

Skate & Chips

It has been decided by the playing field committee that it is time to add some new facilities to the field, suitable for the younger members of our village: a "Skate Park" and something for the less energetic but competitive residents, a "Petanque Court", a game usually played on fine gravel chippings.

Subject to planning consent and there being no major objections from the community we, with the help of the youth of the village, will be building a skate park on the left hand boundary of the field just behind the pavilion. The exact size has not yet been decided but we hope to build a half pipe, two quarter pipes and a fun box in an area large enough to accommodate BMXers and skaters, see photograph. We are very aware of the need to preserve the visual amenity; therefore we intend to landscape the site and plant new trees along the boundary to absorb any joyful aural emanations (noise). Facilities for the youth of the village are long overdue and if we are to reduce the nuisance factor of bikes on the pavement and skating in the road outside YOUR house we must provide some facility to cater for this. Latterly skateboarding roller blading and the BMX have become professional sports; we feel that their longevity is guaranteed. Who knows we could go on to have a Wethersfield representative at the Xtrem Sports or the Olympic Games in future years?

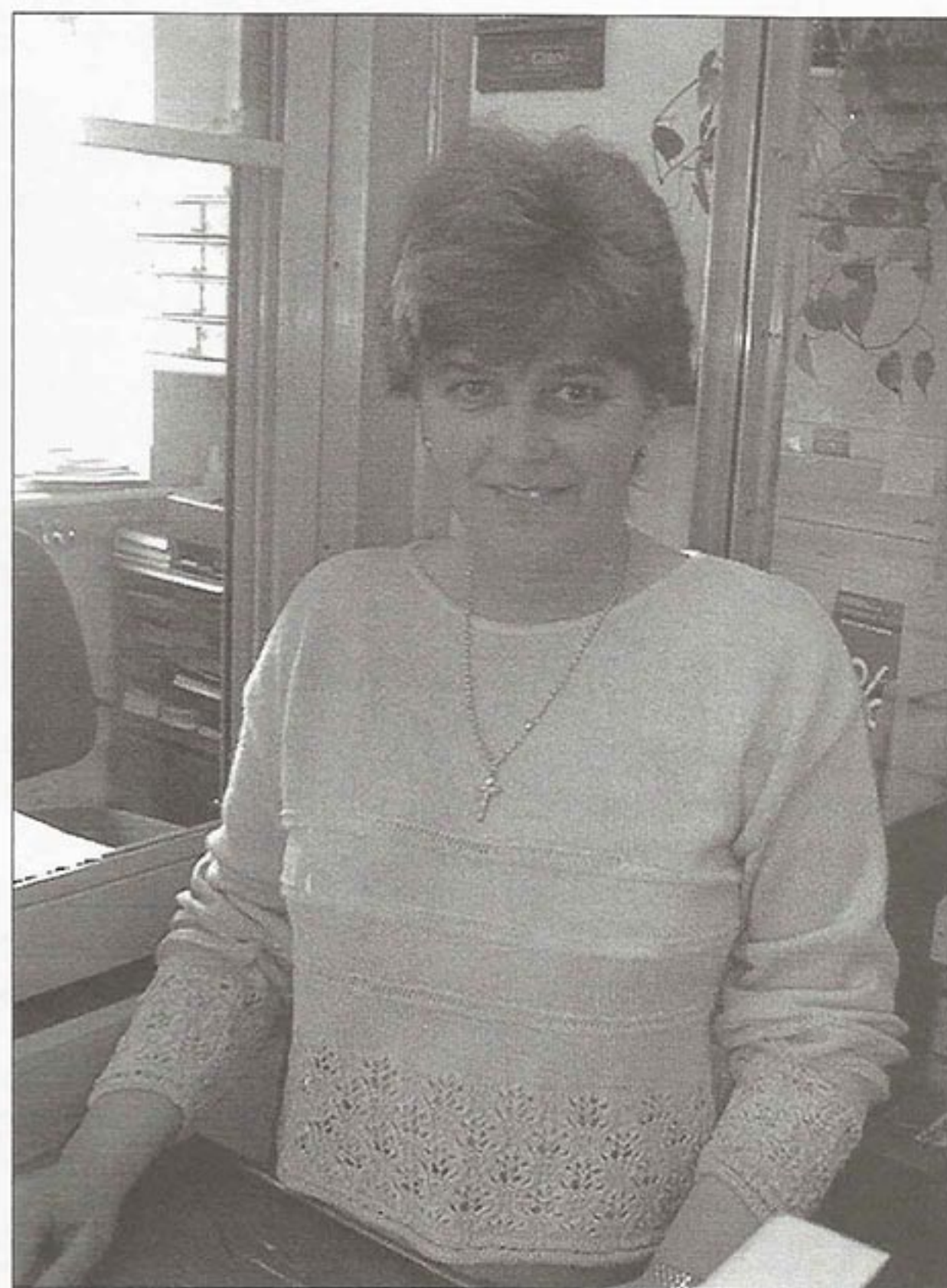
So please support us, we will be happy to listen to all opinions on the matter. If you can help with materials or services give us a call. We would really like the labour force to be drawn from those who will be end users; thereby ensuring the facility will be looked after and policed by those who care about it. *continued on back page*

Changes afoot... at Wethersfield Post Office

After taking over the Silver Street business five years ago and living over the shop, Teresa Rhodes has decided more living space is needed. An extension at the back is developing apace, much to the interest and curiosity of many of Teresa's customers who are keen to inspect progress. So much, in fact, that builder Terry Saunders has provided a couple of hard hats so they may visit the extension in safety! Teresa reckons "it might be getting more popular than the Millennium Dome!"

The interest and support of the local community in the local Post Office is a vital part of ongoing village life. Teresa talks about how she has come to know her customers and their lives in the area. "Some of them combine a trip to collect their pension with an appointment at the surgery next door" she reports, "coming in for a chat whilst waiting their turn". Knowing that many of her customers are not easily able to travel out of the village, Teresa has also built up the general stores part of the business, with fresh fruit and vegetables, newspapers and magazines.

Teresa is keen to point out the



many services which the Post Office provides, some of which people may not be aware of. Bills for gas, electricity, phone and water rates can be paid — why bother with an envelope and stamp! Foreign currency for holidays can be purchased at only 4 days notice, with only a 1% charge and no buy-back charge for those unused notes. In these days, when banks are closing and talk of internet banking abounds, we still need to pay money and get cash out! The Post Office provides banking

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Editors come and editors go

Wethersfield News, a much loved albeit relatively infrequent diversion into our lives, enters into another new era, a new millennium, a new editor and, unusually, a new editorial team with ambitions to push this publication into the public domain and produce a vehicle for your thoughts and ideas and allow access to the editorial via the internet as well as conventional reporting.

I must say the response has been somewhat staggering: we have had only a couple of weeks to put this edition together and as is apparent it is stuffed full; the response for articles from you has been amazing so keep them coming. The one thing that has become apparent to me is that Wethersfield has a mountain of talent, societies and willing bodies but they need bringing together to create a more integrated society. We also have to remember that there are many new-

Road Rage at Quiz Night on page 5

comers who don't necessarily know where to go or who to contact to participate in our village life. If you are a member of any club, society, public service or institution, tell us about it, run an ad, or a few short lines; we can expand and research the rest and give you a bit more coverage.

It is also our intention to cover a more disenfranchised area, that of the 12-22 year olds. Often an age group that don't get involved, but if we keep up and are sympathetic maybe a better understanding can be established. Ideas for regular articles for this age group will be very welcome, and although I would not exclude the older contributor (I wouldn't like to be accused of ageism) I would prefer contributions to come from that age group. All communications please through any of the editorial team or email: hofnoff@purpleteapot.fsnet.co.uk

Your editorial team are:

Dinie Dimsdale, Sue Marsh, Penny Payne, Richard Clubley, Charles Dimsdale, Kerry Harris, David Mangham and me, David Clements (Editor).

And to the outgoing Editor! What can we say? Thank you for a sterling effort. For Liz the burden has been lifted. Many thanks again from the whole of Wethersfield.

OPENING THE DOOR TO THE WORLD

Great news for full time wheelchair users in Essex

The National Lottery Charities Board has agreed to widen the criteria to enable people to join the **EDPA** Travel Voucher Scheme.

If you are receiving any means-tested benefit, get in touch with **EDPA** now – for **£25.00** worth of **FREE** travel vouchers every month!

For an application form telephone **01245 253400** or write to:

The Essex Disabled People's Association
90 Broomfield Road
Chelmsford
Essex CM1 1SS
Email: edpa@edpass.org.

The scheme offers wheelchair users the opportunity to travel as and when **they** want to. Starting on 1.11.99 the scheme now has about 130 members county-wide with 55 transport providers, including five community buses, two rail companies and 48 taxi operators.

If you meet the following criteria you should apply without delay.

1. *Be unable to walk and rely entirely on a wheelchair for outdoor mobility.*
2. *Be receiving any one of the following benefits: income support; housing benefit; council tax benefit; working families tax credit; disabled person working tax credit; income based jobseekers allowance.*
3. *Over 18.*
4. *Do not hold an orange badge — or are willing to surrender it.*
5. *Living at home or in a residential/care home with no access to transport.*

Property – an expert's view

Bev Baxter of Gray & Co says:

"Wethersfield has long been one of my favourite villages. There is an excellent mix of interesting and historic properties and it provides a shop, a post office and garage — not to mention two public houses. The community spirit is excellent and I have to say that, property-wise, it is still extremely good value for money considering its proximity to rail and road links to London.

Stansted Airport is within easy reach and in time this will gradually increase property prices as the demand for housing to accommodate staff at the airport increases. I have always felt that Wethersfield is much under rated property-wise and it is true to say that those that have moved there have all said how happy they are once settled in.

All classes of property sell well provided that the price is realistic; although there is a very real shortage of property on the market at the moment, applicants are still not at the point of paying any price to secure a home.

The mix of property is, as I said earlier, absolutely fasci-

nating, from very pleasant bungalows which are always in demand to spacious semi-detached and detached houses right through to extremely important village houses with architectural features such as crown post roofs, medieval doors and windows and in one case, to my certain knowledge, medieval wall paintings.

The future of the housing market in relation to prices does give me some cause for concern, more particularly having seen a recent edition of 'The Money Programme' on television in which it stated that there will be approximately 3,000 people looking to buy a property in central London; each of these people will have between £1.5 and £7 million to invest in property in the capital. This influx of money will start to be invested at the end of March when the city bonus money is paid out; my feeling is that, like ripples on a pond, it will place a strain on a market where precious few houses are available. The Chancellor has adjusted stamp duty under the guise of cooling prices. The biggest casualties will be those that are trying to get on the property ladder."

1st Wethersfield Rainbows

After the February half-term break we welcomed Esther Pilgrim and Gemma Shilling to our pack and we hope they will enjoy being members of the 1st Wethersfield Rainbows.

As Rainbows we have been looking at the colours of the rainbow, focusing on a colour each week, and have combined this with making Mothering Sunday surprises for our mums.

Our group is for girls 5 to 7 years of age and we have a waiting list for any girl coming up to 5 years.

Telephone Snowy Owl:

Mrs Sarah Pilgrim 850781

1st Wethersfield Brownies

Congratulations to Heidi Pearce and Lucy Jerram who recently gained their Highway badges and are looking forward to going on to Guides. Well done also to Evelynne Wilson and Louise Pascoe who have gained their Roadway badges. By the time you read this in print we hope a number of girls will have received badges for Handbell Ringing following regular practising and a Mothering Sunday performance in church. We are now a small group and are on the look out for girls from 7 to 10 years of age to join us. Please ring:

Brown Owl: Cherry Threadgold 850481

Snowy Owl: Sarah Pilgrim 850781

Jackson School of Dancing

Wethersfield girls have been practising hard ready to join others from Toppesfield, Hedingham and Halstead for the annual charity show. This year's show 'Millennium Magic' is to be held at the Ramsey School in Halstead on the afternoon of Saturday 8th April and the evenings of Friday 14th and Saturday 15th April.

Classes are held in Wethersfield Village Hall

Fridays, 5.30pm – 7.00pm. Contact **Kate** on **01787 473607**

What does Barnardo's mean to you?

That was the question Blackmore End resident Roger Singleton, the charity's chief executive, asked an audience of around 60 at Wethersfield Village Hall. Not many were fully aware of the now far-reaching work of the organisation and Roger spoke about how its work with children has changed and illustrated this with video extracts of historic and contemporary films.

Barnardo's now work to try and ensure that disabled, disadvantaged, abused and needy children — who in bygone years would have been removed from their homes — can receive help and support to remain in their own families wherever possible. They support families in need in the community and organise adventure holidays for disabled and disadvantaged youngsters.

After an interval supper of bangers-and-mash questions from the floor came thick and fast — always an indication of a thoroughly enjoyable and informative event.

Barnardo's has asked Wethersfield News to thank everyone who supported the occasion. Around £240 was raised and a trailer-load of saleable gifts was donated for the Barnardo's Braintree shop. Appreciation has been expressed to the Wethersfield and Blackmore End Conservatives for organising this non-political evening and to all those who contributed their time, skills and services to make it such an interesting and enlightening evening.

"BUSY FINGERS" — DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2000

Blackmore End Village Hall — first and third Tuesday in each month 8pm – 10pm

Mar	7	Making a large material craft bag	Pat Harris
	21	As above	
Apr	4	Fresh flower arrangement	Paulette Bauckham
	18	Crochet	Janet Hitchings/Brenda Sheldrake
May	2	Fabric-covered books and crafted kitchen items	Margaret Jacks
	5	Outing to Hatfield House "Living Crafts" - seats available	
June	6	Patchwork and appliqué	Pat Harris
	20	As above	
July	4	As above	
	18	Awaiting confirmation	
Aug	1	Making a fabric covered box	Christine Scott
	15	Making a fitted lampshade	Janet Hitchings
Sept	5	As above	
	19	Awaiting confirmation	
Oct	3	Awaiting confirmation	
	17	Sugar Craft	Myrna Bragg
Nov	7	As above	
	21	Gold thread Christmas cards	Caroline McBride
	25	CHRISTMAS CRAFT FAIR (Saturday)	
Dec	5	Christmas flower craft	Paulette Bauckham/Janet Hitchings
	19	Fresh flower arrangement with candles	Paulette Bauckham

For further information:

contact Paulette Bauckham "Busy Fingers" co-ordinator 01371 850308

Wethersfield Cricket Club

The grass is growing and the start of the new season is rapidly approaching. As usual we are keen to see new members. Anyone interested in playing should call the captain, Chris McCloud, on 850934.

In a break with tradition, we are intending to hold practice sessions in the early season. These will be very informal and any would-be player is welcome to come and join us. Practice will be on Thursday evenings starting on 27th April.

Paul Jerram

Wethersfield Wine Club

On 14th April we entertain the Halstead, Wickham Bishops and Braintree clubs for the annual Blind Tasting competition and Social Evening.

To balance the tedium of the Annual General Meeting on 12th May, we propose to follow the business items with a hot take-away meal in the hope of encouraging an improved attendance for this particular evening.

The outdoor season will begin with a Barbecue on 10th June – more about that later.

R.A. Mostyn, Secretary

History Group

On Thursday 9th March Meryll Catty and Audrey Gillett gave the group a very entertaining talk entitled 'The Name Game'. They explained the origins of names and surnames and gave some very amusing examples: "My father was called Mr Balls and they decided to call me Ophelia!"

On Thursday 13th April John Bridges will be giving the History Group a talk entitled 'Early Country Motoring'. The talk starts at 8.00p.m. in the Wethersfield Village Hall and admission is £1 to include tea, coffee and biscuits.

The Bardfield History Group has organised a tour of Woodbridge and working tide mill on Saturday 3rd June. If anyone is interested in going please contact Lesley Nicks on 01371 850624 for more details.

On Thursday 11th May Dot Bedenham will be giving a talk on 'Unusual Weddings at Hylands House in 1912 and 1920'.

The talk originally scheduled for January, which was cancelled due to ill health, has now been arranged for Thursday 8th June. Jean Grice will be giving a talk on 'John Ray – Botanist and Cleric'.

Wethersfield Floral Art Club – 25th Anniversary

On 23rd February 2000, Wethersfield Floral Art Club celebrated its 25th year. The event was honoured when members old and new joined together for a celebratory dinner. This was followed by a floral arts display by David Thomson titled "Celebration" depicting many arrangements with a silver theme which aptly supported this special occasion. The club now has a new officer group and a full programme is planned for the coming year with a variety of events. In addition to the monthly floral art display, outings, fund raising events and a hands-on night for those who wish to enhance their skills in floristry have been planned. In order to promote the club and encourage new members a first visit to the club will be free of charge.



Floral Art Club Programme for 2000

Mar	29	The Day in the Life of a Florist	Yolande Turgoose
Apr	26	Hands-on Night	Paulette Bauckham
May	31	Once Upon a Time	Lionel Clark
Jun		Club outing – date and time to be confirmed	
Jul	26	Fund raiser: Ploughman's lunch and swim at Little Barham 12.30 start	
Aug	23	Fund raiser: Coffee morning at Barbery Green, Blackmore End 10.30am transport arranged	
Sept	27	Oops!!	Josie Marchant
Oct	25	Flowers for your Delight	Ursula Geller
Nov	29	Christmas Open Evening	Maureen Noone
Dec		Annual Christmas Dinner – date and venue to be confirmed	

For any further information please contact Paulette Bauckham – Secretary
Telephone 01371 850308

WINTER

Old man winter, in haste to depart one dark night
Draped around him a mantle of ermine, snow white.
As he rose from his lair, on the brow of a hill
He glared in dismay at the maid, who stood still
'Neath the dew covered boughs of a sweet chestnut tree –
A vision of loveliness, who could she be?
Attired in a green robe, with her long flowing hair
She smiled at old winter, and bade him take care.
"In your place I have come to bring joy to the earth
For my name is Spring Time, and I give new birth".
The last vestige of snow was soon melting away
As signs of new growth were found every day.
First, the spears of snowdrops, mid ivy and moss.
The antics of garden birds: see how they toss
The dead leaves and debris beneath bushes and shrubs
To seek out their favourite beetles and grubs;
Before long their nests will be fashioned and made,
And in each one the first batch of eggs will be laid.
While lovers, with arms entwined, whisper and sigh,
Ewes penned in their fold hear their lambs' plaintive cry.
The magic of woods with their carpets of blue,
And meadows of flowers, soaked in fresh morning dew.
This season is best with the joyous birds' song,
While the Cuckoo is heard calling, all the day long.
Oh Spring, lovely girl, signs of hope we have seen,
Now all of the earth is clad with your green.

The Wayfarer

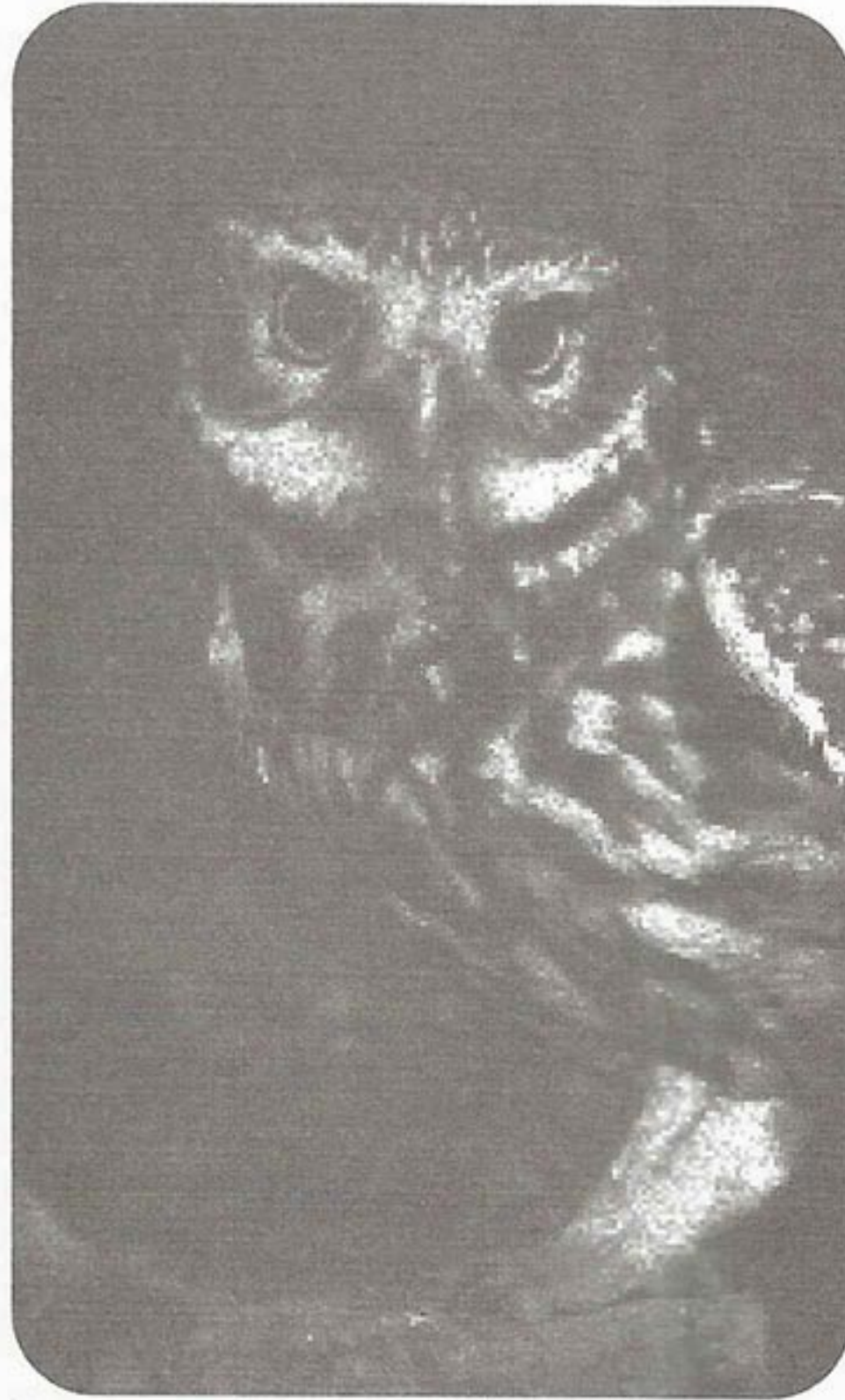
Falconry, n. The art of training falcons to pursue and attack game; the sport of hawking.

My father and I keep rapiers as a hobby. The birds are kept for display and breeding, although in the past they were used for hunting for food mostly grouse sometimes rabbits.

We keep at least seven owls including two breeding pairs, one pair of African Spotted Barn Owls and a pair of European Eagle Owls which have started to breed. When they are in season the male begins to dig a small shallow hole for the female to lay her eggs, she has little to do with nest building, but when the eggs are laid they take it in turns to tend to the eggs. After the chicks are hatched they both continue to feed and attend to them and this is called double participation. When bred in captivity owls have to be fed a double dose of food a day; if they are not and they are left hungry they will tend to eat their own young. We feed them day old chickens, rabbits and mice which we purchase already prepared from a specialist supplier. The mouse is the equivalent of a vitamin pill to a rapier and a rat helps to build good strong bones. Rapiers are strict carnivores and their diet ranges from small deer to insects, slugs and worms. Breeding pairs are not allowed out when they have young because they become savage and will protect their young at all costs.

After 9 weeks, when the chicks are capable of flight, the parents lose interest and abandon them. During the breeding season the birds need to be left to their own devices, except for feeding, otherwise they get apathetic and refuse to reproduce.

Rapiers have to be trained as



soon as they leave their parents' control. A relationship with a human has to be built up by spending time with the young birds to gain their trust. When they are old enough they will fly naturally but in the wild the female will take their food away from the nest to encourage them to fly. They will then learn coordination and the geography of their environment. When we train them in captivity the birds are taken out to learn about their territory — bells, whistles and lures are used to get them used to humans and to enable them to recognise their owners. They are always taken out of their cages by offering the gauntlet, which is a long

leather glove. It is attached to the bird's legs with two leather thongs called a Jess, which is tied to an anklet with a loop of leather attached to the bird's legs. When the birds are restrained in this way they will not attempt to fly, but can move up and down the gauntlet without turning around. If you allow it to move too much the animal feels it has control over you and will not respond appropriately.

Sometimes a bird will leave its owner if treated badly. Younger birds will revert to the wild, but it is unfortunate that many of the older birds will die because they are not capable of looking after themselves.

Most owls are protected and require a licence in captivity. It is unlawful to shoot or trap them and to steal their eggs. Owl populations are increasing but it will be a long time before they reach acceptable numbers.

The largest owl in the world is the European Eagle Owl, living over much of the mainland of Europe although most wide spread in Scandinavia.

Did you know that there is a visiting European Eagle Owl in Wethersfield? It is roughly 2' high and female and it was spotted along Meadside — so all you cats and small dogs BEWARE! The Eagle Owl

is mainly a woodland hunter. Their sheer size means they are taking prey the size of a fox or a small deer although they are happier catching smaller prey and regularly hunt for rabbit. They are excellent silent hunters relying on stealth and surprise as their main weapons. Female birds can weigh up to seven pounds. Our visiting female is probably looking for a mate.

One of the smallest owls in the UK is the Little Owl which is only 23cm high. Widespread throughout the year in England and Wales this bird was introduced in the nineteenth century. I have spotted a Little Owl down by the sewage works living in an old tree stump.

Most rapiers are nocturnal, they have super-sensitive night time vision and their eyes are so highly developed that they do not move in their sockets; this is why an owl's head moves through 360 degrees. They also have highly developed hearing which is desirable when hunting at great altitudes.

Birds and owls greatly enrich our lives and we should support them by allowing them to inhabit their natural environment of woodlands and farm buildings. Unfortunately, modern farming methods have depleted their habitat, but some breeds like the Barn Owl are being raised in captivity and reintroduced into the wild. Just the sight in Wethersfield of the Eagle Owl, Little Owl and the Tawny Owl, which has been calling on the village green, restores my faith in the future of owls, but we must continue to nurture these wonderful birds.

Mark Spalding. March 2000

One of the editorial committee members has a daughter, Zoë, who teaches the Kindergarten class at a school in Chelmsford. Zoë and her two daughters (Becca 10 and Alice 7) are moving to Wethersfield in September for just a year and it is hoped that the children will meet others of similar ages. They are planning to join the Guides and Brownies and any other activities laid on in the village for the young. We are regularly given Kindergarten 'snapshots' some of which are worth sharing with you. You can guess what Big B....., and Little B..... stand for, but in the interest of younger readers, and indeed older readers, we will not spell it out.

New line in lingerie?

Listening to a Big B talk about space and admiring how much she had managed to find out, I was stunned into shocked disbelief — she was talking about 'Copper Knickers'. No, I must have misheard, but there it was again... copper knickers. Was this a new constellation? Do astronauts have to wear them? Should I be wearing them in case of nuclear fall out? What was all this stuff about copper knickers? At last realisation slowly came over me and I relaxed. I knew what all this copper knickers stuff was... not what, but who... Copernicus! I'm still not sure whether I want to correct her!

1st Wethersfield Guides

Just before the half-term break in February, the Guides welcomed parents and friends to their production of the popular panto 'Cinders'. The evening passed without a hitch and all those who took part should be congratulated on their efforts. Thanks also to the production team who, with such short rehearsal time available, made the panto such a success.

The Guides have tried their hand at 'cooking' during the last couple of weeks, having had a go at making and tossing pancakes and making fruit salads. March is the month when the Guides take their turn at cleaning the brass in Wethersfield Church — just to let you know mums, we actually get volunteers for this job! Once the

longer evenings come there will be plenty of time to go for walks around the village and hopefully make use of the playing field for a game or two rounders (that's a hint to Kim). Finally, I would like to congratulate Sue Atterton and Alison McEwan on their appointments as Assistant Guiders. Thanks also to Alison Hamer for all her contributions to the running of the meetings.

Wethersfield Guides meet on a Wednesday evening, during term time, from 6.30pm until 8.00pm, and all girls from the age of 10 years are most welcome.

If you need any further information, please telephone Kathy Andrews (Guider) on 01371 851384

FREDA ROSE TYRRELL

Born in July 1928 in Blackmore End, Freda attended school there and Margaret Tabor in Braintree. On leaving school she worked in Braintree, cycling there every day. She married Thomas Tyrrell in 1951 and they lived in Mill Lane. After a spell in Wethersfield they had their bungalow built in Blackmore End where they lived the rest of their married life. After Tom's death in 1998 Freda lived in Saffron Gardens, Wethersfield. In 1962 Freda's only child, Teresa, was born.

Freda was a very busy person, except when she was asleep, something she was very good at. She could sleep anywhere, anytime! The problem was so acute that when she and Tom were younger, Tom made her sing to stay awake on the back of his motorbike, and if you ever heard Freda sing you will appreciate how concerned he was!

Freda's energy and love of the community led to her involvement in organisations such as After Eights, W.I., Flower Club, Garden Club, British Legion and CREAMER, to name but a few. She worked at The Bull for many years and seemed to know everybody. It was a fact you could go to the Outer Hebrides with Freda and she would bump into someone she knew.

Freda's sometimes tough exterior thinly masked a very warm and caring person who understood the value of friendship. If Freda was your friend it was through thick and thin. She was also a proud and devoted grandmother to Tom and Elizabeth.

Only last year Freda said she had done everything she wanted to do except visit Australia, but then she has been to New Zealand twice, staying with friends of course.

She leaves a small family and the fact that over 100 people attended her funeral says a lot about the sort of person she was. She will be sorely missed by us all.

Millennium bug hits Wethersfield

The incident took place on Saturday 11th March. The location was a sleepy outpost in north Essex in a village called Wethersfield. The event was the WVHMC annual dinner and dance. As the 75 guests arrived no one can have suspected the events that were to unfold as the evening progressed. After all the media publicity the Millennium bug finally struck in a way that had not been foreseen.

The evening started normally enough as guests were escorted to their tables by the MC for the evening, a certain Mr. David Benfield. Dinner was provided by the excellent John Dickens. Starters such as prawn cocktail and homemade minestrone soup were followed by pork, beef or chicken, all with posh names. As dessert and coffee with cheese and biscuits were served (very efficiently I should say) all seemed routine. After many years attending such glittering occasions this reporter was shocked to see the events unfolding before his eyes.

A band called *Millennium* took the stage. Within seconds the effects could be seen. Revellers experienced uncontrolled tapping of the feet. Very soon several were witnessed suffering strange contortions. They were forced to get up and seek the open spaces on

MILLENNIUM GARDEN FESTIVAL

Blackmore End Village Hall Committee are, once again, organising an Open Gardens Weekend on 10th & 11th June to raise funds for the Blackmore End Millennium Project.

The open gardens both large and small in Blackmore End, Beazley End and Rotten End will offer visitors the opportunity to see the hard work put in by keen amateur gardeners.

There are some beautiful gardens in the area including some featured in Anglia TV garden programmes, and for one price of £2.50 per person, purchased at the first garden visited, you can visit all the gardens in the festival.

Many gardens will have cream teas and refreshments available and for children and active adults some will have tennis, clock golf, croquet and other garden games. Others will have plants for sale.

The Open Gardens Festival will be well publicised in advance and all monies raised will go towards the Village Millennium Project, which is at an advanced stage of planning.

We already have nine gardens in the three villages agreeing to open on Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th June, but we can still include more. If you have a garden which you are proud of and would like to open it for the benefit of others and for this worthy cause, please contact Adrienne Poulson - 01371 851340 or Kerry Harris - 01371 850009.

the dance floor. Women abandoned their traditional handbags and cavorted unabashed. Men were seen dancing with women (see the scandal pages for juicy details). Teenagers were spotted enjoying themselves to the strains of this addictive combo. A rumour started that the club secretary had been taking strong substances and the drug squad was mentioned. Really the substance taken was no more than a half of lager shandy.

Millennium are a 10-piece outfit specialising in rock numbers like "Nubush City Limits", "Layla" and some of their own tunes. They take no money individually but donate the proceeds of their efforts to charity. But don't get me wrong, these are no amateurs. As anyone present will tell you, they can be seriously addictive and must be treated with caution.

This has been a public health warning from your Social Affairs Correspondent - *Nightlife*.

Road Rage at Quiz Night

Traditionally Wethersfield Cricket Club holds a Quiz Night in early March. This year was no exception and on 4th March around 80 of the top intellects in the village congregated for the annual battle of the grey matter. Teams from such internationally renowned academic institutions as the 'Dog Inn Institute of Technology' and the 'Brewery Tavern Think Tank' settled in to pit their knowledge against the best to be found. Unfortunately the previous champions, the Garden Club, were unable to attend due to lecturing commitments in the USA.

Rounds 1 and 2 passed without incident. Already the Dog Inn was showing promise whilst others were showing the effect of the refreshments. No one suspected that controversy was about to hit. The quizmaster, whose name escapes me, asked which road links London to Southend. A simple enough question for these minds. When he announced the answer as the A127 cries of "YES!" and "WRONG!" echoed out simultaneously. Arguments spread like wildfire across the chamber floor. Normally placid professors, philosophers, palaeontologists and lots of other 'ologists gesticulated, shook their fists, cried "SHAME" and "YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS!" Maps appeared to demonstrate beyond

doubt that the A13 was the correct answer. Never before has such animosity visited such an august congregation. Fortunately, without the need of the local constabulary, order was restored and the battle continued but now with a determined edge. Serious minds had been called into doubt. The word "buffoon" had been uttered. The anti had been upped.

Rounds came and went, jokers were played, baked potatoes were eaten (with a very nice bean stew), points were scored. Things were close but when the scores were finally calculated there was no doubt that the Dog Inn team were the bright sparks scoring 166 out of a possible 200. Mutterings could be heard along the lines of "But if we had played the Joker on round 5 and we'd been given the A13...". The losers went off to lick their wounds and start the serious business of swotting up for next year.

However, that is not quite the end of the story for that evening. This correspondent can report that the team from the Tavern Think Tank postponed their academic pursuits for the rest of the evening and retired to some liquid refreshment during which period events took place which decorum prevents me from reporting in depth.

Traffic South East Reporting for... Nightlife

Spring

The joy of seeing something beautiful unexpectedly should be shared, to live on in the memory. Hence William Wordsworth's delight on walking through trees to a lake where he found "a host of golden daffodils", which inspired him to write his poem.

On the first day of this month, knowing that our churchyard in spring is alive with Snowdrops or Fair Maids of February, I wandered through the grass noting the fresh molehills, and yes, a carpet of Snowdrops greeted me. How simple yet perfect is this flower, both single and double, with its characteristic green markings, growing amongst the Ivy. Glancing around to reflect on this beauty, across on the other side under the trees, hundreds of Aconites made a carpet of gold. Make a note at the end of this year's diary to see this spring marvel on our doorstep.

Some years ago Castle Hedingham was my home, and a few yards away a narrow lane, bounded by hedges, provided a peaceful walk. A rickety plank over a ditch, where Celandines and Dog Mercury bloomed led to a wood, and on entering, yes, the glorious sight - a sea of blue and the sweet perfume of Bluebells. In future years this secret place was shared in the company of a husband and friend.

In 1984 on April third at Petches Bridge, Horse Chestnut twigs were gathered, brought home for observation, and by the tenth the flower buds were exposed and five days later, the fully formed leaves surrounded the candle. On the sixth of February the Horse Chestnut tree at the Broad had burst its buds. Ladybirds abound in the garden, under leaves, so keep a few where shelter may be found, until the greenfly appear. By the twelfth of March, eighteen varieties of flower were in bloom in the garden. Is this a record? Comments please.

Spring has really sprung early this year.

The Wayfarer

PEDRO & ANN HARRIS - new Wethersfield residents

A warm welcome to Pedro and Ann Harris who have just come to live in a house overlooking the Green. They are no strangers to Wethersfield having lived for many years in Water Hall Lane, Shalford .

No journalist I, and without the help of Tabloid headline writers it is hard to squeeze a busy and interesting life into a few short sentences, but I will try.

Pedro? No he is not of Spanish origin, but the nickname surfaced while he was in the Army in Germany in the '50s and then stuck. Opportunist that he is, he capitalised on the name when he became Pedro the Magnificent, wrestler extraordinary. 1963 was a hopeless winter for Rugby (the big freeze), the other love of Pedro's life, but luckily he met Bunny White, a wrestling trainer who had an elementary gym behind a local pub. Needing something physical to do, he learned the art of wrestling and competed on the local circuit for several years, and indeed only gave up playing Rugby in 1985. Pedro says that if you get through the first three weeks of wrestling you will succeed, and unsurprisingly he did. In Pedro's house there are posters advertising his wrestling bouts.

For many years Pedro ran a Chelmsford construction company and having married Ann, they started in Great Baddow, but with a growing family moved to Broomfield, next door to Rider (King Solomon's Mines) Haggard's brother, and then to Shalford where they needed yet more room for children and horses.

Then sadly, with very little warning, their daughter Corinne died. Corinne, a lovely outgoing girl, full of life and fun, was only 15 and she attended Tabor High School. That was in 1983 and then further tragedy hit the family when their elder son Mark died four years later. At about this time, the construction business began to struggle. Despite facing disaster on all fronts, Pedro and Ann picked themselves up, bought the Post Office and village shop in Hatfield Broad Oak and from a low level, turned the business into a notable success with a fine reputation over a very wide area.

They sold the shop in 1998 and have come to retire in Wethersfield near to their son Fraser and his family in Jaspers Green. As two highly active and personable people, we feel sure they will be great assets and a force for the positive in the village.



Pedro and Ann outside their Post Office in Hatfield Broad Oak

CD

United Reformed Church

Services 11.00am

April

2	Mr C. Reader	Mothering Sunday
9	Mrs S. Pilgrim	
16	Rev. T. Perry	Communion
23	Miss S. Wallace	Easter
30	Miss H. Irwin	

May

7	Mrs J. Jenkins	
14	Mr C. Bamforth	
21	Rev. T. Perry	Communion
28	Mr J. Stenner	

Welcome Group

8.00pm 50p including refreshments

April

6	Mr A. Overall speaks of "His Public Life"
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May

4	Sheila Wright talk – Braintree Community Transport Bring and Buy table
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June

1	Guided tour – Braintree District Museum Cost £2.50. Names at May meeting who wish to go. Leave U.R.C. car park 6.45pm
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House Group Bible Study Discussion

2nd Monday of each month at 2.00pm

Wethersfield Parish Church

Forthcoming Services / Events

April

2	8.00am	Holy Communion	
	11.00am	Family Service	Mothering Sunday
9	11.00am	Family Service	
	3.00pm	AGM in church	
16	11.00am	Parish Eucharist	Palm Sunday
21	2.00pm	Service	Good Friday
23	11.00am	Family Eucharist	Easter Sunday

May

7	8.00am	Holy Communion	
14	11.00am	Family Service	
21	11.00am	Parish Eucharist	
28	6.30pm	Evensong	

Midweek Communion – Wednesdays 9.30am

Lent Bible Study continues Monday 3rd & 10th April
2.00pm 54 Saffron Gardens

Sunday School

Welcomes children from 3 to 11 years of age.

We meet in church on Sunday mornings 9.45 – 10.30am

Contact: Mrs Elaine Ambrose 850244

Mrs Sarah Pilgrim 850781

What the Dickens is happening?

We have a deserter in the camp; everyone knows that once you have been in Wethersfield for more than a year it is not possible to leave. The only way to move up/down is to participate in the Wethersfield shuffle. Or shuffle off this mortal coil. WELL someone has succeeded, but he WILL come back. What the Dickens am I talking about? John Dickens of course. Now the proud owner of a fine 15C timber-framed (what's new around here) country house called The White Hart, Yeldham. He hasn't moved, but transferred his interest temporarily to the White Hart to develop that part of his ever-expanding empire; but he assures us that the Inn on the Green will continue to prosper under his and only his guidance, "Cos he IS da man", and we can expect to have a suitably remodelled Dickens Brasserie aimed at a broader clientele and lots more of them to boot thank you very much.

So John is gone only to return, thereby proving my theory, and having already participated in the Wethersfield shuffle, he is doomed I tell you. Doomed.

FUN DAY — we need you!

Well it's here again and scheduled for 8th July. As always we are looking for new ideas and, more importantly, new faces to help and inspire. This is an event which solely supports the Wethersfield playing field and all money raised is used to finance the pavilion, maintain the field, replace and provide equipment.

This year the money raised will go to build some new facilities. At long last the young and young-at-heart will get their very own Skate Park, and for the more sedate and sociable members of our community a Petanque Court — you know that thing they do in France with small steel balls and a glass of wine!

Fun Day's central attraction will be "It's a Knock Out". Let's have some more teams this year, the games aren't hard but you will get wet; it's fun and it's not just for the very young so perhaps some of the older, wiser members of our community could put up a team. All you businesses out there please get a team together and have a T-shirt printed. Teams and T-shirts probably won't make you very much money but

it might raise public awareness and it's a chance for the workers to get back at the bosses. What about family teams? Some of you lot could take over the world let alone Fun Day.

Let's have some more stalls and side shows please; between rounds of 'It's Knock Out' we want them to spend their money, and the more there is the more we get. If you have an idea try it, it doesn't matter how simple. Contact a member of the committee or drop a line to this paper — we'll help if we can. So far we have a Fortune Teller, Karaoke, Dunk Tank and Donkey Dollop. It would be nice if the village societies contacted us early this year so we can allocate pitches and fill deficiencies. Anybody got a donkey? The donkey dollop in '98 was a particular success and nobody has to do anything, except the donkey that is!

So all ideas and bookings for pitches to Sheila Clements at Castle House. She's the Boss. Teams for "It's a Knock Out" to David Clements or Bill Norman. Or you can email us on hofnoff@purpleteapot.fsnt.co.uk

Bravo Wethersfield Pre-School

Wethersfield Pre-School has just received an excellent inspection report from Social Services.

Fully-trained, friendly staff, covering all learning areas, cater for all children, including special needs, from 2½ to 5 years of age.

We meet in the Pavilion at the Playing Field on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am – 12.00 noon.

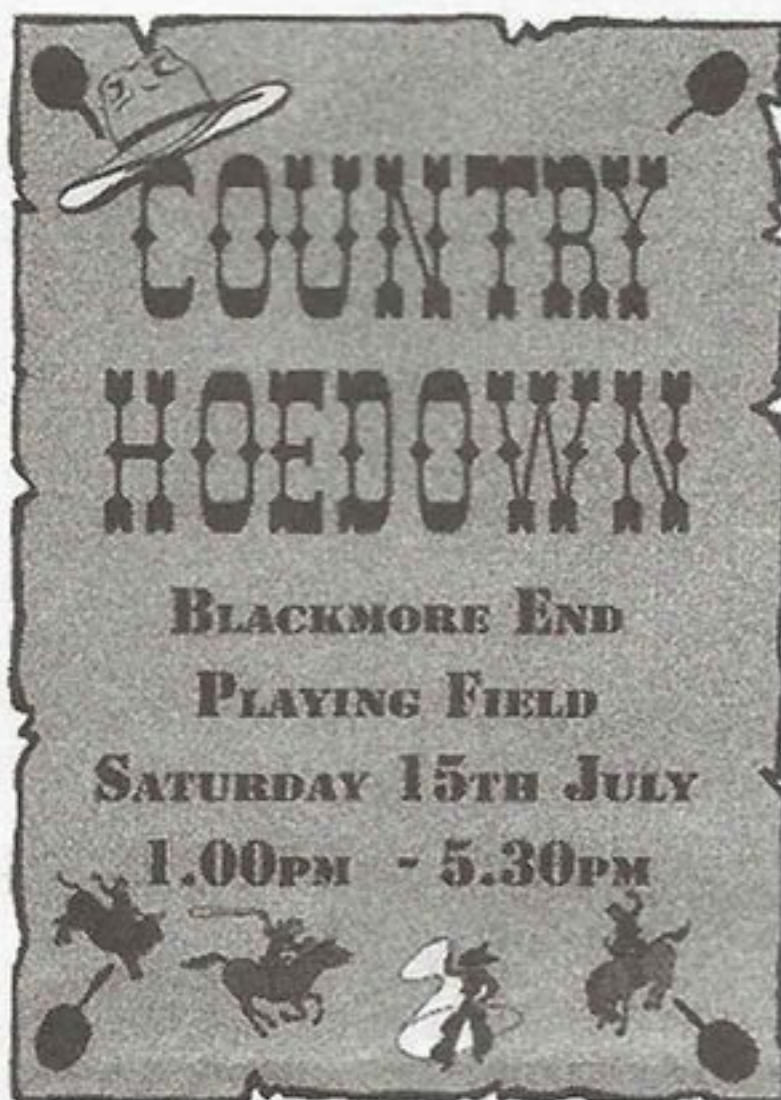
Longer sessions are available on Monday and Friday (with lunch) 9.30am – 1.30pm.

Prices £3.00 per session and £5.50 for the longer session. There are a few places available.

For details please phone:

Gloria on 850773

Lorraine on 850016



Grants available to youth groups

A new fund being made available by Essex County Council is aimed at making a difference to the quality of lives and experiences of young people.

The £50,000 Challenge 2000 Fund, organised by the Youth Service of Essex County Council Learning Services, will make grants of between £100 and £4,500 to voluntary youth groups to help them in their work.

The money can be for games, furniture, educational visits, redecoration, making a short film, securing a connection to the internet, a drugs educational pro-

ject or improving wheelchair access. The County Council says priority will be given to initiative supported by other means of fundraising and benefiting young people in disadvantaged communities. The money will be available at grass roots level, and not for district, county or national organisations.

Tony Duncan, chairman of the county's Community Education Development panel, said: "Challenge 2000 is a good example of the Essex County Council's firm commitment to work with local voluntary youth groups to support the

11 to 19 age group. Whether you are a local scout group, football team or village hall group, there are major benefits to be gained from the new fund".

Applications and enquiries should be through the local Youth in the Community office and new submissions should be made by September 2000.

**Braintree branch:
Darran Harrington-Keeton,
01376 324363**

Source: The Essex Chronicle

Original report: Kathleen Corby

Anyone for Tennis?

The 2000 Wethersfield Tennis Tournament draw will take place over the Easter holiday period. Anyone interested in participating, in addition to last year's entrants, should advise Bill Norman (851094) not later than 20th April.

Whilst the earlier optimism of the organiser, that the 1999 tournament might be completed in good time, has proved to be misconceived, congratulations go to Charlotte Holliday and Giles Bryant: winners of the ladies' and men's singles respectively. Would the players in the 4 outstanding doubles matches please make a concerted effort to complete their matches now that better weather and lighter nights are upon us.

Everyone for Cricket!

Wethersfield Cricket Club and the Playing Fields Association have given their blessing to the proposal by Alan Bruce (the Tavern landlord) for the staging of a series of 15-overs-a-side fun cricket matches in aid of Cancer Research.

On selected Wednesday evenings, commencing the end of May, three teams of mixed ability, sex and age (16 to 60,) nominally representing the Men's Club, the Dog Inn and the Tavern, will compete for the Tony Wood Memorial Trophy. After-match celebrations will include snacks provided by the "home team" followed by a raffle.

Full details will be posted at the three team bases in the near future when anyone interested in taking part should register their name and telephone number. In the interests of fair play(!) the teams will be selected by the promoters to maintain a balance of cricketers, non-cricketers and ladies.

Below is a standard advert issued by the CREAMER Fund.

I thought I would take the time to find out and convey to you what they are about. The CREAMER fund was set up about 1993 to provide support to the Freshwell Health Centre in Finchingfield. It is not a charity, but is run by a dedicated body of people who coordinate fundraising and distribution of funds to the health centre. All work is voluntary. All money raised goes to buy equipment, services and expendables to support your local Doctors and thereby give you better facilities. The fund is currently saving for X-ray equipment, to be installed in the health centre. They have already purchased cameras for remote diagnostic work so the consultant can be anywhere in the world, thereby speeding up treatment and reducing travel. This is your fund to help you and your community so please support it when you can, it can only improve your quality of life. Maybe not now, maybe not tomorrow, but some day.

Ed.

CREAMER Fund

The Easter raffle at the Freshwell Health Centre will take place the week beginning the 10th April. This will enable those who win prizes to collect them. If you can donate a prize for this event it would be most appreciated. Contact: Mrs Iris Jealous via the doctors surgery.



Extend the 30mph limit



Following a spate of accidents and near misses, Andrew and Gill Pipe of Wethersfield Manor Lodge in the Shalford Road are campaigning for the 30 mph speed limit to be extended. They wish to see it start at the top of Sandhills on the approach to the village in the hope that it will slow traffic over this stretch of road.

Their concern over speeding vehicles was graphically justified when a car left the road, crashed through their hedge and narrowly missed their house at the end of last year. Within the last few weeks another driver lost control of his car on the bend by Wethersfield Place and finished up some 30 feet off the road against the wall of Brook Farm.

Andrew Pipe has canvassed all those residents living on the affected stretch of road and has received virtually 100% support for the speed limit extension. This encouraged Andrew and Gill to approach the police and the parish and district councils to make them aware of residents' views before a serious accident happens.

Any comments? Write to the Wethersfield News or call Andrew & Gill Pipe on 850043

DM

Skate & Chips continued...

What on earth is Petanque? Pronounced Petang. Petanque is very similar to Boule, from which it stems. Also to Italian Boccia. The first rules for a game of this type were written down in Scotland in 1849 where it was called "Bowls". In 1894 the French laid out rules for what was called "Boule Lyonnaise". In 1910 Jules LeNoir laid out the rules for Petanque. Wiser? no? Read on.

The main difference between Boule Lyonnaise and Petanque is that your feet have to be close together. Joined feet in French is "pieds tanques", hence the name Petanque. The game is played with three steel balls per player each weighing around 700grams, the balls not the players, and each ball is marked with a number of grooves to identify it. One small wooden ball called the Cochonette (little pig) with a diameter of about .3cm is used like the jack in bowls.

There are three basic playing methods:

TRIPLETTE: the original Petanque. With two teams of three players, each player only uses two steel balls.

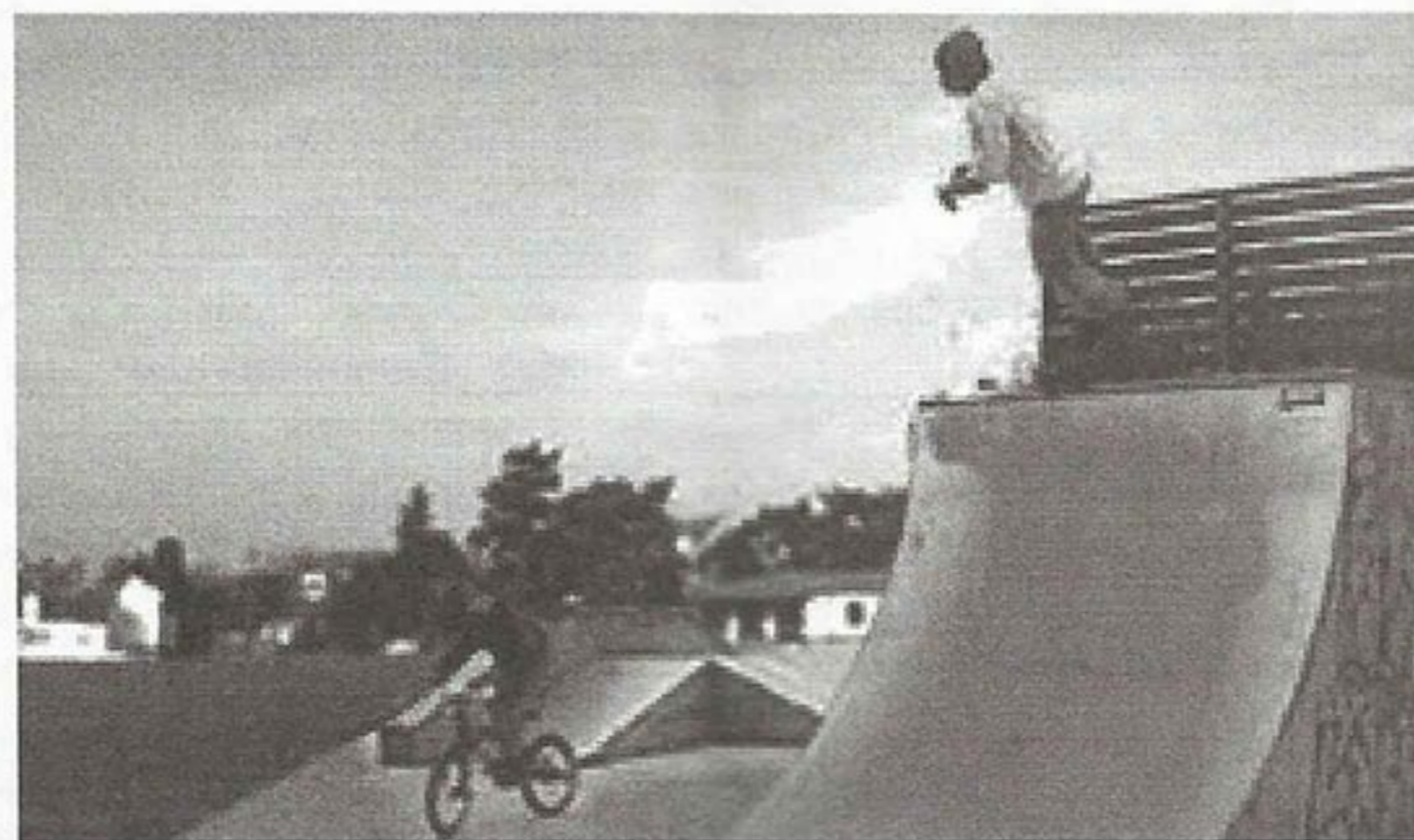
DOUBLETTE: the most frequently played. With two teams of two players each using three steel balls.

TÊTE A TÊTE: two single players match their skills with three balls each.

Play is fairly simple. There is no specific size for the playing ground but it is usual to play on fine gravel chippings. A 60cm circle is drawn in the sand and the first player throws the cochonette anywhere from 6 to 10 metres away. The player then throws his first ball after the cochonette, trying to get as close as possible. Usually the ball is thrown about two thirds of the way and allowed to roll the rest. After this a player in the other team throws his ball attempting to get closest to the cochonette. The teams then take it in turn until all the balls are thrown. Some players specialise in becoming shooters, here they attempt to knock the opponent's balls away from the cochonette.

One point is awarded for having your ball closest to the cochonette, two points two balls. The game ends when one team reaches thirteen points.

So now you know! D.C.



Charlie Dimmock has a lot to answer for...

Lawn mowers, garden implements, window boxes and hanging baskets are being stolen in increasing numbers in the Wethersfield area according to the police operating from the new Shalford police station. Crime is seasonal and the 'steal-a-present-for-Christmas phase' has passed and we are now into the 'thieve-something-for-the-garden' season. So much easier than queuing at the Wyvale checkout. **The addition of a padlock to garden sheds and a security light, if there is power available, is a sufficient deterrent to most light-fingered gardeners.**

The **Shalford Community Policing Team** operates from premises situated in the yard of Tanner's the builders on the Braintree side of Shalford. It covers the rural area on our side of Braintree and acts as a base for Police Sergeant Robert Bell and a team of seven officers. Our own Wethersfield police officer PC Richard Buckland is one of the team operating from Shalford. Matters such as general enquiries and the production of documents should now be addressed to the new station.

Opening hours are 0900 to 1000 and 1900 to 2000, 7 days a week, subject to demands that are made of the officers to give emergency cover elsewhere. Core manning times are 0900 to 1300 each day, outside these hours the Braintree force provides cover. Telephone and fax numbers are 851632 and 851635 respectively.

DM

The Post Office continued

for Lloyds, the Co-op and there is a pilot running for Barclays. The recently installed computer system at the counter makes these banking services possible. Perhaps the best known service provided is that for pensions and benefits payments, although the move towards direct transfer into bank accounts, becoming enforced by the government in 2003, is providing a threat to the future of Post Offices.

Apart from a very basic salary, the rewards for running the office are based on a points system — the more customers who use the services the more points are earned.

As Teresa says "with the Post Offices in Shalford, Panfield and Gosfield closing, it's a question of

use it or lose it".

Teresa is running a service in Wethersfield which goes back many years. The Wakelings ran the original Post Office in the High Street, backing onto the churchyard, for 22 years. Jack Tillbrook bought the business and ran it from his front room for ten years before building the present shop and continuing for another 27 years.

In these days of anonymous call centres and e-commerce Teresa feels that she runs

"a community service at the centre of village life".

Long may it continue!

RC & SM

