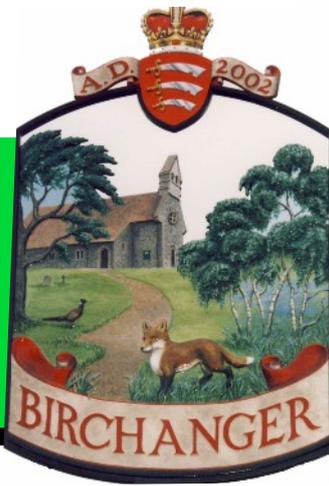


Birchanger

March 2014



Magazine

Issue 135

THE OWLS VISIT AYLMERTON

Once again Birchanger School arranged a few days away for the children in the "Owls" class. These events happen every two years and are eagerly awaited by all.

This year's trip to the Field Study Centre at Aylmerton was no exception. Aylmerton is in North Norfolk near to the Felbrigg estate. Traditionally the children visit the seals at Blakeney, but this time they visited A Barn Owl Refuge as well and learnt about the owls and their dwindling habitats as well. They were able to work with the birds and to learn all about them and their needs.



The theme for the week was to learn to overcome fears and phobias, in other words to confront their own personal dragons. They invented very colourful and realistic dragons in the process. They explored the beach at Blakeney looking for fossils, walked the woods and tried their hands at zip wiring, invented nick names for each other and much more. There were early mornings and late nights, but both children and staff rose to the occasion.

"The children in Owls class had a great time on their residential trip. We were very fortunate with the weather and everyone threw themselves into the activities with great enthusiasm. I will particularly remember the rock pooling and the group whose hide was so well camouflaged that I thought we had lost them for good! Thank you to all the adults who give their time up to attend and kept smiling despite the late nights and the early mornings."

They told their parents all about the week at the Friday Assembly and demonstrated the "haka". Something else they had learnt to do while they were at Aylmerton.

It all made up to an experience which they may never come across again and a great deal was learnt in the process.

Josh Curry Busks The Willows

Piano sensation Josh Curry continued his recent busking tour to raise money on behalf of Grove Cottage at the Three Willows on the night of Saturday 8th March.

Josh who is just 10 years old attends Manor Fields Primary School and practises daily at his home on Thorley Park for about an hour each day.

Josh has been "Busking" at various locations around Bishops Stortford including Jackson Square, Sainsbury's and the Harvest Moon pub. So far he has raised an astonishing £1213.00 for the Grove Cottage Mencap Charity.





PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Elizabeth Godwin

Birchanger Under Water?

Hopefully not many of us, but those in older houses with porous bricks found some very unwelcome water in some of their downstairs rooms. The water table was so high, the water simply leached into the houses, causing as much damage and aggravation as if it had come from an overflowing river.

There were many who suffered last month, whether from flooding drains and blocked ditches. We should have seen this coming and sharp lessons have been learned. There is a lot we can do ourselves. I cleared some drain covers from their carpet of leaves and miraculously the gutter flowed again. I tried others and the same thing happened. It was not the worst job in the world and the result very worthwhile. Try one near you sometime, it could help.

We are a low priority for action here. Problems in Stansted, Newport, Saffron Walden were far more acute and services, already limited were concentrated in areas where the flooding was worse.

The gas board dug a 4 metre hole in an effort to search for a gas main. You would have thought they would have known where this was, but apparently they did not. They found plenty of other things, old water mains, old gas pipes, but not what they were actually looking for. This became an increasing challenge as within a few hours water had completely filled the hole. The problem had arisen when houses in the lane had found water coming out of their gas rings instead of gas. Somewhat disconcerting when you are trying to cook and I wonder how that affected the meter reading?

So whatever happens in the next few months, and whatever drought we face in the future, we must remember this winter and do our best to put measures in place to try to clear our drains and ditches, as well as doing our best to waterproof our homes. We have proof of global warming now, and we must be ready to face all extremes, winds, floods, plunging and soaring temperatures, whatever, until we get our collective and international acts together.

Resident Traffic Lights?

They set up traffic lights and then they disappear and leave us with them for weeks. At one time there were two sets in the lane last month with absolutely no sign of

any work actually happening for days. Different utilities but very much a jobs worth approach to the work. Everyone is divided into teams, there may be as many as 11 vans parked, but they all belong to different crews with their own areas of responsibility it seems. Nobody can touch work for which they have not been commissioned, even though they are technically qualified to do the work. So we all wait for the hole diggers, the pump out team, the guys with the camera to actually try to locate the service lines, and a host of technicians, foremen galore who all seem to go around the area on different jobs, while everyone waits for the right crew to actually arrive.

The result is delay and inconvenience all round. Nobody running their own business could possibly operate in this way. How much does all this add to our utility bills? Is this the best use of man power. Health and safety gone mad?

However every cloud has a little silver lining. For once the rat runners gave the village a wide berth. We also had half term which reduced the mad rush by the four by fours dramatically. If it had not been for the massive puddles everywhere, it would have been quite pleasant to walk the lanes.

Footpaths warning.

Finally the footpaths are coming back to a more user friendly state underfoot. However there is danger overhead. The roots of the trees have been weakened by the rain and some trees are in danger of coming down altogether. Land owners are expected to sort this problem, but there are far too many in an unsafe condition. Take care still when you walk the footpaths.

A New Era of Crime?

Crime rates are down, or so they tell us. Burglaries do not happen so often and when they do they are the work of a single individual on a burglary spree. When that person is caught the robberies stop. At least that is the theory!

Ok so the public has a break, the police pat themselves on the back with their detection rates and crime prevention, but all the while a group of normal seeming people are beaver away divesting us of our money. The average policeman would not even begin to know how to catch that individual, yet he is getting away with thousands on a daily basis.

I am referring to the computer thefts which are happening all the time to banks, large institutions and directly to ourselves. It does not matter who we are we all pay in the end one way or another, whether it is by higher charges on our bank accounts, electricity bills or in the shops.

There is no need for cutting equipment, knives or dark nights, the thief simply sits down and hits the right computer keys in the comfort of his own home. When friends ask him what he does, he says he works from home on his computer. He may even have a front company, but nobody will ever know what this company actually does. He is into computers all right, probably yours!

These guys are far from stupid. They know when enough is enough and move on to another victim. When people realise something is wrong, the tracks are too well covered for anyone, other than an equally astute computer wizard, to find. Our most complicated passwords take them just 40 seconds to crack, while we ourselves have difficulty even remembering them.

Sadly I do not believe crime rates are truly down. It is just a different and far smarter criminal doing it. The perpetrators themselves do not think they are criminals. It is just us who are too stupid to understand until it is too late, who are the gullible ones.

What can we do? You cannot exactly lock the door for security and even when your computer is switched off, the information can be accessed. We need to check all our accounts and emails very regularly, and spam all messages we are uncertain about. If something seems wrong, go to your provider for advice and ask them to check your system. Failing that, find a computer savvy policeman, fast.

Please Report All Airport Related Fly Parking

Apparently we are not doing enough of it, so the airport does not take the few complaints it does get very seriously. They will if we told them, but from their point of view, they do not see that there is a problem.

We all know it is a problem. There is nothing more annoying when you are trying to leave your home, than to find your way out impeded by a car whose owner you do not know and which probably appeared overnight. When people have seen the suspect park and call a taxi, they have been warned off in no uncertain a manner on many occasions.

This inconsiderate parking is a menace and there is a number to call to report it. It is 08007312385. Do not be put off, it is also the noise event reporting site. You will be asked the make, type, colour of the car, as well as the registration number and when you first saw the vehicle. If you have problems, please give me the details and I will do it for you.

They will also ask you what makes you think it has anything to do with the airport. Well suitcases and calling a taxi are dead giveaways if seen! It is illegal for taxi firms to pick up passengers in this manner, but that is no deterrent it seems.

Please help us to tell the airport what is really happening with this. At the moment they are under the impression that it is just happening a few places and a few instances, so not much of a problem.

Have You Any Spare Time?

For most of us this could be a resounding “no” as we struggle to keep the balance of work, home and children in some kind of stability, but for some of us those days may be past or you may need something while you are in between jobs. Anyway there is a very real need for some community work in our patch.

This month it is Uttlesford Community Travel who is appealing for volunteers. This local transport scheme, which takes people to hospital, any variety of other appointments and social events for a minimal cost throughout the Uttlesford area and beyond, is very successful and it is growing. To maintain this very necessary service, more volunteers are urgently needed.

Drivers are wanted for the vehicles owned by the scheme as well as administrative support in the busy office. If you are interested and would like to find out more, please contact Malcolm Barrell on 01371 875787 or by email Malcolm@uttlesfordcommunitytravel.org You can also visit the website at <http://uttlesfordcommunitytravel.org/index.php>

Ever Heard of the U3A?

Or University of the Third Age to give it its full title, but don't let the word “university” put you off. You do not need to be a “Brainbox” to take part. The U3A is for anyone over 60 who would like to meet fellow retirees and to take part in a huge variety of activities. There are monthly meetings with very interesting and high quality speakers on all manner of topics.

But it is not just about a monthly meeting. The U3A organise a wide variety of trips and mini breaks to suit all tastes, there are trips to theatres, concerts, neighbouring counties, weekends and mini breaks away in the UK and abroad. All at very reasonable prices, with transport arranged. There are also language groups, walking and cycling, and much more on offer. It is yet another opportunity to meet people with similar interests, to visit places you might never see, and to develop new hobbies and interests.

The group in Bishops Stortford is frequently full, but the younger sister at Stansted does have some vacancies. Come along on the third Thursday of every month to the Church Hall at St Johns in Stansted at 1.45pm and find out what the U3A might have for you.

Someone's Dog is at it Again!

I know it has been a horrid, wet and muddy winter, and dog walking has been a bit of an ordeal, but the dogs are still eating and the inevitable is going to happen. Ok it may fall on ground which is wet and muddy, but someone will walk that way also that day and would not be very happy to take a present from your dog home with them.

Everyone always asks for dog bins, but the places where they want the bins is not where the refuse vehicle can reach. The council cannot pay for the extra hours a walk or 50 down a lane to pick up from the desired spot, would entail. Bins have to be sited where they can be readily reached, as is the one in Bradley Common. Last time we tried this exercise everyone protested at the proposed sites if they were within a few yards of their own properties. Result, no agreement, so no dog bin.

There have also been well meaning offers from dog walkers willing to empty out of reach bins themselves. This has been tried elsewhere, but though there is the very best will in the world to provide the service to their co dog walkers, the system inevitably eventually breaks down for a variety of reasons.

We are now at the point where if dog bins are wanted, then they must be sited on the roadside, bought and maintained by the Parish Council through an outside contractor. This is will be a heavy demand on the Parish Precept, and non dog owners might be right to protest at this. There is also no evidence that the provision of extra dog bins improves the situation. There are habitual offenders and they can be prosecuted if there are witnesses to the offence.

There were successful prosecutions last year. If you have an instance to report, please call the dog warden Sue

Knight on 01799 510594. She would also like to know of areas which you believe to be particularly bad, and will patrol these. She also has a supply of stickers for lamp posts etc, and free poop a scoop bags. You are now allowed to put dog waste in the black bin. There is really no option other than to take it home with you. Some imaginative individual needs to design an aesthetically pleasing bag for transportation purposes. Not the news you want to hear I think.

Still Time to Sign up for the Birchanger School 10 k Run.

The Birchanger 10 k Run will take place on Sunday May 11th, starting off from the school. With so many people taking up running in Birchanger, now is a great time to test yourself with a 10 kilometre run. It is a double circuit, running through Birchanger Village, so you are not taken too far away from home. Entry Forms are available at the School from now onwards, or contact me on 812793.

Don't Forget!

Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday March 26th 8pm in the Church Hall.

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

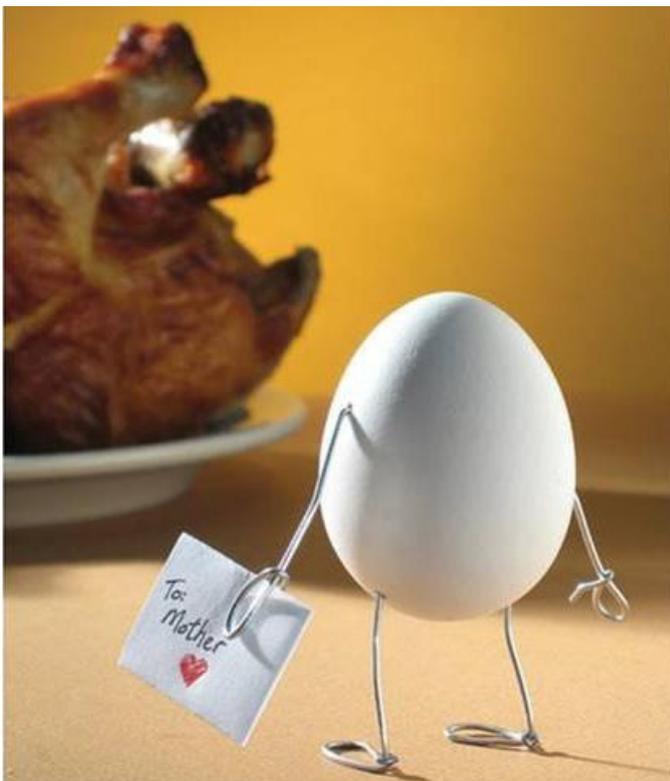
8 PM

Wednesday March 26th

In the Church Hall



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



CLUB THROWS OPEN ITS ARMS TO NEW MEMBERS FREE DRINK

As always we're proud of the welcome we give people in the club, and are forever keen to see new people discovering the great range of good value food, drinks and entertainment on offer.

We do recognise, however, that some people are nervous and so don't come along and find out for themselves what's going on. This month, therefore we have been traveling around the local area distributing flyers offering a free drink for new members when they come to look around. If you're new but haven't received a copy of this leaflet, don't worry, just bring along your copy of the village mag and we'll offer you a drink for yourself and partner. We can't wait to show you what we have to offer!

Existing members, don't think we've forgotten you either. For every new member you 'propose' we're still offering you a free drink as well! See birchangerclub.com for details!

DON'T FORGET MOTHER'S DAY!

Sunday 30th March is a big day in any mother's calendar, when she should be wowed with cards and gifts in thanks for a year of dedicated 'mothering'.

The last thing mum wants to do is either:

a) spend her 'weekend off' preparing meals for her nearest and dearest or

b) Stay in whilst all her friends are lording it up for a night out

So why not bring her down the club for a drink or a night out over the Mother's Day weekend. Treat her like a queen with a meal on the Saturday and don't break the bank with our great selection of value drinks.

We've even got Northern Lass Lesley Ross bringing her own take to Saturday night entertainment on the 29th, so make it a weekend mum won't forget!



SNOOKERED?

The club is the proud owner of a full-size snooker room and cues, with professional lighting and scoring system in its own dedicated wing. Available for use by all members the table is one of the best value around at only £2/hr (20p for 6 minutes), so if you fancy grabbing a cue and polishing up your ball skills then come on down!



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



ENJOYED THE SIX NATIONS?

Once again the club’s giant screen has been used to great effect screening matches from the 6 nations. With special drinks offers for viewers and a friendly atmosphere despite some friendly rivalry the club has always been busy. Now we’d like to ask you what games/tournaments you’d like to watch.

People often forget the club is there to serve its members and give them what they want, so we’re always keen to hear your thoughts so we can take a view on what people want to see. We may not succumb to calls for the next tiddlywinks championships and despite renewed interest in Women’s volleyball for health and safety reasons we’ve had to decline, but please let us know if there’s any other event you’d like to see screened!

ENTERTAINMENT

Irish Night 15th March



Don’t miss out on Birchanger’s unique take on St Patrick’s Night, with live music from the Connerly Brothers, a dedicated Irish inspired menu and guaranteed craic!

Poker Night 21st March



Keep your cards close to your chest and you could be flush with success

Lesley Ross 29th March



A comedy vocalist, this incredibly talented Northern lass is currently taking the south by storm. Her excellent vocals combined with her tongue in cheek comedy makes her one of the top cabaret acts and a highlight for the club’s calendar.

Treasure Chest Draw 4th April



The prize keeps growing, but you got to be in it to win it

Charity Race Night 12th April



It’s a sure bet, this will be a fun evening – all for a good cause: Grove Cottage!

Modern Divas Show with Cat Winter
And Grand Easter Egg Draw

19th April



Are you ready for one of the biggest nights of the year? What a better combination than a live impersonator banging out tunes and revving up the crowd alongside egg-shaped chocolate – it’s like Christmas has come early – or as some might say – it’s Easter!

Sudoku

Here is a simple sudoku puzzle.

The rules for solving the puzzle are :- each horizontal row and vertical column must have the digits 1 to 9 with no digits repeated.

The grid is also divided into 9, 3 x 3 boxes which must also contain digits 1 to 9 again with no digits repeated.

The solution is on the back page.

6	9	5				4	8	1
				9				
4								3
2			9	1	5			4
	4		7		6		9	
1			3	4				2
3								5
9	8	2				6	4	7

SOME USEFUL NUMBERS

Birchanger Church of England Primary School

Acting Head Teacher Mr Geoffrey Slide 812362

Birchanger Open Gardens Committee

Enquiries to: Miss Sheila Devereux 813843

Birchanger Social Club

812810

Birchanger Village Magazine

Editor Mr. Eddie Gilbey 816171

Church in Birchanger

The Benefice office 815243.

Pam Lee

01279 815938

Church Hall Trudy Revell

01279 812309

County Councillor

Mr Ray Gooding 01279813103

District Councillor

Mrs. Elizabeth Godwin 812793

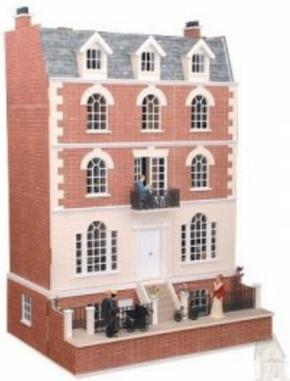
Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator

Mr Alex Stewart 07844446467575

Parish Council

Chairman Mrs. Angie Drisscoll 817376

Clerk to the Council Mrs. Julia Peachey 503912



Large Dolls House Kit For Sale



This 4 storey large family home offers 8 rooms to decorate. Comes with a lovely balcony on the 1st floor with detailed railings and doors onto the balcony.

Lots of character comes in the large light windows, and 3 further dormer windows on the roof finish off the house in style.

Includes chimneys and all moulding details.

Pictured left with the additional basement unit available at no extra cost.

Size : House - H930 x D750 x W380mm

(Please note that the dolls house is a flat-packed unpainted kit)

£50 or near offer (Original price £145) Also some accessories included

Contact Sue Gilbey 01279 816171 for viewing

School News

Book Week Just Gets Better and Better.

With focus on literacy, what makes a good story, what you really enjoy, book week is always a really good week to be at school. There were special events arranged for every class, and so many books to enjoy. The librarian restocked the shelves, the children brought in their favourite books to share. The older children went to meet a real author at Bishops' Stortford College, and parents came into the school to read with the children. A book illustrator Deborah Allwright worked with every class, and they produced some very professional illustrations between them. A Book Fair ran throughout the week resulting in high sales and the librarian visited, talked to the children and restocked the library.

On the last day of Book Week, everyone came to school, despite the floods and generally appalling weather, dressed as their favourite literary character. Many of the costumes were completely original and carefully homemade. There was a competition for the best boy or girl in their year, and the judges were looking as far as possible for the homemade and original costumes. Whether they won or not, the children all enjoyed the day, and the best bit of all was sharing books with parents and other children from all the classes, as they had brought their favourite books into school to share with everyone.

News from St Mary's

Deanery Pilgrimage

The Deanery has decided to visit every church in the deanery over the course of a year. Birchanger's turn will come on Saturday 5th April. Conducted by Rector Paul Wilkin and his colleague from Takeley. There will be Coffee in Church from 10 am to 10.30 followed by Prayer from 10.30 to 11. For those who wish there will be a walk around the village, starting at the Church, at 9 am and arriving back for 10. Dog's are welcome.

Afternoon Tea Anyone?

Birchanger Tea Room Now Open!

Every Wednesday between 2 and 4 pm, you can now go and have a cup of tea and some very delicious cakes and scones in the new room at the Village Hall. The cakes are all home made and there is a buffet so you choose exactly what you would like. There are small tables covered in brightly coloured table cloths, comfortable chairs, as well as a chance to see friends and to spend a very happy afternoon.

The first tea party was well attended, and guests saw the new kitchen and relaxed in the warmth and welcome in the new room.

It is there for everyone to enjoy, and if you are around on Wednesday afternoon, come and join in.

Canine Corner



Where the dogs of Birchanger
can have their say

"The Giant Schnauzer Creed.

If I like it, it's mine.

If it's in my mouth, it's mine.

If I had it a little while ago, it's mine.

If I can take it from you, it's mine.

If you can't take it from me, it's mine.

If it looks like mine, it's mine.

If I saw it first, it's mine.

If you have something and put it down, it's mine.

If I chew something up all the pieces are mine.

If I have something, and it breaks, it's yours!

Chester also says that if any of his four-legged friends in the village want to use The Schnauzer Creed, it's theirs!

Spring is here apparently

A letter from Birchanger's own Casanovas: Eski and Malbec

As the elder brother, I will be penning this submission on behalf of myself and Malbec who is in any event too busy to write because he is currently devouring a cheese board. We're relative newcomers to the village, but have done our best to integrate with the natives. It really isn't very difficult when you're as good looking a pair as we are. In fact the main issue has been keeping you bitches down. So with our favourite topic in mind, here's a rundown of our top 5 Birchanger Bitches (anonymous, but you know who you are xxx)

5) There's a saucy little Staffy from middle of the village, lovely figure – shame about the man she drags around on a lead

4) A slinky sprinter who knows how to play hard to get, despite numerous attempts she's always shot away from our pursuits

3) A trio of black bitches we've often bunked up with – what can we say, more tail than two virile dogs can handle

2) Two little minxes of minute proportions, sisters and luckily for us, neighbours – just think what we could get up to if that gate didn't get in the way...

1) Our very own Mrs Robinson, a beautiful bitch with long blonde hair who could teach us a trick or two – woof woof! One thing we have found hard, however, has been the enthusiasm of some of the other dogs. We'd like to take this opportunity to say that despite what the domestic arrangements of our owners might suggest, we do not appreciate the amorous advances of one long – haired hulk of a dog, whose name rhymes with 'Fester' – whether he is the handsomest guy in Birchanger or Not! Bitches on the other hand – please join the queue!

Eski

Church Hall Hire

For rates, availability terms and conditions
and a description of the available facilities

Please contact

Mrs Trudy Revell
01279 812309

Tea Room At the Church Hall



Every Wednesday

From March 5th
2.00 till 4.00



Everyone welcome

In aid of Hall maintenance funds

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 Stansted Essex CM24 8DU
 01279 814058 Mob 07962 963987
 pauldavall@btinternet.com

THE THREE WILLOWS



01279 815913

More than just
 your village Pub!

Village Diary

March/April

March

23rd 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

30th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

April

5th 9.00am Hall Car Park
Deanery Pilgrimage

6th 11.00 am St Mary's
Matins

13th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

20th 11.00 am St Mary's
Easter Sunday
Family Communion

27th 11.00 am St Mary's
Holy Communion

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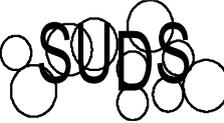
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7	5	4	8	6	2	3	1	9
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