

BIRCHWOOD BETRAYED

Over the last few months I had been receiving complaints that householders in Birchwood were not receiving their copies of the magazine. This was baffling as we know that sufficient copies are printed for each household as well as some spares that are shared out between the School, Church, Pub and Club.

Last month I placed an item on the back page to try to establish the scale of the problem and the responses duly came in! Eventually I received a call from someone via someone else that some of last months copies were "Stuffed down a man hole in Birchwood!"

So naturally I investigated and found 25 copies as reported, down the drain. I photographed them in situ so you can see the evidence for yourselves. The 25 copies represent about a third of those intended for Birchwood readers and I am sure that these were not the first disposed of in this way. I cannot be sure that only 25 copies were dumped and I don't know how long the dumping has been going on. But I can assure readers that the dumping will now stop!

As an organisation the magazine operates on trust. Everyone from the editor to the deliverers does their bit for free for the benefit of the village as a whole. Any monies we receive (and we are grateful to all of our sponsors) is used to print each issue. It is especially galling to see that money being wasted by selfish individuals who let down everyone including themselves.

As editor I apologise to any reader who has not received all of the recent issues and I thank those people who let me know there was a problem. I also thank all those people who are still giving their time for the benefit of the rest of us and to the people who have offered to take over the deliveries in Birchwood. You will note I have not named anyone in this report. It is not about recriminations, it is about people taking responsibility for their actions.



Mystery uncovered



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Poison alert

The allotments in Birchanger do a great deal of credit to those who spend many long hours working on them. It is all the more incomprehensible that some sick minded vindictive person somehow gets it into their sad head that a large dose of poison is just what they need. This has happened before and now, it appears, the sickness is still with us, because it happened again last month. The police have been informed, and last time they did find out who was responsible. It is possible that they have by now taken the appropriate action. They do take this offence very seriously because this could turn into a very dangerous situation. If you do know anything about this, or you think you may have seen something please call the community police team on 07801461666.

Facilities for the older generation?

In recent years the Parish Council has tried to improve services for the younger people in the village, and a great deal of money has been spent. While the older generations are free to use the shelter, there may be other things in Birchanger's open public places which they would like to see especially for their own benefit. The Parish Council would like to hear from the older generations as to what they would like the Parish council to do for them, where possible and practicable, so we await your suggestions on 812793.

Worried about health effects of your mobile phone?

The mobile phone companies are constantly trying to tell us that none of the research carried out so far indicates that there are any adverse health effects observed from the use of mobile phones. Most of the great British Public continues to remain sceptical. The companies are mindful of this and are always coming up with helpful advice, as if they are still unconvinced themselves, or perhaps they are just covering their backs!

Among the less obvious ones are these:-

Keep the phone out of your pocket when at home or work.
Move the phone away from the body when in use.
(Presumably this means either shouting or using a hands free kit).

Check the Specific Absorption Rate or SAR of the phone before you buy it. The SAR measures the amount of radio wave energy that is absorbed by the body, and obviously if you can, choose the phone with the lowest rate.

Meanwhile the research goes on.

Parish plan update

There has been a disappointing response to the appeal for volunteers to help should there be an emergency situation in Birchanger, and there is a need to open an Emergency Rest Centre. Both the District Council and the Parish Council have up to date emergency plans, and the only thing lacking is the volunteers. It must be born in mind that less than one third of the volunteers would actually be available at the time of any disaster.

Meanwhile all the statutory and voluntary agencies have their acts well got together. They know exactly what their roles in the Emergency Rest Centre are. What they do lack is local knowledge and expertise. The rest centres will be run by a manager who is likely to be a member of Uttlesford District Council staff. with input from the District and County Councils. On hand will be representatives from the police, the Health Authority, the Red Cross with the W.R.V.S. Who would provide the catering if required. The needs of all those caught up in the situation will be assessed, and links will be provided to the call centres to provide information for relatives of those who have been caught up in the emergency.

Volunteers would help under the direction of the centre manager. Each situation will be very different, but with a motorway and an airport on our doorstep, sooner or later something will happen and we have to be ready. There are also smaller emergency situations in the village when builders, carpenters or those with plumbing skills are urgently needed and it would help the parish council to know who they are, and whether they are prepared to help when they can. If you would like to know more please call me on 812793.

House prices set to rise?

The current slowdown in the housing market is likely to be short lived, according to the study group Oxford Economics, and house prices will rise even faster in the South East than anywhere else. It seems that we have all heard this before, and the bad news is that the overall housing supply is 25% short of what is required, while in the affordable housing sector the supply is short by 50%.

This means that more and more people will be forced out of the housing market altogether. The average house now costs in excess of 12 times the average income. This will lead to more young people forced to live with their

parents and occupancies across the East of England will increasingly be classified as overcrowded. The stagnation is reflected across the housing sector. Social Housing tenants no longer find themselves able to buy their own homes, and this contributes to the poor supply of affordable homes. Buy to let has also meant that the lower priced units are not being bought by those who need to live in them.

The answer is a larger affordable housing program in the eyes of the Government, but there are many empty and second homes which also distort the overall housing picture. Nobody has done the sums it seems as to the effect both long and short term immigration has on the situation. Whether this gloomy forecast proves to be right or not we shall only discover as the year moves on. Meanwhile houses on the Rochfords estate go on sale next month. Affordable houses will be built later in the year. There will be several one bed flats on offer as well as small units for families. The Moat Housing Association is the one involved with Croudace.

New electoral boundaries for Birchanger

From the date of the next council elections in 2011 the electoral boundaries will follow the Birchanger parish boundaries. This will perhaps clarify matters around Stoney Common, but it may not suit the new residents of Rochfords so well, as they may see their links a being closer to Stansted. They may be given an opportunity to choose at the next Parish Review, but this is unlikely to happen until the majority of the houses are occupied.

Expect a knock on the door from the boys in blue!

As part of yet another new Police Initiative each Neighbourhood Policing Team will call on at least 25 households on their beat per month. This will give people a chance to discuss their concerns confidentially and to get to know their own Neighbourhood Policing Team. They are also planning to hold Open Forums, to attend District Council Area Panels and to hold monthly Beat Surgeries. They have planned a "Have Your Say" event at Tescos in Dunmow on Thursday July 10th. If all this makes the police easier to get hold off when you need them and leads to a better mutual understanding of each areas problems, it is an initiative to be welcomed.

Mobile police station

The Mobile Police Station continues to visit the Welcome Break Service Station most Thursday mornings throughout the year. The times might vary as they can be are subject to change. The dates which I have so far are,
April 11th 18th 10 -11 am, 25th 11.30 -12.30 pm.
May 9th 16th 10 -11 am, 23rd 11.30 -12.30 pm
June 6th 13th 10-11 am, 20th 11.30 -12.30 pm July 11th 10 -11 am, 18th 11.30 -12.30 pm
August 11th 10 -11 am 15th 11.30 -12.30 pm
September 5th 26th 10 -11 am 12th 11.30 -12.30 pm
October 3rd 24th 10 -11 am 10th 11.30 -12.30 pm

November 21st 28th 10 -11 am 7th 11.30 -12.30 pm
December 19th 10 -11 am 5th 11.30-12.30 pm. To find out the exact time of the visit for a particular Thursday please call 07989 335719.

Bus shelter this month?

Don't hold your breath, but it is just possible that the Bus Shelter will be installed this month. It has been a very long time coming, and there have been a great many problems beyond the control of the Parish Council, but one day it will arrive!

Missed hospital appointments benefit nobody

There may be a very good reason why you cannot keep your hospital appointment, but there are rarely good reasons for not letting the hospital know. Your appointment could have been used by somebody who has been waiting for a long time to see a consultant and who really does need to start treatment as soon as possible.

It is also very costly. For specialist hospitals it is estimated that a missed appointment costs £70 a time. There are some 1400 odd missed hospital appointments per month at most hospitals. That alone could pay for some much needed equipment or specialist staff.

For appointments more than 6 weeks away patients now have to book a month in advance, instead of booking at the time of the last visit. This may help, but the real help will come from the individual.

Coffee morning in May

The coffee morning in May for St Mary's Church will take place at Moorswood on May 13th from 10.30. Everyone is welcome!

ARE YOU AGED BETWEEN 8 & 10?

BORED?

WHY NOT COME TO CUBS?

Phone Elaine on 01279 815887

Sally goes “Down Under” part two

Well here I was in “The real Australia”. The first thing I noticed was the Heat, it had been over forty degrees in Perth. Yvonne explained that she lived outside of Perth in the bush, The houses were lovely and the gardens very tropical looking. Yvonne had arranged a few things for us to do and see.

We were invited to friends for drinks, which extended into an Aussie barbie. The beer flowed freely, held by a “stubby” which is a can holder. We chatted until late and exchanged addresses and phone numbers. It was a good night.

We went down to Hilary’s boat harbour and drove along the coast. I remarked to Yvonne that I liked the simplicity of things. Certain things stuck in my mind such as the labels on clothing. (dryzabone) Shop names such as “Little horrors” (children’s wear) and road signs. There was a triangle with a pair of lips displayed and the words “Kiss ‘n’ drive”. It made me think it was an area where lovers met, but Yvonne laughed and said that it was by a school where parents kissed their children goodbye and drove off.

Yvonne was the perfect hostess and our chauffeur. I noticed that the railway lines were down the middle of the dual carriageways and it seemed funny to travel on the train and see the cars pass by when you pulled into the stations.

I told Yvonne that mum and I had gone to the zoo to see the kangaroos. She said she would take us to the local cemetery where we would see hundreds. The cemetery was not like ours, no church, but a parkland where people had name plaques planted around the edges of the lakes, under a tree or in a pathway. It was so beautiful and peaceful.

And yes true to her word we walked amongst the kangaroos. Little Joeys, feeding from their mums etc. We took the train into Perth to go on a wine tour. We visited four vineyards where we sampled two white, two rose and two reds at each. By the time we were at the fourth vineyard we were a bit giggly. Perhaps you were meant to spit out the wine. A lunch was provided at the last vineyard, a wonderful platter of cheeses , breads and salad, We needed this desperately as the wine was beginning to take effect.

The Jane Brook vineyard has produced a champagne or wine that contains gold from the mint. It is consummable but excuse the pun, costs a mint.

The following day Yvonne had arranged high tea with friends Wally and Anne Marie who live in Kallamunda. They welcomed us and had prepared a lovely tea of smoked salmon and cream cheese sandwiches, ham sandwiches, small biscuits with pate, teatime cakes etc and English tea. They had been to Harrods and wanted us to have a high tea.

The difference was that we had to learn the “Aussie salute” to wave away the million flies buzzing over our tea. We had to be polite and chat but both mum and I kept a very careful eye on the table. Wally and I chatted and he was mostly interested in our royal family and politics. Anne Marie chatted with Mum and Yvonne.

We visited the Mongers lake area to see the black swans and Kings park to walk among the plants, trees and bird life. Yvonne was excellent at telling me the names of plants. She gave me a large nut(the size of a coconut without hair) carved by an Aborigine. It was beautiful and from the Boab tree.

We went to Cottisloe beach to see the Indiana tea house . We drove through the elite district of Nedlands and went into the bush to see the koalas in the trees.

We visited Freemantle market and the gaol. Had a day on the beach at Mullaloo. But the best times were when we were with Australian people listening to their stories. One evening we were invited to a meal. It

was the 97th birthday of Bert, a relative of Yvonne's. He told me that he had spent five months in England during the war but in hospital. He is well known and has written hundreds of books. At the end of the meal he asked Yvonne to bring us back to his house as he wanted to sign some of his books for us. He lived in a huge house but spent all his time in a room at the back surrounded by his books. Mum and I were presented with three books each all signed by Bert. Such a lovely gentleman.

Then there was Joy, Yvonne's sister. She is a real character, she told me all about her time as a prison warden. The convicts liked her and would bring her a can of cherry soda pop and chocolate for a favour (Cigarettes, telly etc.) She gave a prisoner a lift once as he had just been paroled and no one is likely to give a lift to a man in an arrowed suit. It was Friday and Joy said as he got out he said "Thanks miss see ya Monday" (there are those that re offend just to get back in.)

She made me laugh with her stories. I heard about the "walkabout disease", caused apparently by a poisonous plant and if eaten by a horse than the horse would walk day and night unable to stop eventually dying. The "condom trees" caused a laugh. Young Aussies are well known for their partaking of liquor and often too far from anywhere to obtain a condom. The government allowed "condom trees" in the parks as a precautionary measure. I did any see any but Yvonne promised I would have a photo of one sent to me. Would that be acceptable in our country do you think?

I must admit as a doctor's receptionist we would provide them over the counter free to the younger generation but we found that they thought it was too embarrassing to ask for them.

Well the month was passing by rapidly. We went to drive in liquor stores. We sampled the Aussie food and it was a lot warmer than back home. "Waltzing Matilda" made sense now and I had learnt quite a few words. It was fair dinkum, to say "we had a great time".

We said a farewell to all in Australia, bringing back mementos, gifts for our family, friends and addresses of new ones.

We flew to Singapore for two days before the flight home. We were only there a short time but had to visit the famous Raffles hotel. We sampled the Singapore sling and other cocktails We noticed that it was similar to Hong Kong, very clean, hot and humid and while eating our tea, in Raffles there was a downpour of torrential rain. But as soon as it stopped, the Sun shone and the rain dried up within minutes. The other very noticeable thing was that the shops and businesses were fully staffed by their own countrymen and all very smart and very polite. A lesson our country would do well to acknowledge.

Now we are home on English soil the weather is very different from Australia. It was definitely a holiday of a lifetime

I am currently a volunteer with the blind and will be once again be guiding in the coming year. Watch out , who knows where I will go next

Sally Tilstone



Careful where you tread Sally

School News

Chinese New Year celebrated in style

It was hardly surprising that 62 children elected to take a full Chinese Lunch as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations last month for the Year of the Rat. They enjoyed a menu which included Prawn Crackers, Chinese Chicken with Bean Sprouts and Rice, with a genuine Fortune Cookie to complete the meal. They learnt about the ways in which the Chinese Children celebrate the New Year, and the hall was decorated with Chinese Lanterns and fairy lights.

Diversity Project

Year 6 spent the morning at St Mary's Primary School in Stansted as part of a drama initiative focusing on diversity. They enjoyed being a part of a drama workshop which gave them the scope to focus on other people and how they react with them. They learned about their own impact on other communities as well as how other people function in our very diverse society as well as how to cope with it all.

School dentist likes our children

The school dentist visited last month and was not only delighted with the overall healthy state of the children's teeth, but also commented on their excellent manners. Congratulations, and keep it up!

Sure start children's centre

A new Sure Start Children's Centre has opened in Lower Street Stansted in the Youth Centre. Please take the opportunity to visit the centre and find out just how it can help you. You might be in for a pleasant surprise.

New lap tops

Every child in Class 4 now has their own lap top computer. These were donated by the company who looks after the school computers. The school is one of their better customers and the gift is very much appreciated by everyone, particularly the recipients. They will be leaving Birchanger School with highly developed computer skills.

Easter Recycling Collection

Please note that during Easter week collection of the **Brown and Green bins will take place on Thursday 27th March**

Published on behalf of the people of Birchanger, and distributed free to each household in Birchanger. The views expressed herein do not automatically reflect those of the Editor or any of the organisations or institutions represented. Editorial team: Eddie Gilbey (816171), eddieb.gilbey54@virgin.net Elizabeth Godwin, Ken Wheatley, Michael Daw Submissions are welcome but may be edited depending on available space.

Hi folks and welcome to your new look magazine We have been in print for five years now and the publication was due for a makeover. The new masthead was designed by Brian Gough to incorporate the village sign. In addition the typeface for our main body text has been changed to try to make everything easier to read. Please let me know whether or not you like it!

There is a shortage of stories this month. The non delivery problem has come to the fore but there is a submission from nine year old Lauren Clark who has concerns for the environment and we have part two of Sally's Australian travelogue

Ed



SAVE OUR PLANET

Re use your carrier bags when you go shopping
14 Billion carrier bags are used in the UK alone!

Please do not add to this number.

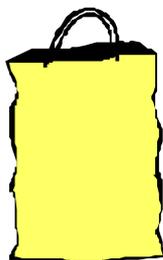
The UK produces approximately 4.5 million tonnes of plastic waste each year. Most of this arises from packaging. The UK has a plastics recycling rate of only 3%. In Germany the recycling rate for plastics is 70%.

Recycle as much as possible.

There is 111 Million tons of rubbish put into landfills every year so your recycling will make a difference

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By Lauren Clark age 9

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Village Diary
February/
March 2008

March

23rd St Mary's 11.00 am
Easter Sunday
Holy Communion

30th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins
Followed by
Easter Buffet Lunch

30th At the Club
200 Club Draw

April

6th St Mary's 11.00 am
Matins

13th St Mary's 11.00 am
Holy Communion

20th St Mary's 11.00 am
Family Service

27th St Mary's 11.00 am
Hol Communion

27th At the Club
200 Club Draw

Easter Buffet Lunch
30th March in the Church Hall
after the 11am service.
tickets £10 adults, £5 children
bring your own drink.
For further details call Pam Lee on
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DELIVERER NEEDED

We need a new deliverer to cover Hillside Cottages from April as Paula Stapleton has moved to the Willows. If you live in that part of the village and are willing to deliver about 25 copies to your neighbours every month. Please call Trevor Stone on 812994. Or email the editor with your details.

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