



Birchanger Village Magazine

April 2026 Issue 279



"The great gift of Easter is hope" - Basil C Hume

Money-grabbing Stansted Airport increases drop off charge by 43%!

As you may have seen in the local press, Stansted Airport has recently increased the passenger drop-off charge on the terminal forecourt from £7.00 to an outrageous £10.00 for a maximum 15-minute stay, making it the most expensive airport drop-off charge in Britain.

However, if you live within 5 miles of the airport, i.e. Birchanger, you can register for the local resident discount scheme and pay a drop-off charge of just 50 pence. You can do this online:

<https://www.stanstedairport.com/terms-and-conditions/local-resident-discount-scheme/> and you can register two cars per household.

The drop-off area uses number plate recognition and has automatic barriers. If you forget to pay you'll get a £50 penalty charge notice. The safest option is to register for an autopay account at <https://pay.stanstedairport.com/> so that the 50 pence charge is automatically paid on your credit card.

Nobody was available for comment when we contacted the airport "We are too busy counting your money, smoking cigars and drinking champagne at your expense" (...they might have said if they were available). *The_Ed*



Car parking officers clocking off from work at the airport (perhaps)

Villagers are shocked "At least Dick Turpin wore a mask" said one. "I hope they spend the extra money cleaning the toilets, they are always filthy" said another.

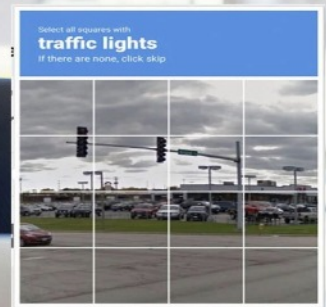
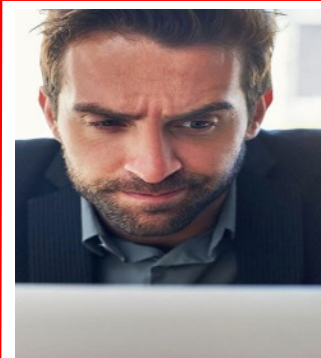


Amazon delivers.... or does it?.....

A new delivery option has been introduced by this leading on-line store called "Not delivered at all". On March 10th, an Amazon delivery driver left a full bag of parcels on a Birchanger pavement and left various others in and under hedges around the village. Many thanks go to helpful villagers for delivering the wet boxes to the right addresses the next morning. Amazon Customer Services regret the incident and said "We regret the incident, customer service is our #1 priority"....blah, blah, blah. What they should have said was "This driver is past his Prime so we would hedge our bets he was fairly bushed. Do we get a five star review now?"



Delivered 10 March
Parcel was handed to resident.



Some village cyclists have been locked out of their social media and bank accounts after continually failing to identify traffic lights in the 'Captcha' security test.



magazine@birchanger.com



07488 315349



217 Birchanger Lane CM23 5QJ



The_Ed's InBoxBag ©

**Today I was struggling to
get my wife's attention.**

**So, I sat down on the sofa
and looked comfortable.**

That did the trick

A new feature for our Village Green?

Dear The_Ed

We have identified a fresh and vibrant idea for our long-standing village green, which is situated about halfway down Birchanger Lane. The idea proposed is to create a 'nature pond' to complement the grass area already in place on part of the village green planting suitable freshwater plants and populating it with wildlife.

We believe this could become a much-loved place for walkers and school children alike to visit, located in the shade of the millennium tree which was planted some 26 years ago. We would love to know what villagers think!

Yours sincerely, A group of nature-loving villagers



Artists impression of the nature pond

Would you like to see a nature pond installed at the village green just like the group of nature-loving villagers?

Birchanger residents, simply send your vote, Yes or No, to the editor at magazine@birchanger.com with your name and address. The closing date for votes is Wednesday April 1st. The_Ed

Dear The_Ed,

I'm so mad at the prices of things these days, I could spit feathers. I needed to get my coat cleaned as the dog emptied his bowels onto it. Jeez the smell!

So anyway... I took it to the cleaners (the coat not the dog) up near big Tescos and they wanted £25 to clean the slurry off it, I couldn't believe my ears and I said to them "I can't believe my ears" I said.

So anyway...I didn't wanna pay that I said "I don't wanna pay that" and I didn't pay that and walked out and went next door to that Charity shop (the one with all the videos and books no-one buys cos they smell of wee).

So anyway...I go in there and say to them "You can have this coat" and guess what they did have that coat and got it cleaned and hung it out on their rail for £4.50 - and next day I went back and bought it! Ha!

So anyway...that mugged off those cleaners good and proper and I got a clean coat saving myself £20.50 for my meths and the dog's curry snacks. He loves them and the wrappers. Yours Mrs T



*Dog Mess savings!
Mrs Troubled yesterday*

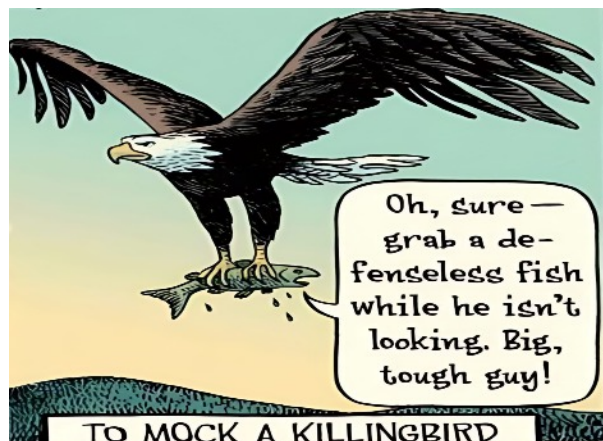
Dear The_Ed

And another thing, those people who make those fitted sheets need to wobble their heads and talk to those people who make those mattresses. It shouldn't be like putting a swimming cap over a fridge should it?

Mrs Troubled (Again)



*Fitted sheet Rage!
Mrs Troubled yesterday*



Liz Godwin's News & Views



Hopefully by the time you get this the cold wet weather will be simply be a distant memory and we can hope for sunshine and good weather from now on. We are told to think positive but being somewhat shell shocked from the wet winter we have just endured, optimism may well be in very short supply. Just stay indoors and guzzle some Easter Eggs this Spring. Even that is less than tempting when you would far rather be out in the sun!.... still time to book a last minute holiday?



He Couldn't Help Himself.



Donald Trump couldn't help himself. He fancies his role as a Lord of War and he is going to have his way. He got himself a war. Never mind the rest of us. Most of us would have tried other ways first. Mr Trump seems to think that war is good for us. With memories of the

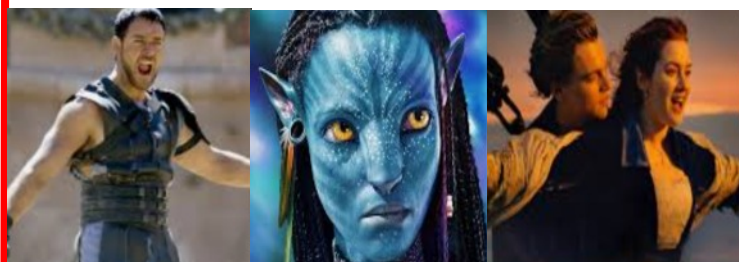
second world war only too vivid this cannot possibly be right. How can it be ok to lose so many young lives, take away people's homes, jobs and destroy whole nations ways of life. If it has to be done, let it be done quickly so that our new way of life, how ever different this may be, can begin.

Bleed prevention kits...

...have saved many lives in serious road traffic accidents. Unfortunately they are not always available on site and patients bleed out unnecessarily in major traffic accidents. Now these life saving kits are to be made available to all fire crews who attend major road traffic accidents. Big question is, shouldn't the kits be carried in all ambulances as well? Sending for them when the crew discovers they need them can mean the kits arrive too late!

Word Search - Find the 10 hidden HOLLYWOOD blockbusters

M	Y	N	B	I	Q	P	M	Z	J	P	L	S	G	Q	E
J	E	Y	D	T	Z	I	R	W	Z	T	E	J	D	X	C
V	K	P	R	D	L	N	K	T	U	G	R	P	O	Q	I
B	Z	R	K	A	C	X	M	W	Z	V	U	A	T	P	K
H	X	K	F	R	O	Z	E	N	W	C	G	S	H	H	Z
E	Z	S	R	R	A	L	O	C	C	K	Q	P	D	J	R
J	W	N	R	O	D	P	L	R	K	R	G	Z	T	R	S
J	O	C	O	E	T	T	C	A	C	Z	M	K	S	H	J
F	G	F	B	I	G	A	T	I	F	I	V	I	P	C	C
V	Y	E	E	B	T	N	I	N	S	Y	N	C	W	R	V
M	W	Q	I	Q	Z	P	E	D	E	S	K	A	H	G	V
S	N	S	I	O	P	V	E	V	A	I	A	S	T	U	W
Z	L	C	K	T	D	P	S	C	A	L	L	R	U	I	K
G	H	A	X	I	D	W	H	L	N	E	G	A	U	Z	T
F	K	N	B	Y	K	C	O	R	D	I	H	Z	E	J	W
H	B	S	U	R	T	V	C	A	D	R	A	T	A	V	A



Year 5 and 6 visit the O2 for Young Voices 2026

It was an unforgettable day at the O2 Arena as they took part in Young Voices 2026, joining thousands of children from schools across the country in an incredible mass choir performance. After practising hard for the past few weeks the children were so excited when they stepped into the arena and saw all the other schools taking part too! It was a fabulous atmosphere whilst the children warmed-up in the afternoon and they truly threw themselves into every song and dance move with enthusiasm. Their hard work in rehearsals really paid off, and it was wonderful to see their confidence grow throughout the afternoon and evening. By the time the final song finished, the pupils were tired but absolutely glowing with pride, as were their parents and teachers. They returned to school full of stories, favourite moments and memories that will stay with them for a long time.

It was a fantastic experience and a real highlight of the year. They certainly did our school proud, well done all of you!



The Way We Woz Birchanger Primary School

Birchanger Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School was founded in the 1860s during a period when many Church of England village schools were established to provide basic education for local children. In its early years the school was very small, with pupil numbers varying between about 26 and 88 children before 1900.

Like many rural schools of the time, pupils sometimes missed lessons in autumn to help their families with the harvest on local farms. School trips have long been part of its traditions. Records show that in the 1920s pupils visited the seaside and the Empire Exhibition in London, giving village children opportunities to experience the wider world. The original village school building still exists today, but a new school building was officially opened on 19 February 1982 by the Bishop of Colchester, marking a modern chapter in the school's history while maintaining its close links with the parish church and village community.



For the ~~Love of~~ Dog(s) Patsy & Eddie

We left it way too late this month to get some great dog stories in to the magazine office, so reluctantly we have decided to feature The_Ed's not-so-great mutts.



"Off you go, you're free".

Born in Hungary and allegedly illegally imported to Peterborough, these two overweight slippers are the curse of The_Ed's life. Named after the Ab Fab stars, these girls are rarely seen but are always reliably under your feet when you are carrying a hot drink. They have managed to survive a very busy household as the kids have grown up around them for over 11 years. Despite numerous attempts to 'free them' by leaving gates open and driving them into various unknown locations to abandon them, they use all their homing skills to remain. Their favourite activities are sleeping, doing absolutely nothing, messing carpets randomly with their outpourings from both ends and leaving small hairs everywhere. And they always smell of foxes (and not the mints either!)

Village Recipe Lamb HotPot

This month's seasonal lamb favourite comes from Mrs Molly-Mary Polly Wooley from High View.

Start by heating a little oil in a sturdy casserole and gently browning 500g diced lamb—just enough to make it feel important. Remove it,



then soften a sliced onion and a chopped carrot in the same pan. Return the lamb, sprinkle over a spoon of flour, and stir in 400 ml stock with a dash of Worcestershire sauce. Add a bay leaf, salt, and pepper. Let it simmer for 10 minutes while you admire your good life choices.



Tip the mixture into an ovenproof dish and layer thinly sliced potatoes on top like neat roof tiles. Dot with butter and bake at 180 °C (350 °F) for about 1 hour, until the potatoes are golden and slightly smug. Serve warm and enjoy the cosy triumph.

Pick a nice white wine, Pinot Grigio or Sauvignon Blanc, to have with your hotpot!

DESPERATE BUSINESS

You want to delay your performance review?



Yeah I slacked right off the last few months and it's not really fair to base it purely on that period



The Village People. This month: Lauren Channing

I have lived in the Bishop's Stortford area since the age of six. I was born in North Wales and first moved to Buntingford before my family settled in the area when I was nine. I attended Herts and Essex High School from 1996, where I completed my A-Levels, before moving to London to study at Roehampton University. After graduating, I returned to the area and lived in Elsenham for a while before moving to Stansted. I moved to Birchanger in 2021 and live with my two children, Aimee and William, our lovely black Labrador, and our two ginger cats. My first experience of Birchanger was when I applied for a job at the local primary school in 2013. After seven years of working in a middle school, I wanted a job closer to home so I could spend more time with my family and cut down on travel time. It turned out to be the best decision! Having never worked in a small village primary school before, I was immediately struck by how close-knit and friendly the community was. I was very sad to leave in 2017. When a house came up for sale in the village, I knew it was exactly where I wanted to be.



Village life really is the best. The countryside, the walks, the park, and the friendly faces who wave or nod as you pass make it such a special place. Everyone is so kind. My children would also tell you that the people are what truly make this village what it is, and we feel incredibly lucky to be part of it. We really have landed on our feet by moving here. We love the village just as it is. The pub, green spaces, church and park make it feel pretty perfect already. But if I had to add one thing, it would be a bakery or a small independently run coffee shop. We love stopping for a hot drink and a slice of cake on our daily walks, and that would make a wonderful addition. Over the last year, the village has become even more special to me because of the way the community pulls together to get things done. Helping to support the opposition to the new housing development has been a real highlight. It has made me proud to be part of such a wonderful community of helpful and dedicated residents. Through this, I've met so many new people and learned so much about the history of the village, and I've loved being part of such a strong, like-minded and driven community.



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-  Natural Gas Heating Systems

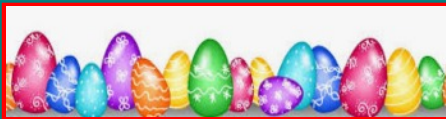
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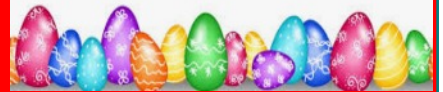
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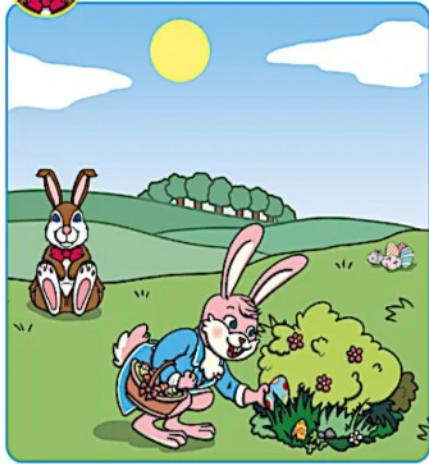


Kids Easter Fun



Spot the Difference

There are 8 differences below, can you find them?



Easter Characters



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



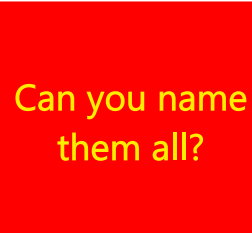
10



11



12



Can you name them all?



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



BIRCHANGER SPORTS
AND SOCIAL CLUB

CLUB NEWS & EVENTS



Welcome to the latest Birchanger Social Club Newsletter!

Spring is finally springing, bringing longer days, lighter evenings, and hopefully plenty of sunshine. It's the perfect time to enjoy a drink with friends and make the most of everything happening at the Club.

We've got plenty of live entertainment lined up, with great bands and performers bringing fantastic atmosphere over the coming months. Cricket season is just around the corner, so don't forget to support our local clubs — even better when watched through the bottom of a glass! Behind the

bar, we've got exciting new guest ales arriving soon, plus our fantastic Birchanger Gold Pilsner 1891 for just £3.50 per pint for members. A new food menu and updated wine list will also be launching shortly, giving everyone even more to enjoy on their next visit. Cheers!



NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

We welcome new members. To join you can either complete the online application or speak to a member of staff at the Club. For more information visit www.birchangerclub.com



For all general enquiries
Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: club@birchanger.com
Website: www.birchangerclub.com

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For all news and announcements



EASTER EGG RAFFLE

Sunday 5th April
4pm draw
£2 per ticket

Easter Egg Hunt
Saturday 4th April 3pm

Lots of Easter Eggs to be won!

NEW MENU
AVAILABLE 1st APRIL

Classic
PUB MEALS AND BITES



Notes from Chef and Latest Special Offers!

Something exciting is cooking! Our new menu is arriving soon, featuring fresh, seasonal ingredients and delicious dishes served from lunch through to dinner. Keep an eye out for **Chef's Weekly Specials**, bringing new flavours to the table every week. Also our legendary Sunday Roasts aren't going anywhere, perfectly paired with your favourite pints, gins, and wines.

SPECIAL OFFER



25% OFF MENU

WEDNESDAY EVENINGS & THURSDAY LUNCH

*NOT INCLUDING STEAKS & SPECIALS

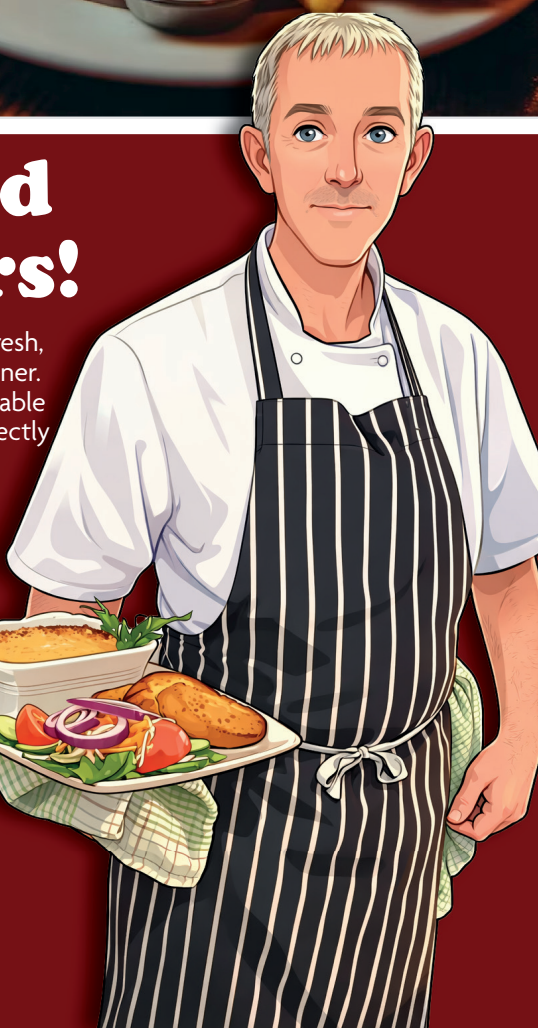
This month's specials...

W/C 1st April
Skate Wings
Baked or Battered
£14.95

W/C 13th April
Toad in the Hole
Burtons Butchers
Sausages
£12.95

W/C 20th April
Seared Hake
Supreme
£16.95

W/C 27th April
Pan Fried
Duck Breast
£17.95



For all general enquiries
Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: club@birchanger.com
Website: www.birchangerclub.com

Anyone for Cricket? By Ross Leavers



The evenings are starting to get lighter, the trees are beginning to show signs of greenery and the dawn chorus is becoming ever more orchestral. In a sporting context, The Six Nations has been and gone in a flash, The Cheltenham Festival is now a distant memory, the football season is on the home straight and the F1 season is well under way.

This means that the cricket season is just around the corner. There's nothing more quintessentially English than hearing the sound of leather on willow on a gloriously hot summer's day whilst enjoying a nice glass of your favourite tippie.

Birchanger Cricket Club will shortly embark on its 131st season with the first league matches for its 1st and 2nd XI teams scheduled to take place on Saturday 2 May. Home matches are played in the heart of the village within the grounds of the Sports & Social Club.

For the first 98 years of its life the club played "friendly" matches. It wasn't until the local Herts and Essex Cricket League (HECL) was established in 1993 that the club began playing competitive league cricket. HECL was disbanded in 2020, since when the club has been playing in the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Premier League.

The club has always been represented by players who have a longstanding

association with the village, but has also been very good at attracting relatives and friends of players from further afield to ensure the club continues to thrive. The club is always on the lookout for new players, of any standard or age (although to play league cricket you need to be at least 12 years old).

The club is currently running off season practice sessions at 9am on Saturday mornings at the HECC Sports Centre in Sawbridgeworth. If you would like to come along to any of the practice sessions or are simply interested in playing some cricket this summer please contact the club's secretary Justin Bass (jc.bass@ntlworld.com).

There are annual subscriptions and match fees for players to help the club meet its financial obligations. There are concessions for under 18s, the unemployed and those in retirement to help ensure cricket is accessible to everyone. To assist with keeping the costs down the club are lucky enough to be sponsored by local estate agent Pestell & Co.



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.COM



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In the beginning...

Birchanger Working Men's Club was just four years old when the members decided to form a cricket club. This is how it began.

A special meeting of the club was held on Tuesday evening April 23rd to start and draw up rules for the Cricket club. The Rector (WH Cam) in the chair. Mr Prince, had drafted a set of rules and Mr K Smith supplemented them with a copy of the rules from a similar club. The rules were put one by one, amended and passed.

The subscription was fixed at 1/- for playing members belonging to the Working Men's club, to admit others, if approved at a payment of 2/6d for parishioners and 5/- for non parishioners. Mr Prince (Secretary and Treasurer) was requested to write to Mr Gold and ask him to be the President of the Cricket Club.

At a meeting of the Cricket Club on April 30th a letter was read from Mr. C. Gold accepting the Presidency of the Club. Messrs. H. Levey, P. Blake, A. Leech, H Threadgold and J. Phillips were elected playing members of committee. These with the President and the Recreation Committee of the Working men's Club (Messrs. H. Smith, P. Wood, J. Reed, A. Phillips, and G. A. Prince) form the committee of management. Mr. A. Phillips was elected Captain, Mr P. Blake, Vice-captain, and Mr. Prince secretary and Treasurer. It was resolved to invite subscriptions to aid the Club at its start, Mr C Gold promising £1 1s., and Messrs. C. Gold, jun., and P. Gold 10/6d each.

In that year 1885 Roentgen discovered X-Rays, Marconi sent a radio message over a distance of one mile, Rye Street Hospital in Bishops Stortford admitted its first patient. The population of Bishops Stortford was 7000.

The club like the bowls club has boasted a number of notable players who graced our sports field over the years. In 1939 the earliest recorded opening stand of 126 was made between Eric Wright and Edgar Osbourne who was the club captain at the time. Eric Wright went on to become a club Vice chairman. The record has been broken since many times and in the mid 1970s Nick Agnoli and Colin Ferbrache scored 129. A little later Eric's son Peter shared a stand of 197 with Paul Agnoli against Matching Green.

In 1981 a new sports pavilion opened at a cost to the parent club of £26000 it included home and away and referees changing rooms, showers, toilets a social area and equipment garages.

In 1995 the club celebrated its centenary. The Cricket club in the meantime is now in its 131st year. And is looking forward to the coming season.

By Eddie Gilbey



Eric Wright and Edgar Osbourne



For all general enquiries
Telephone: 01279 813441 Email: club@birchanger.com
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LOCAL DIRECTORY

Services

Art Studio & Gallery	Heather Brown	01279 815 453
Beauty Therapist	Sarah Whiting	07887 638 359
Bed & Breakfast	The Cottage	01279 812 349
Birchanger Social Club	Terry Earnshaw	01279 813 441
Car Service, MOT, Gas	D. Bonney	01279 813 315
Chiropodist	Julie Golden	01279 873 492
Dementia Support	Debbie Baker	07927 011 345
Dog Walking	Birch & Bark	07393 400 591
Flooring & Furnishing Care	Art of Clean	01279 945 169
Funeral Services	Daniel Robinson & Sons	01279 655 477
Garden Services	GWB Horticulture	01799 543 483
Hair stylist, Gents	Claire's	01799 542 424
Hairdresser, Men/Boys	Emma Marks	07527 227 943
Heating & Plumbing	Upstream	01279 944 445
Home Care	GoodOaks	0808 531 0016
Launderette	Suds	01279 866 183
Legal Services	Nockolds	03456 460 406
Painting & Decorating	David Debnam	07973 861 268
Printing	M&B Printers	01371 874 695
Security Systems	Hiteck	0203 092 0566
Soft Play & Inflatables	Andy & Lucie	07956 622 808
The Three Horseshoes	Paul & Paula	01279 813 429
The Three Willows	Mark Boden	01279 815 913

Classes

Apton Dance Studio	Maxine Williams	07854 251 528
Ellouise School of Dance	Ellouise Wilson	07734 227 479
Line Dance	Shelly Guichard	07824 447 156
Pilates	Mandy Cousins	07713 272 664
Tai Chi	Cait Goddard	07415 628 935

Village Contacts

Allotments	Council Clerk	01279 814 473
BAGS	Rosemary Wheatley	01279 814 678
Birchanger Magazine	John McArthur	07488 315 349
Butterflies Preschool	Carly Richards	01279 810 800
Neighbourhood Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904 333
Parish Clerk	Keith Williams	01279 814 473
Public Safety	Peter Sampson	07817 904 333
Speed Watch	Peter Sampson	07817 904 333
St. Mary's Church	Pam Lee	07702 171 744

THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE



I wonder how many of you loyal followers visited the Victoria and Albert Museum and spotted the Countess of Warwick in the Marie Antionette Style exhibition? They had the picture of Daisy dressed as Marie Antionette at her Bal Poudre at Warwick Castle in February 1895. The Gardens open for the main season from the beginning of April, including our Information Room, if you wish to learn more about how the ball, described by the local press as "unmistakably the most splendidly organised and artistically perfect function of the kind that has been given during the present century", resulted in the Countess becoming a Socialist.

After the snowdrop season in February, there is always lots of work to be done at the Gardens to get spring off to a good start. It's a time for finishing the pruning of the apple and pear trees, the roses and the soft fruit and winter infrastructure jobs, such as rebuilding compost bins; starting the war on the garlicky alliums that will spread more if they flower and set seed; and sowing the first wildflower and vegetable seeds. On lovely sunny March days such work is a joy. The daffodils come out around the Gardens, the first of the blossom and new leaves appear and with them the bumblebees.

So, by the time the gates re-open for the first Open Thursday of the season, on 2 April, the Gardens will be tidy and a glorious tableau of lush greens, with daffodils still looking lovely, primroses and cowslips too. For the monthly Sunday Open Day on 12 April the cherry trees in the walled kitchen garden will be covered in blossom and the apple and pear trees coming into flower. There will be tulips and maybe the first roses. The Gardens open at 11.00 am on Thursdays and on Sunday Open Days - refreshments available. For more information go to our website www.eastonlodge.co.uk

What's On - APRIL 2026

SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

Bradley Common waste collection 1 day after green/black bin dates below

		1		2		3	
		BSSC New Menu begins		BSSC Bingo Night			
		8		9		10	
		BSSC New Menu begins		BSSC Bingo Night			
		15		16		17	
		BSSC Bingo Night		BSSC Bingo Night			
		22		23		24	
		BSSC Bingo Night		BSSC Bingo Night			
		29		30			
		Church Hall 20:00 BAGS meeting Retro Beetle Drive!		BSSC Bingo Night			

Garden Waste@ BSSC
Mar 28th 3pm-5pm
Apr 25th 3pm-5pm

Church Hall - Weekly Classes & Activities (holiday period may vary)

SATURDAY SUNDAY MONDAY TUESDAY WEDNESDAY THURSDAY FRIDAY

09:00 - Apton Mini		16:00 - 18:45 - Ellouise Dance		10:00-12:00 - Tai Chi		12:00 - Line Dance	
09:45 - Kids Latin 2		19:00-20:30 -Apton Latin/Ballroom		09:45 - 10:45 - Apton Dance Ballet		16:15-17:15 - Ellouise Dance	
10:30 - Kids Latin 1				17:30 - Teen Latin		18:30-21:15 - Apton Dance	
				18:45 - Teen Street			
				19:30 - Adult Street			
				20:15 - Rock & Roll			

The Birchanger Village Magazine is published on behalf of the people of Birchanger and distributed free to 450 households in Birchanger. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, the magazine or any organisations or institutions represented. Material sent to the editor will generally be printed as received providing it is considered suitable by the magazine team. The editor reserves the right to edit content if considered unsuitable or where insufficient space is available. Printers: M&B Printers Tel: 01371 874 695. Email:sales@mbdesignprint.com.

Editor: John McArthur Tel: 07488 315349 Email: magazine@birchanger.com. Chairman: Elizabeth Godwin Treasurer: Malcolm Roberts

St. Mary's Church



We are hoping to start holding a Café Church on the third Sunday of each month. These are short services where people can pop in, have a coffee and chat with other parishioners. We shall also be providing an area where children can play with Lego. The first of these will be on the 19th April and everyone is welcome. If you have any Lego that you can donate to the church, it will be gratefully received. Just call Pam on 07702171744 to arrange collection.

Services

- 5th April Easter Day Service with Jo Pratt
- 12th April Holy Communion led by Canon Teresa Wynne
- 19th April Family Service (Café Church) with Pam Lee followed by the APCM
- 26th April Matins with Hugh Mascetti

For the past few weeks, on our Lenten, we have been working our way through the Gospels of John and Matthew and considering how we might be changed by our encounters with Jesus and his teachings leading up to Easter. He, of course, was transfigured – not outwardly changed – seen in a different way. How will you change not how you look but, how you think or feel about things generally. Will you be kinder to your neighbours, more considerate? Will you speak out against injustice? Will you do more to help others, even people you do not know?

In last month's magazine I told you that there would no clergy here on Easter Day (5th April). I am pleased to be able to now say that our Easter celebrations will be led by Jo Pratt, a licensed lay minister, who has been here before. I am sure that she will lead a service suitable for all of the family so please join us if you can.

After our service on the 19th April, we shall be holding our Annual Parish Council Meeting. If you would like to become a church officer, please contact Pam on the number given above to get further information and complete an application. We really do need more people to get involved.

For the year ending 31st December 2025, church outgoings have exceeded income by over £2,500 and fortunately this shortfall has been covered by monies raised from hire of the hall.

Without this and the generosity of a handful of residents who make regular donations by direct debit, our church could not financially survive. During this period where we are without a priest, our outgoings remain the same so if you can help at all – maybe you are a budding musician and would like to put on a concert – let Pam know.

Dates for Your Diary

- 26th March at 11am School Easter Service
- 5th April Easter Day Service
- 19th April APCM and Café Church/Lego
- 14TH May at 6pm Ascension Day Celebration with Choir

News from the Church Hall



Many of you will know that for some years there have been issues with the drains running from the lady's restroom area and they have been frequently blocked. I am pleased to be able to say that as I write this, the old drains are being replaced and I hope all is now running as it should.

Added to the drain issue, we had a leak in the loft space above the cloakroom which took some time for our insurance contractors to resolve but this has now been done.

My thanks go to everyone for their patience whilst we have been waiting for the repairs to be completed.

Finally, I remind all hirers of the hall that FIRE EXITS must always remain clear. Chairs, tables, and other paraphernalia must not be placed in front of these doors at any time but especially when the hall is in use. I have put written notices on each exit as a reminder.

Also, unless there is a fire, no one should be taking fire extinguishers off of the walls. Please leave them alone.



www.hundredparishes.org.uk



Horses were once very important in everyday life. This changed quickly with the advent of tractors, trucks and the motor car. Horses were used extensively in agriculture; they also hauled delivery carts and buses and everything in between. Some of us may remember the horse-drawn milk float or the coalman and rag-and-bone man. There were blacksmiths, smithies and forges in most towns and villages. We still have blacksmiths who work in metal, making gates, weather vanes, tools and farm implements, as well as shoeing horses. A farrier is a specialist in equine hoof care. Whilst blacksmiths and farriers are quite rare today, there are reminders of this aspect of our heritage around The Hundred Parishes, for example in the names Forge Green at Hildersham, Anvil Cross in Great Hallingbury and Smith's End Lane in Barley. The area has five pubs called The Three Horseshoes – a name which probably came about because they had a nearby farrier, ready to deal with a customer who arrived with a horse that had lost a shoe. Today, dwellings with names like The Old Forge or Anvil House often reveal their earlier lives.

Much Hadham Forge is still in use, part of Much Hadham Forge Museum. The museum usually opens Friday to Sunday, April to December, 11am to 5pm. It is housed in a series of listed buildings, dating from the 15th to 19th centuries. The forge itself dates from the 17th century; today's blacksmith runs forge experience days.

Ashdon once had three blacksmiths in the village. Now, one of Ashdon Museum's excellent displays is a representation of a blacksmith's shop with all the tools and equipment that he would have used. The museum is open April to October from 2pm to 5pm on Sundays and bank holidays and is well worth a visit.

Ken McDonald

u3a
Stansted Mountfitchet



Had he lived Freddie Mercury would now be in his late 70s. Many in the u3a are his contemporaries and this was demonstrated when Danielle Barnett began her presentation called "Freddie's kind of Magic" with a recording of Freddie singing. Joy crept into the room and radiated through the sizeable audience, until everyone was clapping along to the stirring sounds of Queen. Danielle, a super enthusiastic presenter, supplied a review of a life that produced an iconic soundtrack for the time.

Another large audience sat entranced by the expertise of Dr. Helen Fry, who gave a talk on the incredible Intelligence work that took place under the leadership of MI6 Colonel Thomas Kendrick during World War Two. Helen's historical research uncovered the fascinating work carried out at Trent Park, Wilton and Latimer House, where German military elite prisoners were held. They were treated extremely well, little knowing that the walls surrounding them "had ears" and they were being bugged continually. Deep below them, their conversations were listened to closely and the vital military information gleaned from their conversations substantially affected the war effort.

Yet more interesting and delightful talks are in store at the u3a. To give examples of the variety, talks will include: 'Wildlife of Britain and Europe' by photographers Graham and Mary Brace and Mike Dodsworth on 'The Witches of Essex'. The treats in store at every monthly meeting can be seen on the u3a website. The website also presents information about the 40 different activities available through the u3a. To give but one example, the Gardening group, in April, will be visiting the gardens of Benington Lordship - an ancient private home with wonderful landscaping and a very impressive diversity of plants.

More info on the website and 07847 385541

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Birchanger All Girls Society

The 'BAGS' welcome women to join them on the last Wednesday of the month at 8:00 pm in the village hall.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday April 29th
7:45pm for 8:00pm

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bags@birchanger.com
Rosemary: 01279 814 678
Liz: 07473 508 056



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