

WETHERSFIELD NEWS

BLACKMORE END, BEAZLEY END

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1992

Tapping your views

ANGLIAN WATER is proud of its product. But in Wethersfield some people are less happy with it.

As water filter jugs appear beside more kitchen taps and kettles blow up in despair from calcium coated elements not a few people have queried the purpose of the huge plant in operation at Petches Bridge. On page 3 we take you on a tour of this state of the art water conditioning works.

Anglian feel they have had a bad Press on water quality and quote the report of the Drinking Water Inspectorate, the official industry watchdog. It showed that more than 99 per cent of samples taken from customers' taps complied with both chemical and microbiological standards.

On November 3 representatives of Wethersfield parish council will attend a Water Quality Roadshow which Anglian are running and will be asked for their comments. Short notice, but if you have views to pass on to the Clerk, Allan Frost (0371 851146) ring him immediately.

Community Care, what does it mean?

WETHERSFIELD, like so many rural parishes, has a high number of elderly residents. What does the future hold for them with changes in health care and possible cuts in other services that make your later years worth living?

To help dispel some of the fears two Principal Officers of Essex County Council Social Services department, Gary Thorpe and Vinod Kumar, are making a special visit to the village to make

a presentation on care services generally and the changes being brought about by the Community Care Act.

If you are getting on a bit, or think you may one day have to care for an elderly relative, or have to help those with physical and learning disabilities, please make the effort to get down to Wethersfield Village Hall on November 18 at 7.30pm.

It will not be a long meeting, since it precedes the monthly Parish Council Meeting, which,

incidentally, you are always welcome to attend, as an observer.

Why sit at home wondering and worrying when you can ask your questions straight out? The officers have made an effort to meet us, they deserve our interest. If you have real problems of transport ring 0371 850092.

Sparkling occasion

MICHAEL THAIN and his fellow incendiaries at Blackmore End have been about some highly explosive business for the last few weeks.

On Saturday, November 7, they will be putting on the annual Bonfire and Fireworks Night in aid of the village hall.

Having studied the fireworks firms' catalogues very carefully they reckon they've come up with a super selection, giving a good mix of ground and aerial displays.

Show starts at 6.30pm and it is £1.50 for adults and 50p for children. There'll be hot soup and food to warm you up if you can't get close enough to the bonfire.

Tuning up

THE children at Wethersfield Playgroup are busy practising their singing ready for their Christmas Concert to mums and dads. The Christmas party, with children's entertainer, in early December, is the highlight of the term. Meanwhile it is playtime as usual, with a variety of activities under the supervision of Gloria Ellis, Lorraine Smith and Sue Atterton. Ring Gloria on 850773 for details.

Not all play at the field

AS you may have seen, work has started on changes to the front aspect of Wethersfield Playing Field which in time will enhance a visitor's first impression of the village coming in from the Hedingham direction.

Apart from voluntary work, caring for the Playing Field needs money and new pro-

posals for financing the Association will be made at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, November 12 in the Pavilion at 8pm.

A new committee will be elected. But if you haven't time to serve on that please go along and give your views on the way this valuable village amenity should be run.

Bowls king in search of a crown...

THERE'S one thing Jack Myatt, of Hereward Way, Wethersfield, misses since he came south from Macclesfield: crown green bowling.

Jack, 72, who with his wife Kathleen, 69, celebrated their Golden Wedding on September 29, still enjoys his bowls, but the mat in the village hall is no match for the greens up North.

"With a hump in the middle of the green it demands more skill," says Jack, wistfully.

Jack and Kathleen were married at Kinsey Street Methodist Chapel in Congleton. On September 26 the couple, together with



Kathleen's sister Dorothy, who had been their bridesmaid, but without brother Wilfrid who was unable to travel, and a good proportion of neighbours from Wethersfield, enjoyed a meal out at the Green Man at Gosfield.

Also present were their son Trevor from Witham and daughter Andrea from Great Dunmow, and it was to be near them that Jack and Kathleen moved south after giving up their Post Office at Hazel Grove in Cheshire. They have four grandchildren.

DID the Bull Inn once have a petrol pump outside? In this old picture it appears to have. Maybe you remember. The Local History Group will be meeting at Blackmore End Village Hall on Thursday, December 10 and hopes older people, who know the old days in the village, will go along at 8 o'clock to pass on the lore to more recent residents. The Group's November meeting is on Thursday November 12 and will be entitled Remedies and Recipes. Dr Peter Burdon will be talking on old-style medicine and cookery writer Pamela Westland on dishes of other days. The group has no fixed membership - you just make a 50p donation each time you go, which includes coffee.



Wine Club wins again

WETHERSFIELD Wine Club members certainly know their subject. Last month they won the 1992 inter-club quiz competition, for the Ernie Nye Shield. They faced questions not only on home wine-making but on commercial wines and general knowledge.

This is their fourth win since 1980 and puts them in the overall lead in the competition. Other winners, mostly larger clubs too, have been Witham (once), Braintree (twice), Maldon and Halstead (three times).

SO nice to remember your summer holiday when its all dark and cold outside, even if it does sound like hard work!

Patricia Nightingale, aged 10, writes: Ten Wethersfield Guides, along with Mrs Patmore and Mrs Turburville went up to Warwickshire for a holiday on the canal. The boat was 12-berth. Outings that the Guides had included a trip to Warwick Castle and to Bournville chocolate factory. But the holiday was not all relaxing. There were 156 locks to be opened. The girls left the boat in groups of four to open the locks. Throughout the week there were many sing-songs and a couple of competitions. The holiday was one to remember.

SEE Wethersfield Brownies and Guides in the Great Yeldham District Variety Show: Finchingfield November 26, Great Yeldham November 27. Ring Mrs Sarah Pilgrim 850781 for tickets and details.

NOVEMBER brings shorter days in the garden but keep cleaning up the borders, removing dead wood and raking dead leaves off the lawn in the evenings if you can. Then you can sit in the easy chair and look at the seed catalogues and sort out your list for next year.

December, with Christmas on the way, give yourself a break for a week or two. A Happy Christmas and a good gardening year for 1993. REG DEACON

In the know?

WETHERSFIELD PTA is holding a Quiz Night in the Village Hall on Saturday, December 12 at 7.30pm for 8pm sharp. Teams are invited of from six to eight members.

100 CLUB winners: August - £10 Mrs J Dobson, £25 Mr J Wilkins. September - £10 Mrs M Clarke, Mrs J Barker and Mr I Evans, £25 Mr A Jones, £100 Mrs C Gilkes. Shares for this year are now on sale, please contact the school or Mrs Nightingale on 850013 for details.

A miss-tery

HEADMASTER Arthur Brookes says the school's Christmas Concert, in the Village Hall on Friday, December 11 has a completely new format this year. "Miss it and you will be disappointed," he adds with an air of mystery about him!

Poet's corner

A Golden Leaf on a Golden Day

And is my death to be
Just when the sunlight's
warmth
Caresses me?
And am I drawn away
By Autumn's auburn hand
When I would stay?
Here spinning on a
spider's moistened web,
My life hangs by its thread,
And I am gone.
I pray my fall be soft
As death is long.
I love you, Summer,
Ever,
Be my song.

RITA NORMAN

Ladies are never late!

BLACKMORE End's active After 8 Ladies' Group has been raking in the cash for several good causes.

From a Jumble Sale they made a profit of £137.75 which was shared between the Chelmsford Hospice and the Macmillan nurses. A Bring and Buy stall and later a coffee morning at Mrs Micky Scammell's together raised £43.15 for a support group for mastectomy patients.

On November 30 the ladies will be extra busy - cooking the club's annual dinner in the village hall. Contact Freda Tyrrell on 850948 if you'd like to join the group.

Why "After 8"? Well, it seems that the ladies weren't always so hot on the time-keeping for an 8pm start when the club was first formed.

Living colour

THE Floral Art Club will be holding its Christmas Dinner sometime in December and they say look out for the posters with full details.

The superb arrangements that club members placed in both Wethersfield Church and the United Reformed Church over the Harvest Festival weekend stay in the memory and show how much watching and learning the arrangers must have done. One recent day-school was at Margaret Newman's at Saffron Walden when, as well as tuition a lovely lunch was provided.

THERE was a good family turnout for the Christening of five-month-old Thomas Charles, son of Angela and Robert Stephens at Wethersfield Parish Church: two grandmas, two grandads and three of his four great-grandmas. Robert is gamekeeper at Brook Farm, Wethersfield.

THEIR FAME IS GROWING

HOW MANY FAMOUS PEOPLE IN YOUR GARDEN? Come along and find out at the next meeting of the Garden Club in Wethersfield Village Hall on Friday, November 20 at 7.45pm, says secretary, Lynne Byatt.

Mrs Alex Pankhurst is the speaker and her subject: "WHO does your garden grow? Refreshments, raffle, garden tips and now a library of gardening magazines for all to enjoy.

On November 28 the club invites you to Come and get Pickles - at a sale of Christmas food. There will be a Bring and Buy stall, and a plant stall and you can sit down to a cup of tea or coffee and a mince pie. From 2pm to 4pm in the United Reformed Church hall.

The club is planning a New Year Dinner on January 9, 1993 in the Village Hall. Members and guests welcome. Contact the secretary on 0371 850695

VOLUNTEERS WANTED to help inside Wethersfield Parish Church with general dusting, sweeping and cleaning as well as brass polishing. Outside, too, in keeping the churchyard tidy. If you feel you could give some time, however little, ring Mrs Sarah Pilgrim (churchwarden) on 850781.

PARISH CHURCH ANNUAL BAZAAR

Saturday, November 14, 2pm, Wethersfield Village Hall

INSIDE the Petches Bridge Water Treatment works the noise was deafening. Not from the water rushing into the towering reactors at 50 litres a second but from Kevin Elsdon's ghetto-blasters pouring out a numbing stream of rock music.

Kevin gets lonely and the music is company. That's the trouble with being a plant attendant at a fully automated plant - there's often no-one else to talk to but the computer.

At 38, Kevin, who lives in Saffron Gardens, Wethersfield, has been in the water business for over 20 years, starting with Colchester and District Water Board and now with its successor, Anglian Water. The vast hall full of electronics, pumps, sand and lime hoppers that went up behind the old Petches Bridge plant four years ago is his almost private world.

True former schoolmate and fellow Saffron Gardens resident Michael Lovell does drop in from time to time on maintenance visits and when I called a couple of electricians were busy on the ranks of smooth grey cabinets, decorated with their coloured lights and dials, but generally Kevin doesn't get much in the way of idle conversation.

So it took a while to get him to tell me about his "baby" which like any other can get him out of bed at times for a bit of tender loving care and attention.



Kevin (left) and Michael consult the computer



Inside, the plant is a maze of pipes and hoppers

KEVIN'S KINGDOM

Not often, though, because this 24-hour operation is continuously monitored by the computer, reporting by telemetry to Anglian's Southern Division headquarters at Colchester. Should a blockage appear in a filter, say, the program arranges for it to be washed out and automatically makes any other adjustments that taking the blocked filter off line may call for to keep the supply to the reservoir, under the grass banks beside the plant, constant.

Each day the £1.7 million plant treats and supplies the 1.7 million gallons that Wethersfield and the Braintree area demands. Though the plant sits right by the River Pant none of its water is surface water, it all comes from 91-metre deep, 600mm diameter boreholes, one at Bardfield and the other at Petches.

Coming as it does from deep in layers of chalk this water contains hardness salts such as calcium and magnesium carbonate, together with some iron. It was to improve the quality of this underground water that the plant was put up next to the existing chlorination plant and pumping station, which are now incorporated into the new works. To remove the hardness salts the water is mixed with lime and sand in the reactor towers. As the sand bubbles upwards with the pressure the lime assists the salts to cling to the sand, gradually making the resultant pellet so

heavy that it sinks to the bottom of the tower where it is discharged. Before it enters the reservoir to go eventually on its way to the water tower on Wethersfield airbase and other stations at Panfield and Cressing it is injected with chlorine gas to kill off any bacteria.

Handling chlorine gas, lime and the weak hydrochloric acid used to clean the probes that keep the telemetry working accurately, is a job for trained and experience men, which Kevin and Michael undoubtedly are. "We have got all the safety equipment," said Kevin. "And we have emergency showers."

But for all their years in the "trade" they still have to keep on learning. Above all they have to know their numbers. Computers love figures and Petches Bridge is one of only three plants in the country, and the only one in the Anglian area, that is controlled entirely by numbers.

Each process or sequence has a particular number and Kevin and Michael have to know exactly what the computer is telling them. No 32 shows a fault in the lime-feed system, 1440 shows when a filter wash is due.

There is only one number they DON'T want to see - anything that starts with a 2,000. That is an alarm number. Which means that somewhere along the processing line a fault has to be rectified.

Not that it is really alarming. At the worst all that would happen would be that the plant would automatically close itself down - and wait for Kevin or Michael, who stands in for him when he is on holiday, to sort out the problem.

It's all go at the Men's (and Ladies') Club Back to land

A PITY, perhaps, that they still call it the Men's Club, though it has a long and honourable history under that name.

With women now forming a fair proportion of the membership maybe 'Wethersfield Club' might be more appropriate.

Stars of the club, in fact, are the Ladies' darts team who have

won all of their last five matches. Any keen lady darts players would find a warm welcome if they ring Teresa Andrews at the club (850598), 7.30pm to midnight.

Apart from snooker and the bar there is regular entertainment and this is the line-up for the next few weeks: Nov 7: Perfect Strangers, a 5-piece group; Nov 21 Strate Linze, a '60s music group; Nov 28

Steve Blancard, popular modern and rock; Dec 5, Race Night; Dec 12 Live Wire Disco, Dec 19 Billy Strings, Dec 31 New Year's Eve Dance.

Want to go down for a night to see if the club is for you? Ring John Finbow on 0371 850321 or Teresa Andrews (850598) and they will arrange for you to enjoy an evening in convivial company.

REASONS for the dismissal of an appeal by Mr John Lovric against orders requiring him to remove trailers and tractor units and restore land at the Mushroom Farm to a condition suitable for re-planting, were reported to Wethersfield Parish Council. The Inspector had given particular consideration to the access to the site on narrow roads and the fact that the site was in a predominantly agricultural area.



Susan, with Parsley, left, and Arnie, right

PARSLEY is about to get the treatment.

Although the prestigious Cruft's Dog Show is still some ten weeks away 17-year-old Susan Foster, from School Road, Blackmore End is already making show ring plans for her Miniature Schnauzer.

Schnauzers should have a coarse coat. To get Fosfield's Parsley Sauce (to give him his kennel name) into prime condition for his big day Susan will have to carefully strip his undercoat now for it to grow smart and new by January.

This is because Schnauzers do not moult, a plus point for having them around the house and the Foster household certainly revolves around Parsley,

his mother Bella and litter brother Arnie ('Fosfield's I'll Be Back', in the show world).

In fact Arnie, who was supposed to have been found a new owner since he wasn't up to show standard coatwise, never actually left; Susan and her parents, David and Elizabeth Foster, couldn't bear to part with him.

Susan has had many successes in Junior Handling classes, for which she is now too old. It is not her first visit to Cruft's but she says: "I am really looking forward to it."

Grooming, clipping, washing and blow-drying lie ahead for Parsley, before Susan puts his socks on to keep him spotless for Show day.

People

Ring 0371 850092 with YOUR news of people or events in the parish

WHENEVER London dentist Frederick du Preez felt a little, dare we say, "down in the mouth", after long hours bending over the patients' chair he would put his bike in the back of the car, stop off at Dunmow and spend the week-end cycling around this beautiful part of Essex.

He came pedalling through so often that when Cottage Farm, just on the edge of Wethersfield, went on the market he felt he must have a little bit of the scenery to call his own. Still only a week-end visitor he has swapped pedalling for painting and putting up fence posts. With him come Sipho and Voltaire, two boisterous but well-behaved Rottweilers and girl-friend Carol Adams, from Oxford. The fence posts are with a view to a further arrival, Carol's horse, Race, which she rides in Novice Events.

"It's a very, very pretty part of



New at Cottage Farm: Frederick and Carol

Essex," enthused Frederick, "Everybody thinks Essex is a flat piece of ground, but it isn't."

Frederick is one of many South Africans to take up dentistry in this country.

"There is a lot of wanderlust in South Africans and Australians," he said. "Most of them go back but once they have done their training and their military training, which I did, some want to get out of it. "Four of us came over, two went back and two stayed." He and his associate have been in their practice for five years.

Carol and Frederick met through horse-riding but now he spends more time as driver and groom while Carol rides in British Horse Society one day events. It sometimes means a very early start because they can travel anything up to 100 miles to an Event. "He's the back-up team," laughs Carol.

Just at the moment eventing is out and so is Race - getting wild and shaggy-coated in a field while Carol recovers from a broken arm, gained in a

cross-country accident.

She hopes to bring Race, who competes under the grander name of Woodberry Piper, to Cottage Farm eventually. When her arm is fully recovered Carol will have to get Race back into competition fitness.

clipboard

Items discussed at meetings of Wethersfield Local Council

Clerk to Council: ALLAN FROST, 0371 851146

THE council has decided to drop its objection to a Stopping-up Order, under which the occupant of 1 West Drive can claim ownership of grass frontage, currently outside the site line of the premises, which he has maintained for several years.

It was felt the legal costs would be prohibitive. Planning permission, it was understood, had been granted for a 1½ metre high fence to be placed on the pathside boundary once the order had been signed. Any individual who wished to object to the order would have to do so within 6 weeks of October 8, 1992.

THE proposed closure of Braintree Magistrates' Court is to be reconsidered; the parish council was thanked by the District Council for giving its support to the campaign for this action.

NEW white lines put down after the recent road re-surfacing in and around Wethersfield were felt to be not as plain as before; the Highways Department is to be asked to look into this and the absence of yellow marking outside the school.

APPLICATION is to be made for "poop scoop" by-laws to cover Blackmore End playing field and the District Council's offer to provide and empty two bins at the field is to be accepted.

A PROPOSAL to place re-cycling bins on the green at Saffron Gardens, beside the existing sand bin, has not been approved by the District Council's re-cycling officer on the grounds that the site was too close to homes. The parish council is to press for him to reconsider his decision.

THE council is to look at ways and means of providing a further street light at Blackmore End and improving the road edges there.

AN old pump, above a well at Brick Kiln Green, Blackmore End may be refurbished as a memorial to the progress in water supplies to the area, from wells, through pumps to mains supply.

FOOTPATH 33 at Wethersfield has been cleared of overgrowth by the fire service, alongside whose station it runs. An extension of the path, to Saffron Gardens was not, as some residents believed, an official footpath. It was up to people who had used it for many years to make an application for its adoption as a footpath.

REQUESTS from village clubs and societies for donations would be considered at the Council's January meeting and grants made if funds available.

A taxing problem

ANYONE receiving Housing Benefit or Community Charge Benefit may be wondering what is the situation under the Council Tax which begins on April 1st.

Braintree Council Benefits Office (0376 552525 Ext 2864) at Causeway House can explain the change in detail but it seems that anyone currently receiving those benefits and likely to continue to do so until 31st March, 1993 need NOT apply for Council Tax Benefit although the council may make a check on family circumstances before the change-over.

People not currently on benefit, but wishing to apply for it under the new tax, should contact the Council Offices after 1st December.