

Birchanger

January 2011



Magazine

Issue 97

WELCOME TO 2011

Well folks welcome to 2011. The past year had its trials and tribulations its triumphs and tragedies. We have a new government bent on promising one thing and delivering the opposite so no change there. SSE got its wish and the second runway was cancelled. The good news is that the Birchanger Burn's night is set to continue. There is a new head at the primary school who wants to change the class names and put the children into houses, no Gryffindor for Birchanger unfortunately. We lost one or two notable villagers: Alice Tilstone and Ted Haggerwood most notably. And we seem to be surviving the snow, ice, fog and rain as it comes. So welcome to 2011 bring it on!

Take me out. A perfect distraction

My son Samson, tall, handsome and single, is just what the ITV programme 'Take Me Out' were looking for when the producers approached him in London and asked if he wanted to be on the show, which was to be presented by Paddy McGuinness.

For me it was a good distraction - tell you why later! Sam was filmed in Bishops Stortford and running through Birchanger Village for the show. One day in November Samson's sister Jo, a group of his friends and myself went along to watch the show being filmed and after various questions with Paddy, Samson picked a girl for a date. His date was Amy, the 2010 Miss Hertfordshire. The next day they were whisked off to Tenerife for their date.

It has been so exciting to see Samson in the adverts leading up to the show in between X Factor, I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here and during daytime television and then of course the show itself. What an experience for him, plus Birchanger being on National TV. Oh and the distraction for me was the day after filming the show was the first session for my chemo. One proud Mum!

Karen Garwood





PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Birchanger lights up despite everything

Householders might not have been blamed if they had decided to forego the Christmas lights. The weather was not exactly favourable and power bills only seem to go up. However Birchanger lit up despite it all. The church path lights guided the congregation as they arrived for the Carol Service. There were some truly beautiful and imaginative displays to cheer everyone up as they came home in the cold. Hard to say which was the best because even the smallest lights contributed to the Christmas scene. Thank you everyone.

Have you been to Birchanger wood ?

Ok it is not exactly the best weather for rambling around the countryside, but it is a time when many people dream about the great outdoors and what they will do when Spring finally appears.

You may be planning great things in the garden or allotment but there is something else close by which is opening up all the time. A great deal of time has been spent on Birchanger Wood in the past few months and work is ongoing. It may seem as though it is actually in Hertfordshire but the bulk of the wood is in Birchanger. Some may remember the big effort the Parish made to help to buy the wood in perpetuity for everyone to enjoy some 12 years ago.

Many things have happened since then. The wood is undergoing a coppicing program which is necessary to maintain the wood and it is a process which has continued in the wood for over 1000 years. There are new paths which are able to be used by those with disabilities on the Heath Row side of the wood and the wood can be accessed through the footpath system in Birchanger.

In spring the wood is carpeted in aconites and a wide variety of wild flowers. Wild life abounds, in fact many of our woodpeckers in Birchanger nest in the woods. The wood is well worth a visit, the Parish Council are trustees and fundraising for the wood is ongoing. It is maintained by a warden and a band of volunteers working mainly at weekends. The wood needs your patronage and your help. Walk it sometime this year and see for yourself what goes on there.

Will we make Birchanger a neighbourhood?

Birchanger is known for being a very independent sort of a place. There are a lot of hardworking people living here who like to make things happen. Many find the restrictions imposed by councils and the Eastern Region frustrating and not always in the perceived good of the village.

Under the new neighbourhood initiatives we may not be able to do anything about airports and motorways as they come under national needs, but we could do a lot more about our own development and affordable homes for those who really need it in Birchanger. Development is never popular, but we have to face the fact that young people from the village have to move away to find the right sort of affordable housing for their own growing families. Ties are therefore cut in many cases to the detriment of all.

For our own village needs, it will certainly not be on the massive scale of the Rochfords development. Small units better suited to Birchanger could be dispersed throughout the village by infilling, demolition of dilapidated houses or exceptionally, the use of garden land. The sort of housing needed is not of the type currently under construction but for smaller and cheaper two and three bed roomed houses. Under the new initiative the neighbourhoods will decide by referendum where they would go, although the details as to how it will all work are as yet unclear.

The government appears to be determined on this course, despite the court cases and appeals so it will happen eventually by legislation. We need to be ready for it and to grab the best financial deals which will be around for early birds. It is time to think about this and to be ready to move when the legislation is finally in place. It is better to do our own wake up call than to have one forced upon us.

A new bus service to Tesco's?

Well not exactly for the older parts of Birchanger although it will be a benefit to the residents of Stansted and Forest Hall. It is actually door to door Tesco's as it will run from the Tesco's store in Saffron Walden to the Tesco's store in Bishops Park. The problem is that it will stop at Sion House but it will not stop in Birchanger Village.

The bus will run twice a day to Bishops Park, picking up at Sion House at approximately 9.48 and 11.48. Return trips will leave Bishops Park at 10.15am, 12.15 and 14.15pm. Would be good but changing and waiting for another bus or humping a load of groceries up the hill is not my scene. Will have to ask them to include Birchanger in their plans if at all possible.

Bus 7/7a to Continue

Some Centrebus drivers on the bus routes through the village have apparently been telling passengers that the service is being withdrawn. There is no truth in this. Centrebus are to stop operating the service after 13th February and a new contractor will be found to run the same timetable from the following day.

Christmas in Birchanger

Well a momentous few weeks is behind us. What with the weather, the lights and the events it was a time to remember. Christmas fairs, Coffee mornings, Nativity plays and concerts all received record attendances and larger than usual funds were raised. Perhaps it was because more people stayed in the village and used the things which were nearer to their own doorsteps. It all contributed to a good Christmas spirit which more people than usual were able to enjoy.

Road improvements for Birchanger

We are supposed to have money allocated to Birchanger from the Section 106 Agreements which were put in place to mitigate the traffic increase from the Forest Park development. Sounds good, but by the time the requirements that Stansted has asked for along with the needs of the development itself which were not properly forecast at the time of the granting of the outline planning permission, there is precious little actually left for Birchanger itself it seems.

The biggest problems residents in Birchanger are confronted with daily are the difficulties of exiting Birchanger on to the B 1383, particularly to turn right into Stansted and the problem of over large vehicles in the lane, along with the constant rat running by those who still use the lane as a short cut to the M11. If there was a proper junction with the B1383 a lot of the problems might be alleviated without the necessity to close Tot Lane, which is still an option if other means fail. Lorries could be controlled by an order banning them from the lane except for access. Unfortunately speed humps are out, as the lane is a bus route. If the money is there it might be possible to have speed registering systems in place and a crossing for the school.

Highways are currently undergoing yet more reorganisation. They are hoping to be able to work up schemes for both villages in the next month and they will tell us just how far the money will go at the Annual Parish Meeting on Wednesday March 30th.

Benefit Services to be shared with Harlow Town Council

The administration of benefits by the District Council is expected to be shared with Harlow Town Council from next October. Uttlesford District Council will be mounting a shared operation with Harlow where staff and resources will be pooled and administration costs should be much lower for each council.

Clients should not notice much difference as they will still be able to access designated benefits staff at Saffron Walden in the same way as they do at present. The scheme, which will include a new computer system, is being financed by a grant from Improvement East. There will be a project manager to take charge of the set up process and the scheme will be managed by a team which will include a senior officer and three members from each council.

Help with the Fete wanted

Something a great many people will be looking forward to is the return of the summer Fete which this year will be run by Birchanger Club with all profits going to Village Projects.

As fetes don't just happen a great deal of input is needed from you. You can offer your help or for a small franchise you can run your own stall for your own particular charity or project. It all adds to the sense of fun and special family occasion.

Music will be a feature of the day with a traditional Brass Band in the afternoon and further family entertainment in the evening. There will be a traditional hog roast, stalls which are fun to try your luck at, refreshments running throughout and much more. Watch this space and plan to be involved on September 3rd.

Police beat surgeries

Come and chat to a member of your neighbourhood policing team to discuss any local issues or concerns you have in your community. Beat surgeries are held one Friday each month on the Mobile Police Station (in the Village hall car park). Dates for 2011 are;

January 21st, February 18th, March 18th, April 15th at 11:30 - 12:30. And from May 13th, June 10th, July 8th, August 5th, September 2 & 30th, October 28th, November 25th, December 23rd at 10:00

School News

The school house system comes to Birchanger

Some of us may remember being divided into school houses for sports, other competitions and smaller working units when we were at school. In my day there was a house leader and we competed between ourselves at various events throughout the school year. Sometimes schools have a cup for the house which wins the most points throughout the year.

A similar system has started in Birchanger School. The children are randomly allocated a place in each house. The names of the houses reflect the trees which are special to the village, Birch, Willow and Cedar. Older residents will remember the beautiful Cedar tree which used to be in Harrisons.

One of the prizes the houses will be competing for is the attendance cup which will be awarded at the end of the school year to the house which has had the best attendance record throughout the school year. The children will also be competing using this system at their sports day and in other competitions.

Classes start the year with names instead of numbers

Most schools know individual classes by numbers not names. A rather impersonal but clear way of identifying classes and one which is really not necessary in a small school. Staff and children consulted and agreed the new names together. The children came back to school to Ladybirds formerly Class1, Hedgehogs which was once Class2, while Class3 became Squirrels and Class 4 Owls. The adults had more trouble remembering the names than the children.

A new way of learning

Most of us have never experienced learning outdoors on a regular basis, but this is the opportunity which Class 1 and 2 will now have, thanks to a local farmer, Roger Pryor and the Essex Wildlife Trust Schools Project. Mr Pryor has given the school the use of his copse which adjoins the school's own wildlife garden. Laura Harvey from the Essex Wildlife Trust will work with the children every Wednesday morning to help the children to develop their speaking skills through learning outdoors right through the year.

A great deal goes on in the small wooded areas adjoining Birchanger. There is a wide variety of bird, animal and plant life to be seen with the right guidance and the knowledge of just where to look. The youngest children will be acquiring these skills in the coming year. They will also be telling everyone how they get on and what they have seen. At the same time there is a lot of fun to be had and the children will use redundant branches and build their own dens.

What Are "Napier's Bones"?

That was the question for many parents when they went back to school for a Maths workshop to try to keep up with the kind of Maths which their children are very familiar with learning but which for many of the rest of us leaves us at the starting gate.

Understanding Maths for many has always been something they simply cannot seem to come to grips with. I have to confess to being among that number when so called "modern maths" was taught to my own children more than just a few years ago. It seems the wheel has come full circle as last month today's parents struggled with the intricacies of a mathematical world their children knew about but which is a foreign language as far as many adults are concerned. Those who did attend emerged after an hour impressed by the logic but finding the practicalities needed considerably more practice on their parts.

News from St Mary's

Celebration of Marriage Service Sunday 13th February 2011 at 4pm

Everyone is invited to join us at this special service which has become an annual event in Birchanger. If you, a family member or friend were married here then it is an opportunity to recall the happy event. For those married elsewhere, it is still a lovely service where vows can be repeated in an informal way. After the service, refreshment will be served in the Church Hall.

Over Sixties Club

On December 6th Birchanger over 60s club held their annual Christmas party. There were forty seven guests who all had Christmas dinner with wine at the social club. There was a very large raffle and a disco by Mr AT King. Everything was paid for by the over 60s club members and we would like to thank Graham, Kim and the staff of the club for opening on their day off.

BFG King

Club News

Birchanger Sports and Social Club would like to remind members that subscriptions are now due. Current subscriptions are £15 per annum and can be paid during every session during January. Prospective life members who have reached state retirement age and have five full year of membership may now claim their gold cards

Why do Supermarkets waste so much?

By this time my New year's Resolutions are usually very effectively broken, which is why I gave up making them years ago. It saves the inconvenience of having to acknowledge to myself that once again I failed.

This year something happened in our local supermarkets which made me see red. It was learning that gallons of cream, tons of fresh fruit and vegetables, meat and bakery items and much more had been simply thrown away in vast quantities at our own local supermarkets. They had over stocked, but had made no real effort to find anyone who might actually be very grateful for the produce at a greatly reduced price or for free.

The trouble lies with the sell by date. Reach this magic and often meaningless date and the item must be binned. What about the homeless, those on benefits who are genuinely struggling to pay for their children's Christmas, the elderly and many more?

I was brought up to abhor waste. It is even worse to think about when half the world is starving. What right do we have to be throwing away food like this when even in our own country someone needs it badly?

We are adding up our own cost of Christmas. It has cost most of us far more than we would like and the credit card bills are rolling in now. Yet despite the wastage supermarkets profits are mainly rising. We may not be able to stop the behaviour of supermarkets, but waste on this scale has made me realise that my own larder is often far too well stocked.

Perhaps in 2011 the supermarkets will actually be able to distribute their surplus to those in need and curb their own overstocking where this proves to be an impossibility.

BALLROOM DANCING

Did you know there is still Ballroom Dancing in the Church Hall on a Monday evening at 7.45 p.m. Why not come along and have a really great and fun evening of dance, minor instruction can be given but not lessons. Please do come and join in the fun and dance the evening away with the magic of Ballroom Dancing. What a great way to meet new friends and perhaps some of your old ones. Give it a try: what better way to keep fit.

Panto Season

It was a pleasure to take my eldest three grandchildren to the seasonal pantomimes this year. Jack aged four and his sister Olivia aged three were going to see JACK AND THE BEANSTALK at Rhodes Bishops Stortford.

Jack and Olivia, were really excited and in the theatre foyer I spoilt them by buying a flashing wand and sword, these would be waved around when it was dark and also to point at the baddies. I know it's rude to point, but it's panto! I sat between them when Olivia asked 'Nanny. Why is Jack a girl?' well spotted Olivia Jack quickly came to my rescue and explained that every one dressed up and so a girl dressed up as a boy phew, thanks Jack.

Olivia was amused when the cow was led on stage and declared " that her middle name was Daisy just like the cow. Grandson Jack laughed when he heard Queen's "We will rock you" because he learnt a new version to tell his daddy. They sang out loud "We will, we will milk you!"

The song choices were brilliant. Even a rap was included. There was a lull of funny names of people and places, but I was a little concerned that Jack's Mummy and Daddy would not appreciate the children shouting out "bye bye Baldy", at Squire Basil Nasty as instructed. It is rude to call people names. Olivia clung for dear life when the ghost appeared and also when the Giant's footsteps thundered overhead. Brother Jack reassured her they were only people dressed up, Well done Jack once again to the rescue, he would make a great musketeer. It was fun to see the audience joining in shouting out "behind you" or "Oh yes he is!"

The two lads Bob Scratchit and Tom Tickle had all the kids laughing and at the, end came out into the audience with very large water pistols and squirted everyone Well done to the local people who put on a fantastic bit of Christmas entertainment. And I know that Jack and Olivia could not wait to tell their Mum and dad about it!



Alice aged eight was going to SNOW WHITE ON ICE performed by the Russian Ice Stars at Cambridge. The guest narrator was Nicholas Parsons who did his best to bring a touch of Christmas panto to the production.

King Mirabile and his Queen Aurora started the show with a beautiful display, of skating and acrobatics. The story of their beautiful daughter Snow White is well known. And the wicked witch Drina duly sets out to trap the King into marrying her Snow White, is taken into the woods to be killed. As you know, the huntsman could not do it and left Snow White in the forest with the animals.

Nicholas Parsons told the audience that two geese befriended her called Foie and Gras.

Snow White also came across seven woodcutters and lived with them in their house in the forest (maybe there are no ice skating dwarves!)

After two failed attempts to kill her (both foiled by the geese) The wicked witch decides she would take no chances and set off in disguise as a gypsy woman selling apples.

She gave Snow White the dreaded apple, Snow white falls into a deep sleep. And of course we know that a few years later she was awakened by Prince Charming and they lived happily ever after.

The skating was breathtaking and the costumes very elaborate; the Russian ice stars were fantastic and Alice enjoyed every moment. We went home with a glossy brochure and. a small Russian tree decoration as a memento.



Sally Tilstone

A letter to the Editor

As a resident of Bradley Common, I am a keen Motor home holiday maker and regularly arrange trips away throughout the year..

Having returned recently from 6 weeks in the South of France, a beautiful coast at the Spanish border, Biarritz.

I have attended this particular site for over 5 years now and whilst always placed my proud camper at a local Farm, providing shelter and a space for my beloved mobile home, this year I was unable to locate the vehicle due to unforeseen circumstances, I was reduced to parking it at High View, abidingly within a spot that was legal and of no wrong doing I was left a small note a few days later, exclaiming that the vehicle was indeed causing some obstruction to them, although their driveway not being blocked in any way but their argument was of the blocked view...

The note reading:

"ON BEHALF OF HIGHVIEW RESIDENTS WE ARE ASKING FOR THE MOTOR HOME TO BE MOVED AS IT IS CAUSING A GREAT DEAL OF PROBLEMS. ie PEDESTRIANS, DUST CART, LIBRARY VAN AFTER 5 WEEKS WE FEEL ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. THE POLICE HAVE BEEN INFORMED AND THEY ARE THE ONES THAT TOLD US OF THE OWNERS. IF IT IS NOT MOVED BE ASSURED IT WILL BE MOVED."

I acknowledge and proceeded to make arrangements for relocation. I then received notification from the local police again advising the request for it to be subsequently removed. However this was for the benefit of residents, although it was not actually illegally parked or breaking the law. I was also informed that technically there was no offence being caused or obstruction apparent. Just courtesy of neighbours.

As I attempted to do so, I found the state of my vehicle in somewhat vandalised object. The complete length of the drivers well painted side had been scratched and darkly marked, now making what was my modern, eye-catching holiday home, to an eye sore they had made it become.. Two slashed tyres added to the vandalism.

Removing the vehicle I felt disappointed and somewhat let down in the support of my local community, to which I have respected and been part of for almost 10 years.

Local schools educate my two children with out of school activities and weekly cubs/sports and brownies. The football club alongside fetes, shows, presentations and meetings that I and my family have attended.

I feel insecure and unsafe in the home I built to feel safe in.

What has become of reality in this world....

Anarchy ...

Mr PV Garrett

Bradley Common

01279 647774

Faster Broadband for Birchanger

BT has announced that its Stansted exchange, which serves Birchanger, will be upgraded in September to provide faster broadband for the village. The new Infinity service will use high-speed optical fibres to bring fast Internet into BT cabinets within the village. Existing copper phone lines will then be able to provide residents with speeds of up to 40 megabits per second, compared with up to 8 Mb at the present. Several parts of the country already have the new service, and reports so far are very positive. Nearly everybody with Infinity gets the maximum rated speed, unlike the present situation where few get speeds anything close to 8Mbps.

This welcome change will benefit not just BT customers. Other Internet Service Providers will also be able to use the new BT equipment to provide faster speeds to their customers.



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Village Diary January/ February

January 2011

- 23rd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion
- 29th 8.00 pm At the Club
Hit & Run
- 30th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

February

- 6th 11.00 am St Mary's
Mattins
- 13th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion
- 20th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service
- 27th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

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27th. June 10th, 24th.

Club, 15.50-16.15. High View,
16.20-16.35.

11.30-12.30

Jan 21st, Feb 18th, March 18th, April
15th, May 27th, June 24th, July 22nd,
August 19th, September 16th, October
14th, November 11th, December 9th

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