help us reach a large proportion of our readers we would like to hear from you.

Please contact either the editor on 816171 or Trevor Stone on 812994 for more details.

We would like to thank Mrs G Smith who was our previous deliverer in that area for her contribution to our efforts

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## Village Diary January/February 2010

January

24th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

31st 11.00 am St Mary's  
Matins

February

7th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Matins

14th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

16.00 pm St Mary's  
Celebration of Marriage

21st 11.00 am St Mary's  
Family Service

28th 11.00 am St Mary's  
Holy Communion

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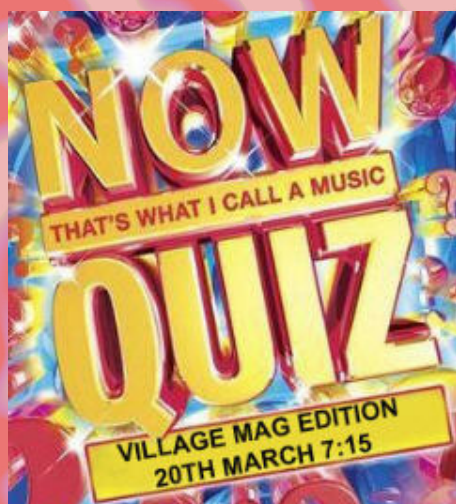
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