

Birchanger

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Magazine

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Olympic Torch Visits Birchanger

Every child in Birchanger School had their own special time holding an Olympic torch when Claire Thompson, a long distance runner who pushed a shopping trolley round the route in the last London Marathon, brought her torch to show the children.

Claire had been the large torch bearer in Essex in the torch relay last month. She had run 385 metres in the old part of Saffron Walden, possibly one of the hardest stretches of the route in Essex. Although the torch is not over heavy, when you are running up an incline, holding the torch up it does become very heavy indeed. It was an experience Claire will never forget and she wants to share it with everyone. She is visiting as many schools, clubs and organisations to show the torch to as many people as possible.

Claire explained why it had 8000 holes in the design, one for each of the torch bearers. It was three sided to symbolise the Olympic values of Higher, Faster, Stronger and the three Olympics of 1908, 1948 and 2012. All the children had their picture taken with the torch. Something they will always remember but may never experience again. But, who knows? I held the 1948 Olympic Torch as an athlete I knew was a bearer then, it seemed to me to be very heavy at the time and I certainly never expected to hold one again. If it happens, the next torch will need four sides.

Paralympics 2012: A chance for the Olympic fever to continue

The Olympics is over, but the Paralympics is just beginning. London 2012 prides itself on providing equal coverage to both the Olympics and Paralympics, hoping to show the high level competitiveness across both games.

There is no reason to disregard the Paralympics; it should in fact be a continuation of the Olympic spirit. The Paralympics are blessed with some terrific athletes who should help bring spectators to the Olympic venues once again. The likes of wheelchair athletes David Weir and Shelley Woods will be competing to continue to make a name for themselves within athletics.

And of course the South African double amputee Oscar Pistorius, known as the "Blade Runner", (because of the artificial limbs he uses to run with) will also be there. During this month's Olympics he raised his profile and extended it to a global level when he ran in the able-bodied 400m and 4x400m relay, becoming the first man ever to run in both the able and disabled disciplines. He looks to become a trend-setter as he opens the door for other Paralympic athletes to compete in future Olympics.

One of the fastest and most explosive sports on show is Wheelchair Basketball. The sport requires speed, agility and strength whilst managing to skilfully move a wheelchair around a court. I hope to see this type of end-to-end action when I take a trip to the newly built Basketball Arena and North Greenwich arena at the end of the month.

Wheelchair Basketball is just one of the sports on show; others like Wheelchair Rugby and Tennis or Goalball also allow spectators to see something different. There are still tickets left so it's worth checking on the London 2012 ticket website if you're interested. If you wanted to experience some of the Olympic atmosphere in the past month but didn't quite manage it, this could be your chance!

The slogan for the games is to "inspire a generation", let's hope it does just that, bridging the apparent gap between Olympic and Paralympic sports. In the next few weeks, I hope you will look out for the Paralympic sports that interest and inspire you – playing top level sport in spite of their disability.

Henry Teall



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Bye Bye Drought, But.....

We can officially use our hose pipes again but apparently we must do so sparingly. Our water company, Veolia, as one of the last in the country to ease the ban, simply could not claim a drought any longer. It was in fact rather embarrassing trying to explain the drought when all around were floods.

The fact is that we have the misfortune to have our water supplied by a company which relies on aquifers and other underground supplies and ground water is simply not yet up to the mark. We could face another ban next spring, unless we get a lot more than average rainfall between October and March. So for us to escape a ban, the rainfall must continue for another 8 months.

We really are not thinking properly about our water supplies. What about national grids, more reservoirs, and prompt water leak repairs for a start. The water companies have lost all credibility. We actually do get plenty of water overall, we simply fail to use it and to store it properly. Claiming for flood damage in the middle of a drought is pure farce.

Need a New Hip or Knee?

Knee and hip replacement operations are only too common place these days. Procedures are slick but the pain afterwards can be very severe indeed.

Basildon Hospital is pioneering a new procedure, known as enhanced recovery. It involves using a spinal anaesthetic which sends the patient into a natural sleep during which they feel no pain throughout the hip or knee replacement.

Apparently after the surgery the patient has little or no discomfort, so they are able to be mobile and start physiotherapy earlier. This means that they are able to go home earlier too, sometimes within 24 hours.

There is always a snag for some. Not everyone is found to be suitable for this type of anaesthesia. If you do require a hip or knee operation in the future, remember you are able to choose your hospital these days. It might well be worthwhile for you to visit Basildon University Hospital and find out if you are suitable for the procedure first.

Highway Rangers Ready to Help

There is a new team of road workers coming into force in our area. They are known as the Highway Rangers and they will undertake many of the minor works needed in our area. Sadly mending potholes is not one of them!!

What they can do is cut overgrown vegetation, clean road signs, fix minor pavement problems, pick up small amounts of fly tipping and litter, remove illegal bill posting, but not much else.

Mind you, with the overgrown state of our footpaths, that is more than enough for one year. There is an extra £11 million pounds available for pothole repairs. This will be carried out by a different team and Birchanger Lane is actually on the list.

Summer Fete Back on September 1st.

It will be the second time this year that the Club will have played host to the village. The Jubilee celebrations were well attended and provided a Birchanger Day Out for the many who came. The fete on September 1st will feature all the old favourites and more. Expect the return of the Hog Roast, a wide range of beers to sample, entertainment for the children and a wide range of stalls and attractions featuring village organisations as well as those from outside the village.

Time to Show Your Special Photographs

Birchanger Art Exhibition is to return again on the 28th and 29th of September. This attracts high calibre local artists whose work will be available to buy as well as just to browse. There will also be refreshments available.

Alongside this there will be an opportunity to show that very special picture you perhaps took on holiday, when the light or subject were very unusual, or any picture which you would like to display. There are three categories covering all age groups: under 12's, 12-18, and 18 and above. Pictures can be up to A4 size, must be mounted on card with the photographers name, telephone number and address on the rear.

Entries will be accepted between 2 and 5pm at the Church. There will be certificates awarded to the winners in each category.

There will also be an exhibition of Birchanger School's art work and a floral display in the church.
A date for your diary which will be close to your own doorstep!

Birchanger Parish Council Adopts the District Code of Conduct.

These days everything in local government has to be transparent and this means that elected members of councils everywhere must sign up to a code of conduct, whether it is one which they have created or a standard model which is used elsewhere. The legislation may surprise some who expected a more relaxed position on this under the coalition government.
Birchanger Parish Council has decided to adopt Uttlesford District Council's code of conduct and will operate under this code in future.

History Hiding in our Roof.

It has been over 100 years since our roof burnt down and the thatch was replaced by tiles. However the fire did not touch the bricks, and when it came to replacing the rather tall and now fragile chimney the small early Tudor bricks were discovered. Their condition was excellent but the ones which had been added a century later were crumbling and fragile.

Most of the Tudor bricks will remain while their later counterparts have been replaced. The priest's hole where 2 men could hide is still there and will remain there until the new chimney finally gives way. Their condition is such that they will certainly out last the new bricks.

Birchanger's History goes well beyond Tudor times. Over 1000 people lived here in 1066. The whole area was wooded, with people living deep in the woods or gathered together in a small clearing roughly where the centre of Birchanger is today. Our house was built as a rest house for the Dons of New College Oxford who visited Thremhall Priory, so was built before the priory was burnt down. It remained in the ownership of New College until the end of the 19th century. It was for rent at five shillings a year.

The ancient bricks which were removed will be used to create a brick barbeque, well maybe, one day.

The Spirit of Britain Lives On.

Well it does when you are trapped for several hours in the underground system. I feared for the London Underground after spending several hours stuck in a train following a points failure, or perhaps it was a signal failure, depending on which announcement you chose to believe at the time.

It happened one Saturday night, when a large part of the system was already "closed for maintenance" and there was this failure of the service on the central Line. Trains

were crowded with people trying to get home after a Saturday out. It had rained heavily so most were damp and tired. People were herded off trains and on to others with very little progress made as they tried to journey homeward. We finally were put back onto the Central line again after many diversions to face a journey that lasted over an hour to cover two stations.

It was very hot on the train and packed. People gave up their seats so that others could take a turn sitting down. People actually chatted to each other, shared their phones as they tried to explain their predicament to concerned relatives, and tried to solve difficulties over how to do the shopping, find an all night chemist and other small concerns. When we finally cleared the obstruction, we parted as friends.

We were in a mainly young age group from all manner of backgrounds. Nobody appeared to be drunk, nobody was anything other than considerate to their neighbour. Hope for mankind yet.

Please do not Smoke Out Your Neighbours.

Bonfire lighting is something some people really love to do. The problem is that while you are enjoying yourself, your neighbours are bearing the full effects of your smoke, their washing is blackened and their homes stink for days.

Bonfires constitute a health hazard where they blow directly across people's homes and should be reported as a nuisance to the public health authority at the District Council. They can and have taken action.

Parking in the lane on Dustbin Days.

There are several new refuse vehicles collecting our rubbish and operating the new systems which have been put in place this year. The only problem is that these vehicles are somewhat larger than their predecessors and cannot access narrow lanes.

I was somewhat surprised to find that part of Birchanger Lane fell into the narrow lane category, but apparently it was because a vehicle was parked inconsiderately on a wider part of the lane. This meant that some 70 households did not have their rubbish collected. A smaller vehicle had to be sent the following day to complete the round.

One thought, if the refuse collection vehicles are larger, and they try to get by, you could find your vehicle has been remodelled when you next drive it. Take care!

When Sally met Rami

On Monday 2nd, July I was presented with a 5 year appreciation award for my voluntary work with a charity organisation called support 4 sight.

Every week I give support and advice to people at Herts and Essex eye unit.

I also guide visually impaired people on holidays, and more recently as a day companion and guide

A few weeks ago I met Rami who had travelled from Israel to London for a week. We had arranged to meet at the British museum in London. I had enquired about the audio and facilities available to the blind at the museum.

The information desk had marked the rooms to go that would be of most interest to Rami and supplied me with a book describing things etc.

I started by taking Rami to the top floor where there are Olympic medals on display. Unfortunately they were behind glass but I described them to him adding additional information as required.

Leaving that area we chose the next gallery. We found ourselves in areas that had a "hands on" policy where a room guide stood at a desk laden with objects to handle and she or he would tell us about each item. There were several rooms with this type of display which I found very informative

We went into rooms such as the Egyptian room where items were labelled in Braille, for example a picture of a sphinx was embossed in my book for Rami to run his fingers over.

Then he could touch the real thing and I would read the information given in the book next to the picture.

Before we left the Museum Rami wanted to visit the Museum shop where he duly bought items to take home.

We then left the museum and headed to a restaurant for a meal.

Rami made me laugh as his next request was go to oxford street as he had three items he wished to take home One was an audio book of a programme he had heard on bbc radio while back in Tel aviv. That was easy I found a Waterstones where they found the book much to his delight.

The second was a CD of songs recorded by a blind husband and wife that I had never heard of, I managed to find an HMV and item number two was purchased.

The third item proved to be too much of a challenge for Oxford Street "Scrumpy Jack Cider"

I saw to it that Rami got on the correct bus back to his hotel and we said our goodbyes.

Sally Tilstone



News from Birchanger Social Club

Birchanger Sports & Social Club Committee secures significant Grant for the club

In early 2012 the BSSC Club committee applied to the Uttlesford Council regarding a possible grant under the S106 funding - Forest Hall Park. The application was made in consideration of repairs and modification to the club covering refurbishment of the toilet facilities, installing a lavatory for the disabled, modifications to the interior structure of the building and repairs to the roof.

Following lengthy exchanges of correspondence between the Club and the Council, the Committee is pleased to announce that it has been successful in securing a grant of £80,000.

After receiving the results of the Club survey in December 2011, the committee acted on members wishes and undertook preparatory work and investigation in respect of the repairs and modifications mentioned above. The committee can now report that it has been successful in obtaining permission to carry out the work according to the necessary building regulations allowing the work to proceed as and when approval is given by the Members.

At this stage it is not known if the council grant is sufficient for all the modifications proposed or whether additional club funds will be required to support the cost of the work. However, the project is currently being specified and will shortly be put out to tender to several companies in order to assess the total cost for the work. As soon as the tenders are in and the costs are known the proposal will be submitted to the members for approval. It is anticipated that the proposals will be submitted at the next AGM.

Updated drawings will be made available in the Club to keep members informed of the proposals but if any member needs further details or has any questions they are invited to contact any of the officers or members of the Committee.

Birchanger Summer Fete at the Club 1st September 2012

Yes it will soon be time again for the annual Birchanger Summer fete. The date is 1st September and the time from 1.00pm to 5.00pm. Last year's fete was a fantastic success and enjoyed by many families in Birchanger and the surrounding villages. This year will be no exception. There will of course be the obligatory hog roast and BBQ, and loads of fun and great entertainment for all the family including a bouncy castle, brass band, karate demonstration, gladiator joust, raffle, stalls, face painting and plenty more. In the evening entertainment in the club will be by "Ainsley". ***Don't miss it!***

Fancy an Ice cream

The Club has just introduced a whole new fantastic range of ice cream for all the family.

Choices include:

Magnum; Classic, White & Infinity

Cornetto; Strawberry & Enigma

Minimilk; Vanilla, chocolate & Strawberry

Solero; Exotic & fruit Ice

Other enticing ice creams include: Haribo Push up, Calipo orange, Feast & Twister

School News

School Celebrates Achievement.

July marked the end of the school year and it was a year which many will look back on with pride. It was a year when sporting records were broken, the school came third in the District Sports with one pupil breaking all previous records in the High Jump and jumping more than his height as well. The cricket teams also performed well. Six Children who made outstanding progress were rewarded at a special event put on by the West Essex Partnership which includes the District Council. The children were presented with a special certificate and a £10 book token to mark their achievements at the District Council offices. There was also a special tea and a group photograph in the atrium. Children who were leaving were amongst those who gained an award and they rated it as one of the main highlights of their time at Birchanger. Throughout the school barriers were broken and achievement was high.

It was time to say goodbye to Year 6, always a bitter sweet time. The years at Birchanger seem to pass too quickly and the Class of 2012 has been one of the highest achievers in recent years. There was the, now traditional School Prom, and leavers surprise. This year it really was a surprise as the stretch Hummer arrived the week before to whisk the leavers away for an afternoon of fun at the Outdoor Activities Centre. Parents of the leavers came to school for the last Wednesday Roast Lunch, enjoyed the school play and the sad but memorable Leaver's Assembly and Leaver's Service. There was a special dinner at Pizza Express on the final Friday followed by a sleep over at one very courageous parent's house.

Meanwhile we move on to the new school year, hoping that it will bring new achievements for the school. The current Year 5 children have been well prepared and encouraged by the leavers as to their new roles. We also look forward to welcoming all the new children in to the reception class in September. Their parents were also invited for lunch to see just what will be on offer for their children.

School Play Was a Chance for Everyone to Shine.

And shine they really did. Year 6 pupils took on the roles of world famous singers. Before they did their own song in character they were interviewed by fellow pupils and gave us all a glimpse of themselves and their families before assuming the part of their chosen character. An amazing number of the Dads were said to be "mad"!

The costumes were imaginative and followed the original role model. The songs were clear and sung

really well. It is a very brave thing to do to sing to a large audience but everyone seemed oblivious to all of this and performed with confidence and enjoyment. The audience loved it all. Every child had a part to play whether as a singer, dancer, member of the backing group all brought together by a very able narrator who coordinated the show.

Olympic Torch Comes to School.

One of the torch bearers who carried the torch through our patch on July 7th came to school to show their torch to the children. Every child was then able to have a turn running around the field with the torch so they had first hand experience of what being a torch bearer was actually like.

Rain Stops Sports Day

The Sports Day had to be postponed due to the appalling weather. Everyone was on stand by for a gap in the long run of really horrible monsoon like weather. Sports kits lived at school and parents were on a 24 hour standby.

The Summer Fair was also cancelled. This is a shame as the event produces much needed funds for the school and a great deal of hard work had already been done. The school is very grateful to the PTA for all they do to support the school. It is hoped to hold a similar event on September 15th.

Summer Prom.

I never had one at primary school but at Birchanger the Ball is an eagerly awaited event. Again run by the PTA. It is also a chance to send the leavers to their new schools with another happy memory. The theme was Dukes and Divas and the costumes had been planned for weeks.

We shall miss them, they have been a very special year and have done a lot for the school.

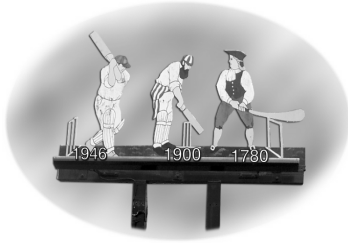
Swap Morning.

September is a seriously busy month at school. Children move into new classes and new children are welcomed into Class 1. The former year 6 are very much missed at this time.

To let the children get a flavour of their new classes there was a swap morning in the last week of term so children could have a taste of their new classes and have a very clear idea of what to expect when it is back to school in September.

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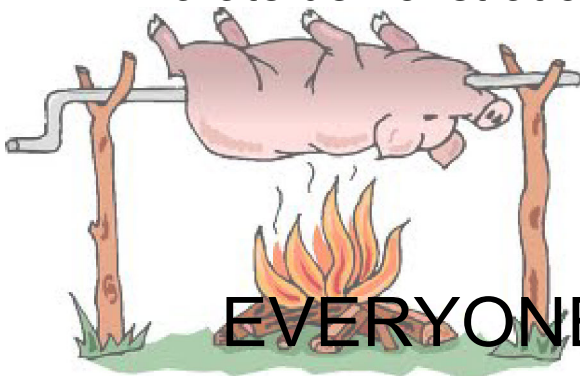
SUMMER FETE 2012

Saturday September 1st

At the club

From 1 till 5 pm

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karate demonstration, gladiator joust, raffle, stalls,



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Village Diary August/September

August

26th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion
With Baptism
26th 7.00 pm At the club
Produce Auction

September

1st 1.00 pm At the club
Birchanger Summer Fete
1st 8.00 pm At the Club
Ainsley
2nd 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins
9th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion
16th 11.00 am St Mary's
Family Service
23rd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion
30th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins
29th/30th
Flower festival
Organ recital
Photographic competition
School Display

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