

Birchanger

November 2012



Magazine

Issue 119

Pam Lee is Birchanger's Community Award Winner

Uttlesford Community Awards are back after a two year absence due to funding difficulties. After such a gap there were many nominees for the awards which reward ordinary people in the community who are doing extraordinary work for their own towns and villages.

Pam Lee was a very worthy nominee for Birchanger this year. She is a very familiar figure in Birchanger who has worked tirelessly for the village in service to the Church, the school and the community at large.

Pam has been the driving force behind the improvements to the church which will be in evidence early next year. It is not easy to obtain the approval of the church for any works and it requires patience and perseverance to see the project through. Next year toilet facilities will be in place, the church painted, the damp treated and much more.

Pam has been determined to keeping the church open and flourishing despite outgoing rectors, money worries and more than the average run of other aggravations. She has raised thousands of pounds through concerts, special lunches, fairs, bazaars and more, over a period of many years. She regularly takes services at the Church and School assemblies.

She has also contributed to the well being of Birchanger School. In addition to being a School Governor she helps at the school wherever there is a need in a variety of different ways.

There is so much that Pam does which help us all, most of it is not included here, but everyone will have their own special reason to think of Pam and the work she does throughout Birchanger.

It was good to see her work acknowledged by this award at a special evening in the Uttlesford District Council Chamber. An evening which is regarded by many at the council offices as the best they ever have, as the work put in by so many is finally acknowledged. This year was particularly special as our two Uttlesford Olympians were honoured as were all the Olympic Volunteers and Games Makers, most of whom were wearing their distinctive uniforms.





PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

20mph Limit for Birchanger

Essex County Council is considering introducing a 20 mph speed limit in appropriate areas in Essex. Local people will know just where these are.

This is behind the proposed consultation with all parts of Essex as to whether residents feel that their particular patch would benefit from a lower speed limit or not. For the 20mph limit to be introduced, there must be consultation and a reasonable proportion of the area in support of the lower limit. County Highways would also be consulted.

Many people despair at the speed some drivers go as they drive down Birchanger Lane. Do you think that a lower limit would help to prevent this? If so, where would it be most effective?

These are questions to consider in the coming months. I am happy to take your opinions now, and the matter will be brought to the Annual Parish Meeting at the end of March.

Beware the Key Scratchers.

They are out and about and targeting Harrisons, making sure they go for expensive vehicles as well. Owners face a heavy repair bill or a loss of a no claims bonus for something which really is just another example of brainless vandalism. Birchanger has been a relatively crime free zone. It seems somebody is out to change all this.

Visitors and workmen in the church hall.

As most people know, the Church Hall is due to be extended shortly. Plans for this are on view in the hall and a Planning Application has been lodged with the District Council.

It is hoped to keep the interruptions to hall users down to an absolute minimum, but there will be work carried out during normal working hours and workers may need to access the hall on some occasions.

These occasions will be kept to a minimum, but some will be unavoidable though hopefully not too disruptive. We apologise for this but it will not go on for ever. If there is likely to be disruption, and we will ask to be informed about this in advance, Mrs Gage will contact you.

Uttlesford offers to microchip your dog for free

If you are a dog owner, living in Uttlesford who has not yet micro chipped your dog, now is the time to have it done for free.

Thanks to a donation from the Dog' Trust unchipped dogs are invited to persuade their owners to arrange for them to be chipped. All the owners need to do is to call the Dog Warden Sue Knight on 01799 510594 to arrange for this painless procedure to be carried out. After all if the dogs do get lost, at least there is a very good chance that they will be reunited with their owners.

In some circles, it is believed that the micro chipping of all dogs will become mandatory soon. It is unlikely to be free then.

Could this be someone from Birchanger?

Hopefully none of our youngsters would do this but last month two boys between about 11 and 15 years old chucked a brick over the motorway bridge hitting a car.

Fortunately unlike the disaster on the A 12 some months ago the motorist who was hit escaped with just a crack on his windscreen, but it could have been much worse.

Boys like to try things out and that age probably do not realise the possibly fatal consequences of their actions, but this is something which must not be allowed to continue in the village. People behaving suspiciously on motorway bridges should be reported to the police whatever their age.

What is happening to our

Gas services?

All summer we suffered traffic lights and delays while the gas service contractors replaced the gas main in part of Birchanger Lane. Everyone remarked at the time that very little actual work seemed to be happening, the process took months and held up repairs to the surface in the lane. The workmen arrived unannounced and told nobody how long the work would be expected to take.

Now the school has been let down badly. The new boiler which replaced the old oil burner was in place for weeks before the gas board set a date for its connection in October. All the time the weather was getting colder and the school was forced to spend a small fortune on inefficient hired electric heaters to keep the classrooms up to the heating standards. Then the connection date was postponed for a further two weeks.

This is no way to treat customers in a vulnerable group or in fact, anyone. The Gas Authority had no regard for the wellbeing of the pupils who range from four year olds upwards. One can't help feeling that a lot of the time wasted gazing down holes and drinking cups of tea would have meant a more efficient connection service and enhanced the rather dim view the village has of their performance overall. After all they are quick enough to put up their prices.

What do You Know About the "Hundred Parishes Society"?

If you are like me, absolutely nothing. That was until very recently when at a community forum Ken MacDonald, one of the leaders in this the meeting all about it.

Birchanger is included in the 100 Parishes, which stretch from Ware and Buntingford eastwards to great Waltham and Weathersfield. All the parishes lie in particularly lovely settings and have a high architectural and agricultural heritage. They are also surrounded by ancient woodland, hedgerows with quiet lanes and footpaths.

To date the area has suffered growth pressures which are rigorously resisted but the founders of the society believe it is an area which needs on going protection. They aim to raise the public's awareness and understanding of the character of the special place they are living in. They hope to enhance public welfare and quality of life through promoting the enjoyment and care of the 100 parishes. They will also focus on the

conservation of the natural environment with particular regard to its features of historic, architectural and wildlife interest.

The group intend to apply for charitable status when funds permit, but contact can be made at hundredparishes@btinternet.com. To make this work it will need the support of the people who are living here.

Do you need transport?

Don't forget Uttlesford Community Travel. This group provides door to door mini bus services with wheel chair access for all disabled people and those over 55. They also run the Volunteer Hospital Car Service. They aim to help all those throughout the District who need transport to wherever they need to go within a reasonable radius, who find public transport difficult to use, or not convenient for them or their intended destination.

Light up early for Christmas

Yes it is coming and although you may be dreading the thought of all that shopping, all the entertaining as well as the expense, it is also the end of the year.

It has been a very special year. We celebrated the Jubilee with extra holidays and special events and with a once in a lifetime experience we welcomed the world to London. Everyone will have their own special memories of this landmark year.

To commemorate why not light up the skies in Birchanger for the whole of December? New lights do not cost so much to either buy or run these days, and the smallest display is welcome in the December gloom.

How about considering making December 1st Birchanger Christmas Lights Switch On evening? It may be daunting to be starting decorations for Christmas that early but least that will mean another job completed ahead of the Christmas schedule. It will hopefully bring a little Seasonal cheer to everyone in Birchanger as well.

Virus Warning

Please be aware of an email circulating at the moment that purports to be from Royal Mail.

The message is carrying particularly nasty virus that may damage you computer. If you receive it the best thing to do is delete it un opened.

Now you can walk in Birchanger wood without getting your feet wet

There is now a new footpath through Birchanger Wood on our side of the A120. The path was opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Essex Lord Petre and our Parish Council Chairman Maria Davy last month. The event took place in the wood with land owners and dignitaries from all around Birchanger in attendance.

The event marked the culmination of the current phase of paths to open the wood up for those in wheelchairs, with buggies and young children, and making it easier for all of us to use in wet weather. We can actually get there on firmer paths now, although the route between the grain barn and the A120 is private and was only opened up to allow easier access and parking for the occasion. It will be a great walk in winter months, as you can actually walk the wood without crossing the road unless you want to, and the new path is surprisingly long.

Try it sometime. In the meantime local children will be planting additional trees donated by the woodland trust in the next few weeks, securing the future for this ancient wood for centuries to come.



Time to get a flu jab

Like them or loathe them, Flu Jabs have actually saved lives and been active in epidemic prevention. The principle is that the more of us who get vaccinated the less risk there is of a serious flu epidemic and all the attendant chaos. Anyone who has experienced full blown flu will know how hard it is even to get out of bed and that it definitely does not go away after 24 hours. If you don't have these symptoms along with the roaring headache, sore throat, running nose and hacking cough then you don't have flu.

It can be serious, often leading to pneumonia particularly in young children, vulnerable adults and as well as the elderly. All these groups get a free jab every year. A lot of them do not take it up, thereby endangering themselves and risking being a nuisance to others.

Every year some of us will get it, but when we are lying there with all the symptoms raging, it won't be good to remember that it was all avoidable in the first place.

A big thank you from this Magazine to the Art exhibition team

The Birchanger Art Festival was very successful this year. Starting with the Private View on Friday where everyone who had bought a picture at the previous exhibition along with Art Gallery owners, were invited to see the pictures and enjoy a glass of wine as they did so. Throughout the weekend there were record numbers of visitors and over 40 paintings were sold.

That was not all there was to see. The flower arrangements in the Church, created by Rosemary Saward were stunning. The children from the school had an exhibition of their art work, along with a Posy in a Cup competition, where visitors were invited to vote for the best Posy, as they were with the photographic competition, also in the Church.

It was a weekend where there was a lot going on. Teas and homemade cakes were also on offer. The hard work really did pay off as the Art Group now has money available for Village Projects.

This magazine, which only survives on donations will benefit, and if you or your organisation knows of any special needs or projects which need support now is your opportunity. to find out more, Please call the lady who, alongside Heather Brown, managed to make the whole event happen. She is Sheila Devereux on 813843.

School News

Planetarium Comes to School

Normally when we think about planetariums we think about well known structures where we see specially arranged and fixed shows which focus on the various galaxies in our universe. There is now a mobile service which will erect your own planetarium for the day in any spacious indoor location.

In Birchanger Schools' case the team arrived and set up the Planetarium in the school hall. Different classes could visit throughout the day and learned about the position of all the stars and planets and how to be able to spot them in the night sky. A novel idea which was a major hit throughout the school and one which will certainly visit the school again.

If You Go Down to the Woods on Wednesday

Yes you may be in for a big surprise should you come across a group of children toasting marshmallows in front of a small fire they have learned to light and carefully control. Toasting marshmallows is a treat but every Wednesday two classes are in the woods owned by a local farmer and used with his permission.

Under the careful eyes of a lady from the Woodland Trust the children learn and become part of the life in the wood. They learn the changes which come with every season, learn to identify the birds and their songs, they learn to build dens, discover unusual insects, leaf colour contrasts, and much more. New words are learned, they know how to respect the wood and each other, how they can relate colour to their own art and have great fun stomping and even sitting in the mud. They are there rain or shine, suitably clothed in waterproof outdoor clothing provided by the PTA.

The children on that day were shown how to light a fire, why sometimes fires will not work and what to do about it. They also started to learn how to use a knife correctly as they whittled a willow twig to make a toasting fork for their marshmallows which were a half term treat. They learned never ever to leave a fire and the wood is all tidied up afterwards, so you would never know that they had been there.

School Library is Officially Opened

Thanks to the PTA the school now has a comfortable and cosy library which is very well stocked with books for all ages at the school, complete with carpet, comfortable chairs and book reviews by their fellow pupils. It is the ideal place to curl up on cold, wet, winter days.

The PTA have not only provided the bulk of the funding for this project, they have also put in a great deal of time cataloguing the books. They do need more support to continue with their fundraising efforts, the benefits of which are felt in so many different ways throughout the school. They welcome everyone who reads this magazine to come to their events, or perhaps lend a hand where possible. They meet regularly and for parents it is a very good way to get to know the school and the other parents and staff as well.

To find out more, please contact me on 812793.

The School's Newspaper is Launched

The first edition of the School newspaper was published just before half term. There is a full editorial team and interviews were held for the reporter's posts which were keenly contested. Extracts from the newspaper will find their way into this magazine from time to time.

News from the Club

The Social Club held its 2012 AGM on Wednesday 24th October with the chairman and treasurer giving accounts of the club's commercial state.

A market overview revealed the declining fortunes of clubs around the country with half saying trade is substantially down and 60% of clubs are reporting a drop in profitability.

So despite the downward trend in the market place with the credit crunch, drink driving and smoking ban having their effects on the club Birchanger club seems to be holding its own with no increase in subscriptions proposed or indeed any price increases since April 2011.

The chairman Peter Booker reported what the club is doing to buck the trend. He said. "We have a hard working committee which have kept within the budgets set for key disciplines which include entertainments, buildings, marketing, servicing and repairs. We held a very successful fete on our club grounds which generated considerable revenue for the club; we also have football teams other than our teams wanting to play at our venue, which increases revenue to the club."

He then reported the Subscription and bar prices for three other local clubs with which Birchanger Club compares favourably!

He finished with an appeal to members for input on where the club should be investing its future reserves in.

There were various changes to the committee which will allow Birchanger club to continue to successfully trade in the way we are used to.

Saturday 1st December - Social Night, Free Raffle, Free drink

This year the Social Night features entertainment from Chris Keen, and includes a FREE raffle with some whopping great prizes including a 32" TV, Blu-ray player, Sat Nav, pan set, camera & iPod Shuffle. As if that wasn't enough we are offering all members a FREE drink.

Saturday 8th December - Entertainment night with Ray Collins

Saturday 15th December - Kids Christmas Party

Children up to the age of 12 years old are invited to the BSSC annual Christmas party. The party which will be full of fun and games starts at 1.00pm and finishes at 4.00pm. Don't miss it kids!

Saturday 15th December Grand Christmas Draw – Win £150

The Grand Christmas draw will be held at the club on Saturday 15th December at 10.00pm. First prize for the winner is £150, second prize will be a Kindle e-reader and many other smaller prizes are on offer including a Christmas food hamper. Entertainment for the evening is by the popular duo Topaz.

Wednesday 19th December - Christmas Carols at the Club

BSSC will host a Christmas carol service in the clubs sports field from 6.30pm to 7.30pm which will be open to all families and friends of Birchanger. The carol service is in aid of MENCAP at Grove Cottage and will be led by the reverend Paul Wilkin. After the service the club will offer FREE mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies, in addition hot food will also be available to purchase at the bar. Song sheets will be supplied so all you need is a torch, warm clothes and your good humour.

Christmas Eve - Monday 24th - Entertainment night with Winnie

New Year's Eve - Monday 31st – Disco & Raffle

News from St Mary's

Remembrance Sunday

Remembrance Sunday was observed at St Mary's this year in the best possible Autumn weather. About seventy parishioners attended the service including a contingent from our Scout troop who led the short procession to the war memorial.

Three of the scouts read out the names of the 51 servicemen commemorated on the memorial. And the silence was observed for rather longer than the traditional two minutes.

The service this year was conducted by Pam Lee in the absence of our rector who was performing elsewhere this year. A poem "On wings of thunder" was read by Geoff Driscoll and Rosemary Saward gave a reading of the story of David and Goliath.

The lesson on the subject of victory related by Pam Lee concerned Mitsuo Fuchida the Naval officer who led the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. After the defeat of Japan Fuchida was astonished to discover the difference in treatment that the Allies and Japanese had inflicted on their respective Prisoners of War. The conflict between his Bushido indoctrination and reality led to Fuchida converting to Christianity in 1949.

The service concluded with Eric Coates "The Dambusters" played by Mr Martin on St Mary's Organ.



Birchanger Sports and Social Club December Entertainment

Saturday 1st Social Night
With Chris Keen
Saturday 8th Entertainment
With Ray Collins
Saturday 15th Children's Party
8.00 pm Grand Xmas Draw
Tuesday 19th On the Field
Christmas Carols
Monday 24th 8.00 pm
Entertainment with Winnie
Monday 31st 8.00 pm
Disco and Raffle

Follow us at www.birchangerclub.com

229 Birchanger Lane 01279 813441

Evening Carol Service

Friday 21st December

7.00 pm St Mary's

Everyone Welcome



CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING



In aid of Church funds

Tuesday 11th December
10.30 till Noon

Moorswood 330 Birchanger Lane

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Village Diary
November/December

November

18th 11.00am St Mary's
Holy Communion

25th 11.00am St Mary's
Holy Communion

December

1st 2 pm Church Hall
Xmas Fair

1st 8.00 pm At the Club
Social Night
With Chris Keen

2nd 11.00am St Mary's
Matins

8th At the School
Xmas Bazaar

8th 8.00 pm At the Club
Ray Collins

9th 11.00am St Mary's
Holy Communion

11th 10.30 Moorswood
Christmas Coffee Morning

15th At the Club
Children's Party

16th 11.00am St Mary's
Christingle Service

19th 6.30 pm At the Club
Christmas Carols

21st 7 pm St Mary's
Evening Carol Service

23rd 11.00am St Mary's
Advent 4 Communion

24th 8.00 pm At the club
With Winnie

25th 11.00 St Mary's
Family Communion

26th 12.00 At the club
Whiskey Draw

30th 11.00am St Mary's
Matins

31st 8.00pm At the Club

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