

Birchanger
February 2016



Magazine
Issue 157

BIRCHANGER-ON-SEA



Water has been a huge factor in the start of 2016, as up and down the country families have had their Christmases and homes blighted by unseasonably wet weather. Closer to home we have been somewhat luckier in Birchanger, but still not unaffected: The main issue being on Birchanger Lane outside the club sports field. 'Lovingly' now referred to as Birchanger lake this area was seen to rise up to people's drives, cutting off safe use of paths and making it dangerous for most cars to pass safely. On one particularly bad day, water also blocked the road by the Travelodge as gutters backed up with discarded McDonald's detritus, making the whole area the perfect romantic getaway for ducks. On both occasions Essex Highways have failed to act despite numerous attempts by the Parish Council to spur them into action. For the Travelodge lake, we have Ron Ranger to thank as he endeavoured to clear out the ditches himself and ensured it was once again passable for vehicles. Birchanger Lake comes and goes but remains an issue that Highways will seemingly do their very

best to ignore. As a community all we can do is report the incident to Highways independently of the Parish Council. Perhaps if they realise it is affecting us all then they will be willing to act.

Similarly, as a community can we aim to be a little more considerate when driving through the village, especially on wet days. Many elderly members of the village have been the victim of a drive-by soaking. Whilst it may cause amusement to some, getting covered in cold and dirty water is no laughing matter for the vulnerable in our community, so please drive with consideration.



THINGS GET FRESH IN THE CLUB

By February many of us have given up on New Year's Resolutions and diets, but the club is sticking firm to its new dedication to all things fresh and home cooked. One of new Steward Del's main aims when joining the club was to replace the old menu which relied largely on frozen pre-prepared items and replace it with a new higher quality menu, which still reflects the needs (and budgets) of the members but does not compromise on quality. The new menu, which debuted in the beginning of January, has proved popular with club members old and new,

especially the addition of a Sunday Roast lunch. There have had to be some changes, but great attention has been made to keep those items, which are known to be popular. Similarly, many classics have simply seen an upgrade, with better quality more fresh ingredients from local sources. This improvement in quality has had a small impact on some prices, but the club remains one of, if not the, best value place for food drinks and entertainment in the area. So as they celebrate their 125th anniversary why not head along and try it out.



a letter from the editor

Dear Birchanger,

February, the month of love and overpriced roses. For this month, with cupid in the air, we thought we'd try to bring you a few more romantic elements to the Birchanger Magazine. This is also the month when as a leap year, women can ask men to marry them. Don't panic readers though, we will not be erring into sex tips and scandal, I have it on good understanding that the Pampas Grass days of Harrisons and beyond are well behind us. Instead I thought we could focus on what you could get up to on Valentine's to surprise your special someone with something more than a petrol station bunch of flowers. At the Birchanger Magazine we do not, however, wish to discriminate or alienate and hope some of this inspiration can work as well for singletons as it can couples. So if you're alone this Valentine's Day, why not celebrate these ideas with a friend, buy yourself that gift you've always wanted or bed in to a night of Bridget Jones and Chardonnay!

As always we're more than willing to receive updates from the village or ideas and suggestions about what you would like to see so please let me know. One error I made last month was about the new line dancing classes for absolute beginners. These start on Thursdays at 12:45 not 13:00, so apologies. Why not resolve to do something as a couple or to meet people this month and head on down to the Village Hall to strut your stuff?

Tom Granger



magazine@birchanger.com



816349



319, Birchanger Lane



LOCAL HEROES



KEN AND ZENA STURGEON



ED AND SUE GILBEY



This couple have been living together happily in Birchanger since 1961. Ken first met Zena after serving the Royal Navy. Since moving to the village both have been driving forces behind the local community. For almost 40 years Ken served on the club committee helping with the buildings committee, as we all as supporting the entertainments. They have also helped the local residents throughout their time in the village. As such a strong and much-loved couple of the village the magazine (and I'm sure our readers) would like to wish them many more happy years together. The club would also like to offer them a free meal in the club for two over the Valentine's weekend!

For years Ed led the helm at this very publication, something which is no mean feat and requires quite a dedication of time. Sue for her side has always supported local events from the church to coffee mornings and village life. She is known as a talented cake baker who will always be happy to help. Beyond the village magazine Ed was also a staunch supporter of the club being a member of the committee for some years. Once again the magazine would like to thank them for their years of service to the village and wish them the most romantic of Valentine's Days together. Hopefully they will be able to enjoy the special Valentines menu on offer over the Valentines's weekend courtesy of the club.



VILLAGE NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Can We Help?

A great many of us in Birchqnger have gardens and quite a lot of us enjoy our various plots and are able to look after them ourselves.

However there are some very keen gardeners who are finding their gardens a bit too much work for them as they grow older. They do not want to move out of the village for somewhere without a garden, but it is very hard for them to watch their gardens decline. The rest of us do not want them to move either. They are valued members of the Birchanger Community.

A great many of us would like to help, but are not quite sure how this could happen. One way would be to fund raise and to pay for professional help. Another way would be to form a group of volunteers with an hour or so to spare each month and to help these gardeners ourselves. If enough people could do this, then there would be no need for professional help at all.

What do you think. Could you spare the time? Would you like to help?

Call me on 812793.

Tea Room

It is easy in winter to go into a kind of hibernation state, but this is not particularly good for the human race. The days may be short and the weather very unpleasant, but staying home alone can lead to depression and other unpleasant illnesses.

It may not be want you think you would like to do, but it has been shown that as little as 15 minutes in the outdoors can do wonders for the human race, who obtain the valuable vitamin D through daylight, even if it is only the face which is exposed to it.

So a walk to the tea room between 2 pm and 4 pm on a Wednesday might be just what the doctor ordered. Alright, maybe he did not order the delicious cakes you can find there, but if you were to extend your walk a little, or perhaps arrange it to be a longer one with some friends, the Doctor would be delighted at the improvement in your sense of wellbeing in the winter. Why not try it. I do when I can and it has never disappointed. You will have a warm welcome.

The Big Soak

By this I mean the big puddle close to the bus shelter in the centre of the village, which everyone who uses the Lane knows all about. Highways know all about it too. They have been told repeatedly about this problem, but action is zero on their side. They will continue to be reminded that the problem still exists.

Meanwhile pedestrians are getting soaked by inconsiderate drivers who actually seem to find sport showering them in icy water as they drive through the offending large puddle, or mini lake at top speed.

Unless they are strangers, they must know it is there for days on end after it rains. It is horrible to think that there are such individuals around. Please drive slowly past the puddle. For once in your life think about others?

Drug Abuse is Back in Birchanger

There have been problems with this in Birchanger before, most notably the events some years ago which led to the murder of a young man. Nobody wants to see this kind of thing ever again in this village. Many are still traumatized from the events of that night. Others have been dealt with through the court system, but the problem does not go away.

Police are aware of the concerns of the Parish Council, but a large police presence in marked cars and uniformed officers is not the way to deal with this type of criminality. It is individuals seeing the smallest thing which they deem to be suspicious, and telling the police about it, not just their neighbours and friends.

In the past dealing and drug abuse has taken place in all Birchanger car parks and in the recreation ground.

The individuals concerned are too concerned about getting their fix, to care where the evidence goes, and it is evidence. Dealing with people like this is difficult, and most of us simply do not want to get involved, however, there is a phone line where people can report what they see anonymously, and the police will listen and take notice of any information received. We may not be aware of these actions as it is the subtle approach which catches these criminals.

The contact is Crime Stoppers on 0800 555 111 where you are required only to tell the police your information

and you do not have to give your name, or the usual number which is 111. On both numbers tell them all the information you have, no matter how trivial it may seem to you. Nobody wants the youngsters in Birchanger to be exposed to criminality and drugs. We ourselves need to act.

Stansted Airport Out Of The Frame?

Possibly not yet. The government's inability to make a decision and the MAG Groups' persistence means that even if the 3rd runway is built elsewhere, air traffic at Stansted will continue to rise, as we have already seen in recent months. It is hard to believe that the MAG group will not try and edge Stansted into the third runway debate somehow.

The stress and expense that all this has cost residents around the airport has gone on for over 50 years and until the first hole is dug at either Heathrow or Gatwick, we are still vulnerable, at the whim of a political party.

Be Fraud Smart in 2016

A great many people in our District have suffered one way or another at the hands of the fraudsters. Some have managed to recover their loss, but most have not.

There is no proven way to be certain to prevent fraud, because as soon as one seems more secure, the fraudsters work overtime and find a way around it. They are very smart and spend their time perfecting their skills.

There are various things you can do to lower the risks and remember the old adage, if in doubt, don't do it, find another way of contact, banking or placing a order. check the website is secure before you enter any any account or credit card details.

Look for the http so at the start of the web address and the padlock or unbroken key at the top of the paper next to the address bar.

Ensure that a phone call is made by the organization they say they represent. Banks or the police will NEVER call you asking you to transfer money to another account. Ensure that your phone line is disconnected after an unexpected call asking you to call your bank or security after one of these odd calls. If you want to check, do so from a different phone.

Never share your pin or personal passwords to anyone who contacts you. If someone does call you asking for this information, end the call immediately.

Never enter your PIN number over the phone, it is not secure and it is not kept secret from any caller. Do not click on links from unsolicited site.

If in doubt, check with your bank or card provider first. Fraud does not have to happen.

A new Police Contact Point in Saffron Walden?

With police stations closing down all over Essex in a so called economy drive, it is becoming increasingly difficult for ordinary members of the public to contact the police in person at all these days. A possible new initiative by the District Council to open the house situated in their car park as a police contact point for the public might well be welcomed.

An initiative like this has to be open at times to suit those who use it, and this may be difficult to arrange as people need to see the police for anything at anytime. It is just a house, no secure cells, interview rooms and all the usual things associated with a police station. Possible better than nothing, but is this really a good way forward for us all?

Your Letters



Dear Birchanger,

I today (15th Jan) decided that with the weather changing for the worse, I would take my tools up to the Allotments and clear the area of mud and leaves from outside the gate.

I feel it will or has already become quite dangerous for those of us at the bottom of the village to walk safely up past the allotments at this time of the year. Indeed, going for a drink at the club can be quite treacherous and following the consumption of our club's wonderful beer even worse coming home.

I would suggest it may be even more dangerous for young mums with prams and pensioners running for the bus.

I hope by doing this wonderful, kind gesture It may encourage a group of gardeners to take it on board to clear the area at the end of the season.

One can only trust in the good will of our allotment holders.

Michael 'Green Fingers' Daw

Ex Club Secretary

What's On ...

February

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
1 VH - 09:30 - Birchanger Buddies Mother and Toddler 19:30 Ballroom Dancing	2 VH - 09:30 - Adult Ballet, 15:45 - Junior Ballet	3 VH- 09:30 - Tai Chi 14:00 - Tea Room 10:00 - 16:00	4 VH- 13:00 - Line Dancing 20:30 Improvers Belly Dance 	5 - BSSC - Treasure Chest VH- 09:30 - SOSA - open to all 	6	7 St-M - Matins
8 VH - 09:30 - Birchanger Buddies Mother and Toddler 19:30 Ballroom Dancing	9 VH - 09:30 - Adult Ballet, 15:45 - Junior Ballet Shrove Tuesday	10 VH- 09:30 - Tai Chi 14:00 - Tea Room 10:00 - 16:00 Ash Wednesday	11 VH- 13:00 - Line Dancing 20:30 Improvers Belly Dance	12 - BSSC - Bottle Draw VH- 09:30 - SOSA - open to all 	13 BSSC - Valentine's Special Meal - Live Act - Pizazz - Art Class - Heather Highview - 10-12.30 Coloured pencils / watercolour birds.	14 St-M - Holy Communion St. Valentine's Day
15 VH - 09:30 - Birchanger Buddies Mother and Toddler 19:30 Ballroom Dancing	16 VH - 09:30 - Adult Ballet, 15:45 - Junior Ballet	17 VH- 09:30 - Tai Chi 14:00 - Tea Room 10:00 - 16:00	18 VH- 13:00 - Line Dancing 20:30 Improvers Belly Dance 	19 - BSSC - Treasure Chest VH- 09:30 - SOSA - open to all 	20	21 St-M - Family Service
22 VH - 09:30 - Birchanger Buddies Mother and Toddler 19:30 Ballroom Dancing	23 VH - 09:30 - Adult Ballet, 15:45 - Junior Ballet	24 - BAGS - Fun Quiz Night at VH VH- 09:30 - Tai Chi 14:00 - Tea Room 10:00 - 16:00	25 VH- 12:45 - Line Dancing 20:30 Improvers Belly Dance Art Class - Heather Highview 10-12:30 Basic watercolour skies and water. 	26 - BSSC - Wheel of Fortune VH- 09:30 - SOSA - open to all	27 BSSC - Live Act - Run for Cover	28 St-M - Holy Communion
29 Women - don't forget that today you can propose - Men - hide - VH - 09:30 - Birchanger Buddies Mother and Toddler 19:30 Ballroom Dancing		ART CLASSES W/HEATHER BROWN (Dates above) £30. Materials Included - Tel 815 453				

Line Dancing for Beginners

A new class for absolute beginners is taking place on Thursdays at **12:45** in the village hall.

Tea Room At the Village Hall



Every Wednesday

2.00 till 4.00



In aid of Hall maintenance



BIRCHANGER Sports & Social Club

Weekly	Event	When
Saturdays	Meat Draw	1.00pm
Saturdays	Bingo Lottery	Ask bar staff
Mondays	Quiz night	9.00pm
Wednesdays	Steak night	Evenings
Thursdays	Bingo night	08.30pm
Fridays	Bottle Draw	Evenings



BIRCHANGER Sports & Social Club



Live Entertainment - Great Food - Excellent Bar - Snooker - Darts - Pool – Football - Cricket - Bowls



VALENTINE'S WEEKEND

Even the club is getting a little frisky this month as we gear up to Valentine's weekend as well as provide refuge for anyone hiding their other halves on the 29th February. As part of renewed interest in our fresh food offering we will be having a special Valentine's Deal for members on the Saturday 13th evening. For the more traditional amongst us we will of course be serving our fresh Sunday lunch menu on Valentine's Day itself. Keep an eye out in the club or ask our friendly staff for details.



COFFEE TO LIVE FOR

As part of our gastronomic overhaul the club has also taken the much overdue step of updating its coffee machine. The new machine offers a whole range of options from lattes to mochas, stiff whites to a simple quality filter coffee. Using fresh beans this will be a proper coffee experience for our members.



ENTERTAINMENT

13th February - Pizazz



This group are set to take the club by storm, but bring a bit of light entertainment to lift the romantic spirit.

27th February - Run for Cover



An incredible covers act this group will rick the stage when they hit Birchanger.

26th February - Wheel of Fortune



5th + 19th February - Treasure Chest



Birchanger Sports & Social Club, 229 Birchanger Lane, Birchanger CM23 5QJ
Tel: 01279 813441 email: club@birchanger.com Follow us at: www.birchangerclub.com

Seasonal Advice



Gordon Blue Review: THE BRASSERIE- LOWER St STANSTED -PERFECT VALENTINE'S MEAL?

As I peered around the curtain I was greeted with the eager faces of other couples who stopped their meals to assess the new arrivals in their environment! An unconventional entrance, certainly one which didn't shout romance at first sight, but all that was soon rectified as the warm smile of front of house appeared, took my name and swept us off to our table.

A relaxed atmosphere welcomed me in as I had my chair pulled out for me and complimentary water and fresh bread appeared on the table. The two sided menu offering nine starters and mains did, in part, excite me. I thought it an ample and varied selection and felt reassured that I would be eating freshly cooked food of a high standard, (to reflect some high prices). One plus was there were no extra charges for sides, veg etc. T

From a suitable selection of wines I selected a light pinot noir, which was poured very professionally into my rather basic looking wine glass. I wonder how much a long stemmed, large, elegant glass would cost? Despite this, it was exactly as described and perfectly suited to my taste....and I was looking forward to a veritable feast.

The waitress was friendly, attentive and seemed knowledgeable about the food on offer so I tried several dishes. My favourite starter was the 'Pierogi', a classic polish dumpling dish. It looked attractive and although it seems not dissimilar to over-thick pasta, the Pierogi and its cabbage and wild mushroom filling and accompanying sauce was delicious. It sat midway in the price of starters that ranged from £6 to £11. The frog's legs starter was a first for me and I'm sure it was a classic, cooked to perfection. Tender meat with the flavours of garlic and herbs...what was not to like? The familiar shaped long legs that were recommended to be eaten by hand had the texture of chicken thigh but tasted of fish. My taste buds went into overdrive and my mind rejected the whole concept, as I could see the frog skin pattern running up the spine of the slimy creature that once sat on a lily pad!....Not the aphrodisiac I was hoping for ...

The sea bass main was also beautifully presented and a wonderful eat, as were most of the other dishes I tried. Even the steak was cooked a perfect rare, and although not the most tender sirloin I have eaten, it was indeed extremely tasty and it came with a nice choice of chips or dauphinoise potatoes, and a selection of sauces all included in the price. Both these dishes were priced midway in the mains ranging from £14 to £26.

By the time I had finished my main course, our section of the restaurant had emptied, which unfortunately lead to numerous waitresses changing table linen and adjusting tables ready for the next day. A big bug bear of mine as not only did I feel our conversation was exposed to listening ears, I felt it must be time to leaveand so we did. In any case, after sampling 3 starters, 2 mains and a bottle of wine, I was probably unable to squeeze in a dessert!

All said and done, the front of house was exceptional. The open kitchen, which we couldn't see from our table, was a credit to the professional team that were happy to have their work on show under lights....producing truly yummy food. We had a wonderful night and situated only a few minutes from Birchanger, I will definitely be going back.

Brasserie Lower St : 30 Lower St, Stansted CM24 8LP Tel: 817 177

Gardening Gold

The bulbs are rising as our gardens struggle to recover from the battering that January's range of weather patterns gave us. Not long now though until we can sit out with a drink in hand and enjoy the fruits of our labours!

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Bed time - Prepare vegetable seed beds and sow some vegetables under cover | 6) Get on the Vine - Prune wisteria |
| 2) Chit for Tat(ties) - Make sure to chit your potato tubers | 7) Divide and conquer - Divide bulbs that need it such as snowdrops and plant those in the green |
| 3) Cover your sensitive bits - Protect blossom on apricots, nectarines and peaches | 8) Hedge your bets - Trim hardy evergreen hedges and renovate overgrown deciduous hedges |
| 4) Keep the birds at bay - Net fruit and veg crops to keep birds at bay | 9) Conservatory Control - Prune conservatory climbers |
| 5) Deflower your Maiden's Breath - Prune and remove flower heads from winter flowering crops | 10) Cutting edge - Cut back deciduous grasses left over winter |

BAGS Moves Into its 3rd Year

When the idea of BAGS was first mooted after a few glasses of fine wine, I don't think anyone really knew how it would take off, but here we are after two successful years with lots of plans for an interesting and exciting 2016.

The idea of BAGS was for somewhere for the ladies of the village to meet and make new friends with other local villagers. These days with so many of us rushing about in our cars we sometimes hardly know our immediate neighbours. We met for the first time at the beginning of 2014 and came up with the name BAGS, Birchanger All Girls Society. It is primarily a social group for all ladies of any age living in Birchanger.

We meet on the last Wednesday of the month at 7.30 for 8.00 in the meeting room of the village hall. A small committee is elected annually at our A.G.M. and they work hard to offer a wide range of activities to hopefully suit all tastes, however new ideas from members are always welcomed.

Looking back on the last year, we have had quite an amazing range of activities: starting with a SOSA demonstration to shed some pounds after the festive season; a visit from The Birchanger Voices; Emergency First Aid training; a Fun Quiz Night; an evening ramble (including a refuelling stop at The Dog and Duck); a talk about Life as a Wildlife Crime Officer and a talk from Birchanger's Nadia Waters on her walk from Land's End to John O'Groats.

We had our very first trip in September which was a fantastic day out to Kew Gardens and then in December we had an extremely successful Cocktails and Canapés themed Christmas Party.

If you have missed out on all of this and would like to experience the fun first hand, or perhaps you have only recently moved in to Birchanger, come along on the last Wednesday of the month and you will be sure of a warm welcome. It is only £2.00 a meeting to give us a try and then £5.00 for a year's membership. We like it to be a social event with time for a natter, so tea/coffee and biscuits are included and some people like to bring some wine along too.

Look out for our adverts of forthcoming events in this magazine.

Stansted Airport records busiest year since 2007

Stansted Airport recorded its busiest year since 2007 as 22.56 million passengers travelled through the terminal in 2015, an increase of 2.6 million passengers and 13% on the previous 12 months.

Domestic traffic experienced the strongest growth during 2015 with passenger numbers up by 50%, primarily driven by a significant increase in capacity on Scottish routes by Ryanair and easyJet.

In December, over 1.7m passengers used Stansted, an increase of 9.2 per cent on the previous year, making it the second busiest December on record and the 21st month of continuous growth for the airport.

The month also saw the highest ever load factor for any December with an average of 83.2% of all available seats occupied on each flight, surpassing the previous best of 81.5% set in 2014.

Cargo tonnage at Stansted during December increased by 7.8% over the same month last year to lift the annual total to over 237,000 tonnes in the past 12 months, up 4.7% on the previous year and the highest annual total since 2012.

Birchanger All Girls Society

Come along and join us on the last
Wednesday of every Month

Doors open at 7.30 for 8 – 10 p.m.

£5.00 for annual membership and £2.00 subs.
each month

'A Warm Welcome to all Newcomers'

Forthcoming meetings:

Wednesday February 24th A Fun Quiz Night

Make 2016 the year you join the BAGS!

Tel. for details: Michelle - 814481,
Barbara – 813007, Rosemary - 814678

News from the School

Breakfast Club is Back!



The ever popular Breakfast Club is coming back on Friday mornings. This means that children will once again be able to come to school early on Friday mornings and enjoy a nourishing breakfast with their friends. The advantage is that some parents may be able to get to work early on that day as well.

Breakfast club has always been very popular. The children have to be reminded to go into class as they are enjoying chatting with their friends and are all oblivious to the time!

It is open to every child in the school and is used by a high proportion of children.

Governors Rated Well

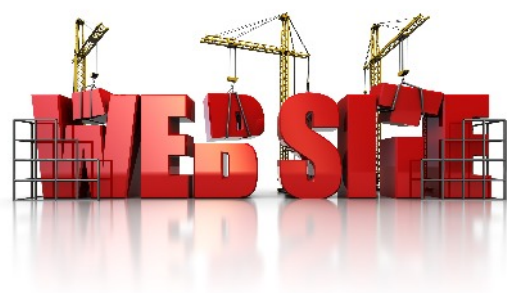
Nowadays nobody gets away without checks, targets, inspections and ratings at the school and that includes the Governors. They have to be checked and rated along with everyone else.

The school as well as the governors were pleased to see that in the recent governor rating round the school governors were firmly placed in the top band. This just did not happen, there is a lot of work involved to ensure that all the governors are fully up to speed in everything.

This may sound like hard work, but the role of a School Governor is a very interesting one and this in itself is a boost to the job. If you are ever in a position to volunteer to be a school governor, you would find it challenging but very fulfilling in so many ways.



New School Website is Up and Running



The school website has had a makeover and will continue to be updated in the coming weeks. It is hoped that it will be a source of interest to the parents and the surrounding community. You will be able to find details of what is happening at the school and information should be easier to find.

The process will take a little time to complete, but there is a lot to see if you take a look now. The address is <http://www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk>

Parents Consultation

It is always important for the school to have the views of parents. They can also be a source of good ideas and help to promote understanding.

Parents are to be consulted again this term. Their views contain some very good ideas and information, which the school can use. Learning for children is a responsibility which parents and the school share. It is important that information is exchanged between them.



ANY MAKE, YEAR, CONDITION

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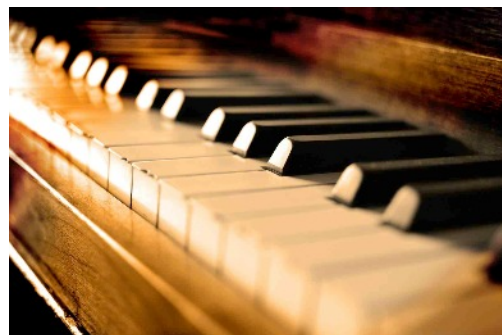
SELECTION OF NEW AND USED CARS

Yew tree corner Manuden
Ring Malc or Neil on
01279 813315 or 815946

CALLING ALL CLUB MEMBERS

BSSC is run by and for its members.
Throughout the year the committee are
working hard on entertainments, drinks, food
and sports for the members, but we can't
succeed without you. If you have any ideas or
have time to dedicate to sub-committees then
get in touch!

Drop us an email at
club@birchanger.com or speak to
one of our staff



Interested in a nice piano that - 'needs a
good home'?

Call Annie on 01279 815012.

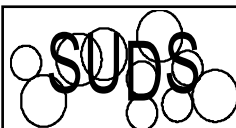
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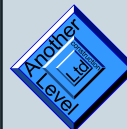


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