



# Birchanger Village Magazine

April 2025

Issue 267



## Ready – Steady – Gone!



**On a freezing cold evening in the middle of March,** two Parish Council members together with District Councillor and farmer Nick Church along with his trusty tractor gingerly lifted, removed and brought down the village sign on to a pallet after which it was stored inside the social club's cellar ready for collection by renovators.

The sign was originally erected in 2002. It was paid for using funds raised by the 'Birchanger Open Gardens' group. Various people in the village were involved and the final design was drawn by Birchanger local artist Heather Brown. After many years adorning our Village, the sign is now in desperate need of renovation. Unfortunately, since its installation in 2002, the weather has taken its toll on the revered sign and the paint is flaking away. The parish council has therefore decided it is time to do something about it. The sign was cleaned and touched up some years ago but now, more drastic action is deemed necessary. To this end the Norfolk company 'The Village Sign People', a specialist in this kind of work, has been contracted to carry out the renovation.

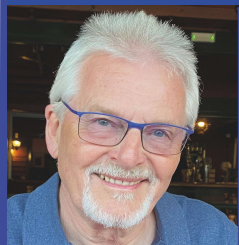


The sign will be cleaned and repainted by the company at a cost of approximately £2,000. This is being paid for by the Parish Council together with money raised by the art exhibitions that was held in the village prior to the Covid epidemic. The wrought iron framework will be separated from the painted panel to enable it to be gently grit blasted and then finished with a black satin finish enamel paint, then powder coated & baked.

The cast aluminium sign panel will also be gently grit blasted to remove the old paint. It will then be commercially treated with a polyester etch primer/undercoat and hand painted with topcoats of sign writer's high quality coloured enamel paint.

It will take several weeks before the newly renovated sign is ready for reinstallation.





# Editors Letter Box

## The passing of Beryl Ginger 20/8/37 - 15/2/25

It is with much sadness we announce the loss of our Mum, Beryl Ginger. Our family lived in the Village from 1966 until 2004.

Mum worked at the school for 30 years, 'Mrs Ginger' would have touched the lives of many children, and I am sure remembered fondly.

*Paula Tyler (Formerly Ginger)*



## Meet The CEO of Princess Alexandra Hospital

A unique opportunity to meet the recently appointed CEO of Princess Alexandra Hospital, Thom Rafferty, and senior members of staff to discuss various topics about the hospital.

**Venue:** Harlow Civic Centre, Water Gardens Harlow

**Date:** Tuesday, April 15, 2025, 2 -4 pm.

**Topics:**

- The new hospital update
- Electronic health record system and how this will benefit patients.
- Progress on the new orthopaedic Health Care Hub at St Albans for hip/knee surgery.
- New services at Herts and Essex and St Margaret's hospitals.

If you are interested in attending, please reserve your free ticket by logging onto Eventbrite website and searching for 'Meet the CEO PAH'.

For further information, please contact Diane Deane-Bowers, Vice - Chair Patient Panel PAH. 01279 815543.

*Diane Deane-Bowers*

## Bin Your Bag!

Last Sunday morning whilst out walking my dogs, I met a few people sourcing the hedgerows along the back of Harrisons where they were searching out and collecting rubbish that had clearly been deliberately tossed into the undergrowth. This rubbish included quite a number of poo bags (9) which were collected from beside a pathway where I know many families regularly walk their dog. There were also a few tin cans and plastic bottles.

There was a young child with this group and between us we came up with the name "Poo Patrol". Why anyone would pick up after their pet then sling the bag into bushes is beyond me, especially since there are three waste bins close by where these can be disposed of. Most plastic bags have a long-life cycle which is not good for the environment. So please, when you pick up after your dog and bag it, do not throw the bag into our hedgerows leaving the mess for someone else to pick up. The plea from the 'Poo Patrol' is - Bag it and bin it. Thank you.

*Pam Lee*

Don't forget, your magazine is only as good as the content it receives, so please keep sending me your news, views, notices, concerns and complaints. Advertisers are also welcome. All copy should be submitted by the 16<sup>th</sup> of the month, preferably sooner and may be edited depending on space and content. Please contact me by E-mail, phone, or letter as shown below.

Thank you and Kind Regards, *Peter Sampson*

Join us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/birchanger/](http://www.facebook.com/birchanger/)



[magazine@birchanger.com](mailto:magazine@birchanger.com)



07817 904333



2 Harrisons, Birchanger



# VILLAGE NEWS

By Elizabeth Godwin

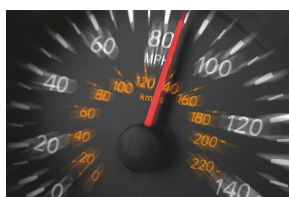


## Planning a Big Night Out?

Even a night out these days is all about personal safety, something we would never have considered 30 years ago. Attacks on women, at the venue or outside, and even in a cab are all things that have to be taken into consideration. Plan how you are going to get to the venue and book a cab from a reputable well-known company for the journey home. Never leave your drink unattended or accept a drink from anyone you don't know. It is incredibly easy to spike someone's drink. If a fight should break out tell a venue supervisor but never get involved. Grim advice for what should be a fun night out!

## Thinking of a Career?

Maybe you are about to leave school or perhaps you would like a change in direction. Have you ever thought about a career in the police? This does not mean that you have to actually join the police force. There are a lot of support jobs available which assist officers track down crime. You might be interested in forensics and a placement in the forensics team with appropriate training provided. You might like to be a call handler and assist members of the public who call about an ongoing incident or maybe need to discuss something they have seen. Maybe something online is bothering them, and they are unsure how to deal with it. Training and support is ongoing. There is a lot there which might surprise and interest you as you consider your future.



## Speeding on the A12

Recently at a police speed check on the A12, the police clocked 95 speeding motorists over a two-hour period. A large number of those caught registered speeds in excess of 110 mph in a 2-hour period. I wonder how many of these lost their licences.

Think you are safe? Think again. The cameras could be anywhere.

## Birchanger All Girls Society

The 'BAGS' welcome women to join them on the last Wednesday of every month at 8.00 pm in the village hall.

### Next meeting:

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> April 7.45 for 8.00 pm

A crafty evening painting pebbles!

[bags@birchanger.com](mailto:bags@birchanger.com)

Rosemary: 01279 814678 - Liz Turner: 07473 508056

## Can Spring Really Be on The Way?

Hopefully, it is. Well, the calendar says it is, but it seems that overall Spring could be a little late this year! Sometimes people feel very low this month and March can be very fickle weather wise. The deepest snow I have experienced in Essex to date has been 12 inches. This fell in March. We may not be there yet. The only thing you can say about snow in March is that it usually doesn't last long, otherwise it could do a lot of damage to the emerging flowers. Easter this year is almost as late as it can be, falling on April 20<sup>th</sup>.



## Getting Used to Being a Blue Badge Holder

I never thought I would actually qualify for a blue badge! The Doctor wanted me to have one, friends and family were very keen that I applied. Everyone but me thought it was a very good idea. Somehow, I couldn't get my head around it. I wasn't really disabled. I coped. Then someone sent me an application form. Eventually I looked at it. Like all government forms, it was repetitive and tricky to fill in. Eventually I thought I'd cracked it and finally sent it in and waited and waited hearing absolutely nothing. Nearly a year after submitting the form I phoned the application office up. They'd lost it and I had to do it all over again. There was a quicker response this time, only 6 weeks wait, and I was going to get a badge.

I was embarrassed to use the badge at first. Not for me, I didn't need it, big mistake! For a while it sat in my bag, then one day while attending the surgery I used it. I could park nearest the surgery for free. That had to be a bonus. The amount of time I was spending there, the closeness of the disabled parking places and mostly free parking was a real game changer. Although different locations have different charging rules, it has made the difficult process of growing old that little bit bearable. I now get cross when people use disabled parking places, particularly at hospitals or surgeries.



Blue  
badge  
holders  
only

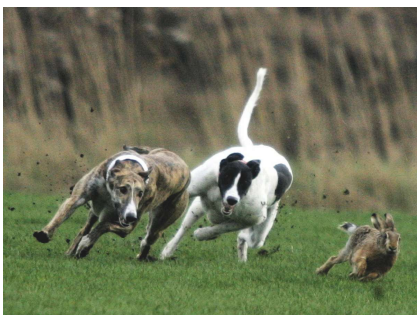
Sometimes the Stansted spaces are all filled by cars without blue badges. That can make life extremely difficult for those who actually need to use it. But take care, if you do take a chance and

jump into a blue badge parking space that you are not entitled to, the parking patrols will fine you up to £100, as the row of cars with parking ticket penalties proved. My car was the only one without a ticket. Do you think you need a Blue Badge? Your GP can help with this, or another health professional who is familiar with your case. I have to admit, albeit still reluctantly, my blue badge is a valuable aid for me.

## Hare Coursing Near Us

In Little Hallingbury in fact. Police were on the case and one of the main culprits, 'Little Susie' was arrested and detained in the naughty dog jail. The owner's anxious for her return, well he would be, but he has a lot of questions to answer first which he is apparently reluctant to do. Hopefully, Little Susie will find a new and happier home soon.

Hare coursing is an incredibly cruel way to kill a Hare. The details are unfit for publication, and it is terrible that it is happening in fields near us. You can help to clamp down on this so-called sport by reporting sightings of cars and vans in fields at weekends or in the evenings. Uttlesford police know it is happening; the key question is where? This is where the public might be able to help and put an end to this unnecessary cruelty for good.



## Coffee Morning April 15 from 10.00 am to midday

This is a special request for a Coffee Morning to be held at at Moorswood from Mick McGann. He has requested that any funds raised go to his special charity fighting Alzheimer's Disease. Please come and make it a very special Easter Coffee Morning. If anyone else has a special charity in mind which they would like to be a recipient of any funds raised at one of the special coffee mornings, please let me know.

## Looking for a New Voluntary Role?

Have you ever thought of becoming a Volunteer Policeman? Volunteer? Or Special Constable as most of us call them. Special Constables play a vital role in supporting regular police officers as they go about their routine duties. They wear the same uniforms, have the same powers and carry the same equipment as regular police officers. They are unpaid and volunteer their time because they want to help their community. Find out what this might involve at [specials.recruitment@essex.police.uk](mailto:specials.recruitment@essex.police.uk).



## Death on Our Roads

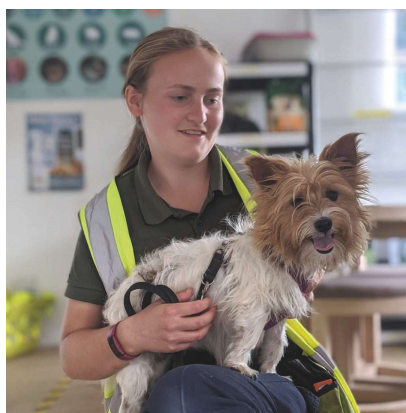
We all know about speeding and that speed kills. In Essex this year, eleven fit and healthy people have already lost their lives on roads in the county. All these people have homes and families whose lives have been upended by their loss, all unnecessarily. When you drive, you are in charge of a potential lethal weapon. It is not just you that could get killed. So please drop your speed and keep to the speed limits, and save lives.

## My Mobile Gives Up Again

Why is it mobiles never last much longer than two years with me. Beyond that they either break, fall apart, get lost or play me up to the point of distraction. As two years is the time it takes me to learn my new phone this is seriously annoying. It means you have to learn a new system with different programmes. All enough to drive my ancient brain to distraction. Where's a grandchild when you need one?

## Should Responsible Pet Ownership Be Taught at School

With all the cats, dogs, and many small animals who are callously dumped and deserted by their owners in the months after Christmas, people could be justified in calling for dog licences to be brought back and licensing introduced for anyone wishing to own a pet. British people claim to be pet lovers but deserted pets all over the country make this a big untruth, especially in the months after Christmas. Next year, if you really want a pet, why not wait until the lovely little rejected ones appear in rehoming centres in the months after Christmas.



They may be a bit wary and slow to adapt after their rotten start in life but most of them come to trust the family after care and kindness and patience in the end.

## Time to Hide Your Valuables

We tend to think of burglars as being opportunistic - and they are, but if you have something they really want they tend to plan their raid very carefully. They watch your comings and goings unobtrusively, so nobody notices. They may not do the burglary themselves, as their face may be known in the village, but farm it out to an accomplice. The accomplice will be well briefed on your habits, so now the summer months are on their way, hide your valuables in unlikely places, shut all windows and lock your doors when you go out and use your burglar alarm, get it checked if necessary. All this might seem like overkill, but, in the summer, far more people are likely to hear your alarm and act on it even if it is because they cannot bear the noise!

## ENVIRO ELECTRICAL SERVICES

[enviroelectricalservices@gmail.com](mailto:enviroelectricalservices@gmail.com)



**DANIEL ROSS**  
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## Birchanger C of E Primary School celebrates Book Week!

Our school has been buzzing with excitement as we celebrate Book Week and our love of reading! The children have enjoyed a variety of activities, from older students reading to younger ones to sharing books in the sunshine at lunchtime. A highlight of the week was the visit from author Jamie Crawford, who captivated the younger children with his enchanting tale of a magical box and taught them how to craft a spooky ghost story.



Octopus Class was enthralled by a story about a hunter and a sparrow, accompanied by the mystical sound of a singing bowl. The older children were drawn into the legend of the Selkies, sparking a thoughtful discussion about the art of storytelling and the importance of making a story their own. Jamie ended his visit with a thrilling ghost story that

had everyone on the edge of their seats! Jack in Year 6 said he loved the ghost story and hopes Jamie can visit his secondary school one day to share more.



The week ended with our 'Wonderful Words Day' where the children came dressed up in amazing costumes representing a particular word – well and truly celebrating the power of words!

Mrs. Vessey, Headteacher, [www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk](http://www.birchanger.essex.sch.uk)



## Woodland Open Day

Come along and see us at the Birchanger Wood Trust Spring Open Day on Easter Saturday 19th April. FREE ENTRY 10am-3pm, everyone is welcome!

Includes activities for kids, woodturning demonstrations, hand crafted items for sale, and more. All activities are free, although donations are welcome - all money raised goes to the conservation of this beautiful woodland. Find us at our compound just off Heath Row, next to the water tower. Visit: <https://birchangerwoodtrust.org/> for a map showing how to find us.



## Magazine Team Retiring End of 2025

The current news team: Elizabeth Godwin (Chair), Peter Sampson (Editor) and Ken Wheatley (Treasurer), have for many years produced the Birchanger Village Magazine and feel it's time for a rest. We are well passed our 'Use by date' and believe a fresh team is required in order to introduce new blood and new ideas for 2026.

We are asking villagers to step up to the challenge and consider offering a little of their free time to fulfil the above positions going forward. There is very little experience required, and training will be given by the outgoing team. The magazine is a non-profit publication run on a voluntary basis.

### A brief description of the positions is as follows:

**Chair:** Heading the team, the Chair controls the direction of news and maintains the integrity of the publication, holding monthly meetings, oversight of the finances, and general running of the magazine. It requires 2-3 hours per month.

**Treasurer:** The treasurer takes care of the finances of the magazine; receiving payments from advertisers and paying invoices by bank transfer. Procuring new and maintaining current advertisers and donors. It requires 2-3 hours per month.

**Editor:** Receiving local news, reports, and notices from existing sources, editing and layout of text and photographs, liaison with advertisers and producing adverts when required. Liaison with the Printer. Writing the occasional editorials and maintaining the 'What's On In The Village' page. The magazine uses a simple publication software to produce the magazine. It requires 10-12 hours per month.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, please contact Peter Sampson on 0781 7904333 or email.

[magazine@birchanger.com](mailto:magazine@birchanger.com)

We look forward to hearing from you!

# what's on in the village...



April 2025



**Household Bin Collections:** Bradley Common collected on Fridays. Rest of Birchanger on Thursdays. (Some exceptions)

**Garden Waste Skip Outside the Club on Saturday Between 15.00-16.00:** 26/4. 24/5. 21/6. 19/7. 16/8. 13/9. 11/10. 8/11.

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

Sun

**Birchanger Parish Council Meetings:** Meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm in the church hall - **Open to the public.**

	<b>1 Garden Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>2 Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>3 Black Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>4 Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	<b>5 Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat draw	<b>6 St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 am Family Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>7 Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>8 Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>9 Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>10 Green Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>11 Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	<b>12 Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat draw 9pm Primal Replay	<b>13 St Mary's Church:</b> 10.45 Matins Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>14 Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>15 Garden Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>16 Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>17 Black Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>18 Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance Valentines Day	<b>19 Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> The Vault Free Quiz Night	<b>20 St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 Easter Day Holy Communion <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast Easter Raffle
<b>21 Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>22 Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>23 Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance	<b>24 Green Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 12.00 Line dance 16.45-20.30 Ellouise Dance <b>BSSC:</b> 20.00 Bingo	<b>25 Church Hall:</b> 09.30 - 11.00 Apton Dance private lessons 11.00 Pilates 15.30 Ellouise Dance	<b>26 Church Hall:</b> <b>Apton Dance:</b> 09.00 Apton Mini 09.45 Kids Latin 2 10.30 kids Latin 1 <b>BSSC:</b> 13.00 Meat Draw 21.00 Goat Patrol	<b>27 St Mary's Church:</b> 11.15 am Holy Communion Service <b>BSSC:</b> Sunday Roast
<b>28 Church Hall:</b> 09.30-11.00 Ayatana Yoga 16.00-18.45 Ellouise Dance 19.00 - 20.30 Apton Dance Latin/Ballroom	<b>29 Garden Bin</b> <b>Church hall:</b> 09.45-10.45 Ballet <b>Apton Dance:</b> 17.30 Teen Latin 18.45 Teen Street 19.30 Adult Street 20.15 Rock'n Roll	<b>30 Church hall:</b> 10.00 Tai Chi 13.00 Takeley Art 16.15-17.15 Ellouise Dance 18.30-21.15 Apton Dance 20.00 BAGS				





BIRCHANGER SPORTS  
AND SOCIAL CLUB

## WHAT'S ON AT THE CLUB

**£1  
A  
TICKET**

**20th  
April**

**LOTS OF  
EGGS TO  
BE WON!**

*The Ultimate*  
**EASTER  
RAFFLE**

**PRIMAL REPLAY  
LIVE AT**

**BIRCHANGER  
SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB**

**ONLY THE  
BIGGEST  
ROCK ANTHEMS!**

**12 April**

**9:00 - LATE**

**GOAT PATROL**

**26th APRIL**

**8pm**

**FREE  
QUIZ  
NIGHT**

**19th  
April**

**THE  
VAULT**

**BEAT THE BANK**

**FOR A CHANCE TO WIN  
£500**

**FIRST KEY WINS JACKPOT  
SECOND CHANCE KEY  
WINS £50.00**

**19th APRIL  
GOOD LUCK!**

For all general enquiries  
Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: [club@birchanger.com](mailto:club@birchanger.com)  
Website: [www.birchangerclub.com](http://www.birchangerclub.com)

Follow us on Social Media  
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## Busy Weeks at Preschool

The children have been enjoying the nicer weather we have been having recently. We have spent lots of time outdoors exploring the natural environment and have especially enjoyed playing and digging in the mud pit area on the school grounds. The children were working together as a team to try and dig the "biggest hole ever"! The muddier the children got the happier they were.



We have also used our imagination in the garden by using the wooden planks and crates to build bridges which we tested before walking over them. It was very much trial and error, but the children were very good at seeing what was

needed in order to make the bridges stronger and safer.

We have been expressing ourselves in Preschool by dancing and moving in different ways using colourful scarves, it was wonderful



to see the children choosing the movements they were making and expressed how they were feeling while dancing. Some children said they felt happy, some said they had lots of energy and others said it made them feel tired. We don't need to have an excuse to dance in Preschool, it is usually a daily occurrence.



We also celebrated Pancake Day this half term by eating pancakes and choosing which topping we would like on them, there was a choice of strawberries, banana, squirty cream or honey. There were lots of happy and excited children at snack time that day.

We currently have spaces available from September 2025 and do accept 2-year funding. Please email us on:

[admin@birchangerbutterflies.org.uk](mailto:admin@birchangerbutterflies.org.uk)

or call us on 01279 810800 for more details or to book a visit. Ask for Carly or Emma.

*Carly Richards - Preschool Manager*



## 630 mile walk for Cancer!

My name is Nadia Walters, previously from Harrisons in Birchanger. For my 70th Birthday I'm aiming to raise £7,000 for Cancer Research UK - a big number but worth a try!

This amount could for instance, buy a Spectrophotometer, a machine that uses light to measure the growth and activity

of cells and therefore, give greater understanding of the disease. Can we do it? Yes we can! Together with Gift Aid, we have already reached almost £2,000 in just a few days.

### Walking the Southwest Coastal Path From Minehead to Poole

I start the walk on the 28th March. I'm walking the 'Salt Path' in aid of 'CRUK' - funds being directed to the Cambridge research centre. It's anticipated it will take me approximately 10 tough walking weeks to complete the 630 miles, 1014 km or 1.5 million steps Any donations are gratefully received and go directly to the Charity. Please go to my 'JustGiving' page for more information and to donate.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/nadias-south-west-coast-path-challenge-1>

### Fundraising for Cancer Research UK

Cancer is happening right now, which is why I'm fundraising for Cancer Research UK. I'm directing my donations to the research work carried out in Cambridge who last year alone spent more than £49m on delivering world leading research that transforms discoveries in the Lab into real benefits for people. In addition to adult expertise, they are also a member of the Paediatric Network - cancer research in children and young adults is an area where much help is needed.

For more information on the work undertaken in Cambridge, go to the 'CRUK' site and then to 'Our Research in Cambridge'. Any help that you can give will be very greatly appreciated by me and the charity that we all need to support to end the suffering that this disease can cause. Sadly, we all have loved ones who have travelled the Cancer journey.

*Thank you - Nadia Walters*

## NEWSPAPERS DELIVERED DIRECT TO YOUR DOOR!

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Weekend Papers  
Magazines*

**Contact: 'Family News' – Stansted**

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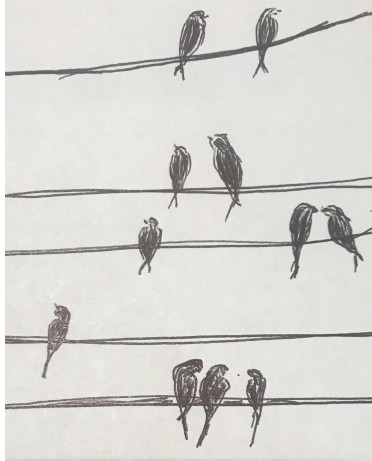
**Email: [familynews@acme-group.co.uk](mailto:familynews@acme-group.co.uk)**



## A Winter's Tale

Drawn by the promise of snowdrops, cyclamen, aconites and hellebores, the gardening group determined to say goodbye to Winter and enjoy Spring at the gardens of Benington Lordship near Stevenage. Arriving expectantly, they were not disappointed by the immaculately manicured borders, banks of snowdrops and a delightful parterre in front of the striking Georgian house. Alas, Winter laid on cold sleety rain which bullied and buffeted the doughty party. The group withdrew to the café's warm and friendly wood-burning stove to partake of some bad-weather-enhanced hot tea. Despite Winter's caprices, they swore to return to do justice to a very beautiful place.

illustration by Julia Cook



Appreciating the wilder landscape of Wales through the illuminating and insightful lines of Owen Sheers was the great pleasure of the Poetry group in a recent meeting. Following some excellent preparation by one member, the group animatedly read and discussed the ways Sheers describes profound and thought-provoking elements of the human condition through the Welsh landscape. Here he uses a sight we have all seen many a time, but gives voice to the utter cheerfulness of birds in Spring in his poem

'Calendar'.

*"Swallows crotchet and minim the telephone wires,  
sing volts down the line."*

Forthcoming Poetry sessions include: The life and work of John Donne, Poems related to new technology, The life and work of E. E. Cummings, and poems about water - all of which are sure to challenge and gratify!

Stansted u3a has such a wide range of classes available, it is well worth checking out the website where you can find information about all of them. You will be warmly welcomed to sample any of the classes to find out what might suit you.

Please contact via [www.u3asites.org.uk/stansted](http://www.u3asites.org.uk/stansted) or by 'phone on 07847 385541.

Julia Cook



## Easter Coffee Morning

Hot cross buns and other Easter goodies at the 'Easter Coffee Morning' in aid of Dementia on April 15<sup>th</sup> at Moorswood, 330 Birchanger Lane,

Everyone welcome. 10.00 am - noon.

Elizabeth Godwin

## THE FORGOTTEN GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

The Gardens open for visitors on Thursdays from 3<sup>rd</sup> April, in time for the bluebell and blossom season at the Gardens and the last daffodils. Bluebells thrive in the dappled shade of the woodland margin at the bottom of the Glade. The lush greens of the grass and fresh leaves on the trees and emerging perennials set off the pink and white of the blousy apple and cherry blossom; the vibrant reds, oranges, and purples of the tulips; and the first roses, the yellow canary birds, in the Italian Garden.

Hopefully, lovely sunshine and early spring warmth, will mean these flowers provide lots of nectar and pollen for the bumblebees and other insects, which we hope might start to do well again after the terrible year they had from the cold and wet spring and early summer of 2024. On Thursdays, the gate is open from 11.00-3.00 and hot and cold drinks and homemade cakes are available.



## Open Day

Our first main season Sunday open day is on 13<sup>th</sup> April and will be an opportunity for families to enjoy Easter activities, with an Egg hunt, fun crafts, and face painting for children. There will be a plant stall and a range of other craft and produce stalls. Local duo, Karen and Tony, will entertain with folk and popular songs. Daisy's catering kiosk will be open, providing bacon, cheese, or hummus rolls.

The Trust's volunteers will be working hard to ensure the Gardens are looking at their best for the start of the season. Hopefully, the bigger development projects will be completed in March - new beds and fruit cages in the walled kitchen garden and further extension of the Japanese style garden. Spring planting will have started, both for flowers and, of course, vegetables too. And we will be weeding again, as the soil warms, and all those pesky weed seeds germinate. For more information on opening times and prices etc., go to [www.eastonlodge.co.uk](http://www.eastonlodge.co.uk)

Jill Goldsmith





## The Hundred Parishes Society

Late 19th-century Ordnance Survey maps record the location of numerous ponds in farmland across lowland England, but since then farming practices have changed and many have disappeared.

Well-maintained ponds are hot spots for biodiversity, supporting special plants and animals. Responding to concerns about the loss of such habitats, researchers at the Pond Restoration Research Group at University College London joined forces with others to investigate the potential for restoring such lost ponds and produced advice about the best ways to create new ones.



*Doctor's Pond, Great Dunmow, February 2025*

Following on from this, Essex Wildlife Trust identified 17,200 Essex farmland ponds on these old maps but noted that 10,400 had since disappeared. A few have been restored, and the team is working with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group to secure funding to help more farmers reinstate their lost ponds. Find more information at: <https://www.fwageast.org.uk/ponds>



*Finchingfield*

However, pond restoration can be challenging - as evidenced by the difficulties faced during the project to resolve problems with Doctor's Pond in Great Dunmow. In recent years it has been polluted by toxic blue green algal growth. Ambitious and costly plans were drawn up to desilt the pond which necessitated the safe removal of fish so they could be returned in due course. Work commenced last October with the installation of safety fencing and the draining of water so that a digger could be used to help remove over 1,900 tons of contaminated silt. Heavy rains made the silt very slippery, and the digger became stranded in January. By the end of February all the silt had been removed.



Future plans include landscaping of the surrounding area and replanting with suitable vegetation once the pond is refilled. It is anticipated that in the coming months this attractive pond will once again provide a great habitat for ducks, fish and dragonflies.



Tricia Moxey, Trustee [www.hundredparishes.org.uk](http://www.hundredparishes.org.uk)



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## Village Services and Activities

Service	Contact	Telephone No.
Allotments	Council Clerk	01279 814473
Alzheimer	Marian	07803 115826
Art Studio & Gallery	Heather Brown	01279 815453
Ballroom Dance	Fred Winters	01763 271942
Ballet for kids	Philippa McMeechan	01763 271010
BAGS	Rosemary Wheatley	01279 814678
Beauty Therapist	Sarah Whiting	07887 638359
Beauty - HEH Nails	Hana Hainsby	07730 619522
Birchanger Magazine	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Butterflies Preschool	Carly Richards	01279 810800
BSSC Club	Terry Earnshaw	01279 813441
Car Service, MOT, Gas	D. Bonney	01279 813315
Car Service - Mobile	B. K. Autos	07786 461813
Chiropodist	Julie Golden	01279 873492
Dance - Apton Studio	Maxine Williams	07854 251528
Dementia	Debbie Baker	07927 011345
Garden Services	GWB Horticulture	01799 543483
Garden Services	Will Grange	07516 783138
Hairdresser Men/Boys	Emma Marks	07527 227943
Handyman	Charlie Grange	07514 783239
Holistic therapy/Reflexology	Shelley Williams	07476 279262
Landscaping Services	Mark Taylor	07941 357934
Launderette	Ian Kennedy	01279 866183
Legal Services	Nockolds	0345 6460406
Line Dancing	Shelley	01279 864781
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Painting & Décor	David Debnam	07973 861268
Parish Clerk	Keith Williams	01279 814473
Pilates	Mandy Cousins	07713 272664
Printing Services	M&B Printers	01371 874695
Public Safety	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
Speed Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904333
St. Mary's Church	Pam Lee	07702 171744
Tai Chi	Cait Goddard	07415 628935
The Three Horseshoes	Paul & Paula	01279 813429
The Three Willows	Mark Boden	01279 815913
Village Church Hall	Cat Roberson	07475 092658

## St. Mary's Church



### Church Services

6 <sup>th</sup> April	11.15am Family Service with Pam Lee
13 <sup>th</sup> April	11.15am Matins with Hugh Mascetti
20 <sup>th</sup> April	11.15am Easter Day Holy Communion with Revd Colin Fairweather
27 <sup>th</sup> April	11.15am Holy Communion with Revd Colin Fairweather

### Church News

Here we are, coming to the end of Lent, a time when we are called to pause and ponder, to examine our call to discipleship and reflect upon our faith. This is something that Christians do through study of bible readings that centre around the transfiguration of Christ, hymns and prayers – all leading up to his Crucifixion – the challenges that he sets us and the way that we respond and how our journey onwards will be.

Lent opens by focusing on the temptations faced by Jesus and closes by taking us into Holy Week and the days leading up to the cross. A sombre time that seems to give the promises of better things to come but we then face the sorrow and heartache of His death on the cross and all seems lost. Then in the days that follow we go from deep despair to celebrating Easter with the absolute joy of knowing that He has risen. What a rollercoaster of emotion.

But Easter is not just a one-day event each year to be celebrated then forgotten. It is a season of celebration balancing the reflective mood of Lent and the sombreness of Holy Week, events which shape everything that we do and are. The risen Christ speaks of new beginnings, a fresh start for all where hatred and evil will not prevail, that sorrow will turn to joy and defeat to victory. Together, let us all celebrate the triumph of His love for all and the amazing future that He has promised.

### Dates for the diary

27<sup>th</sup> April Annual Parochial Church Council meeting – after 11.15am service

This summer we are planning to run a series of talks in church about the history of Birchanger. If you would like to take part or have any information that you feel will be of historic interest, please let Pam Lee know asap. You are also welcome to attend any of these talks - dates to be advised.

### Prayer for the month

Holy Lord, we rejoice in the wonders of this season and the good news of your resurrection. We give thanks for new life that you have won for all your people. Forgive us for forgetting all that you can achieve, rekindle our faith and lift us from death to eternal life with you.

*Amen*

Pam Lee (Church Warden)  
Tel: 07702 171744  
[am.mark2@btinternet.com](mailto:am.mark2@btinternet.com)

## Village Church Hall



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**Telephone:** 07475 092 658

**Email:** [birchangerhall@gmail.com](mailto:birchangerhall@gmail.com)

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Printers: M&B Printers Tel: 01371 874 695. Email: [sales@mbdesignprint.com](mailto:sales@mbdesignprint.com). Website: [www.mbdesignprint.com](http://www.mbdesignprint.com)

Editor: Peter Sampson Tel: 0781 7904333 Email: [magazine@birchanger.com](mailto:magazine@birchanger.com).

Chairman: Elizabeth Godwin.

Treasurer: Ken Wheatley.