

WETHERSFIELD

BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END

NEWS

November/December 2002

news@churchhillhouse.co.uk

Transatlantic Remembrance Day

THIS IS the anniversary of a rather special pilgrimage, made by an American family to the place of their father's death, when his aircraft was crashed whilst attempting to land at Wethersfield air-base.

In 1950s Wethersfield was very active as a USAF base and many of the houses in the village were rented out to American service families. The Hanlen family were living at Hillfoot House, facing the Village Green.

Tragically, just before Christmas 1957 the jet fighter piloted by Major John Hanlen lost power shortly after takeoff and, rather than bale out and risk a crash over a populated area, he went around and attempted to re-land. However he clipped an oak tree just short of the Hedingham end of the runway, crashing onto a field on Tattersalls Farm and was killed. Within a matter of days his family were returned to their home in the States.

Daughter Kathleen was born in Wethersfield and now lives in California. Son John was 10 at the time of the crash and now lives in Colorado. John has very fond memories of his childhood in the village, although his sister was too young to remember. Both were determined to return and visit the site of the crash, promising to take their mother. Sadly however she died just prior to the planned visit and so they decided to bring her ashes to scatter where her husband had died.

An F-100 Super Sabre of the type which crashed



The Lambert family, who now live at Hillfoot House got a letter "out of the blue" asking if they could revisit the house. John & Kathleen flew over in October last year, but the first attempt to get to Wethersfield from London by taxi was thwarted by the floods! Eventually they made it and, over lunch, were able to look over the house of their childhood memories. Much had changed, but they were able to identify a room where a photograph was taken of their mother in front of a Christmas tree.

They also met up with Eve Newell, who "vaguely remembered the American children who lived next door." Eve introduced them to Tom Grimwood who remembered that the pilot father used to buy eggs from his farm and "always had a bunch of big cigars in his top pocket and would often hand me one!" He also recalled young John - "the little b..... used to play in the barn and throw my potatoes around" Tom was able to take the pair to the

crash site and their Mother's ashes were scattered in a short impromptu service.

A visit to David Grimwood at Tattersalls Farm revealed that David had clearly remembered the plane crash as a teenager and was able to provide exact details of the incident.

John remembered his time in the village "as a time of joy and safety - a 'Tom Sawyer' kind of time with our own fishing hole and our own hay fort"

Following the visit Kathleen wrote to thank the Lamberts, Newells and Grimwoods - "John and I are still pinching ourselves over the visit. To see the house and meet you all was surreal. Whilst some of the detail about our father's crash was painful to hear, it allowed us to compartmentalise our grief and put it to rest. We were comforted and happy to experience the timeless wonder of that beautiful countryside that you all live in."

One Route Opens as Another Closes!



May Gurney completed work on the 'temporary' road bridge, almost exactly one year since the old brick bridge was washed away. There was a further delay whilst Anglia Water diverted a water main, but it is now OPEN! Unfortunately this opening coincides with the B1057 route to Dunmow being CLOSED for 8 weeks from 11th November at Great Bardfield, due to drainage work being carried out.

Play Equipment Refurbish

The last day of the 'Indian Summer' (before the current rainy season) witnessed some frantic activity on Wethersfield Playing field. A working party (of 4!) comprising members of the Playing Field Committee managed to repaint all the play equipment and carry out some essential maintenance work.

For future plans see Parish Council Notes, Page 3.



WETHERSFIELD NEWS WISHES ALL READERS A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND BEST WISHES FOR 2003.

NEXT COPY DATE 2nd JANUARY!

PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

POINTS FROM PARISH COUNCIL MEETING ON 23RD OCTOBER.

Old Mill Chase The Clerk reported correspondence with Steve Stares of BDC, and with the Primary School Headteacher. Mr Stares corrected the minutes of the August Parish Council meeting by stating that BDC is not responsible for drainage on private land and does not have a duty under the Land Drainage Act 1991. He further said that any work on private land would require owner's consent, and could have cost implications for the Parish Council. BDC are unable to conduct a survey of a private sewer at the present time due to pressure of work.

Mrs Ferland, Headteacher, has responded with an assurance that a professional company had checked the storm water drains and found them to be clear.

A letter from the Secretary of the Men's Club was read, intimating that the Parish Council had a duty in respect of drainage.

After discussion, members considered that the Parish Council does not have a responsibility for drainage matters and had done all it could to assist in flooding matters at Old Mill Chase. It was reported that recent substantial heavy rain had drained away satisfactorily from the area, and it was felt that the problem may have been solved by the action already taken. It was agreed to keep a watch on the situation but do nothing further at the present time.

Footway Lamp outside Post Office
The Clerk reported that he had found it impossible to contact the appropriate personnel in 24 Seven or TXU. He will continue to further the matter.

CORRESPONDENCE

Braintree District Council - Chief Executive's Department An invitation had been received from the BDC Chief Executive to a Flood Meeting on 25th November 2002 at Causeway House from 10 a.m. to Noon. Various agencies will update the meeting on the recent river surveys in the District, Halstead Town Flood protection, responsibility for critical watercourses and flood prevention measures. Councillors Foster and Wright agreed to attend.

Councillor Wright reported the completion of the Petches Road bridge, and the new water main diversion work around the temporary footbridge. The new bridge cannot be opened until the water main work is completed. He also mentioned that conservationists have prevented the clearance of debris from the River Pant.

Braintree District Council - Personnel Services Changes to the Environmental Agency's Flood Warning Areas have been publicised by BDC. The appropriate 'quickdial' code for the

Wethersfield area is 0363221.

Braintree District Council - Planning Services BDC advise that a consultation document on the future development of air transport in the UK, and how much airport capacity should be provided in the period to 2030. The options include the provision of one, two or three additional runways at Stansted Airport. Members agreed to await the outcome of two District Council meetings later in October.

Braintree District Council - Corporate Services Details of the proposed diversion of Footpath 44 at Beazley End had been received, and a copy was distributed for the Beazley End notice board. Members discussed the details of the diversion, and had no comment or objection.

Braintree District Council - Planning Services A copy of a list of premises licensed for Public Entertainment had been received, and is available for perusal from the Clerk.

Essex County Council - Highways and Transportation Group Copies of correspondence had been received from ECC regarding parking problems in High Street, Wethersfield, in response to a complaint from the occupier of Blenheim House. The problem arises from the narrowness of the road, from parked vehicles in the area and the siting of a large shrub outside Blenheim House. After discussion, the Clerk was asked to reply to ECC that the suggested use of bollards was not favoured by the Parish Council.

Derek Flannery Playing Field Association A letter from Bill Norman had been received advising of the Association's intention to apply for Lottery Grant funding to replace the

existing pavilion in the near future. They also propose the provision of a skate board facility at the Playing Fields - comprising a concrete slab 25m x 4m located along the boundary on the pavilion side away from the road. The aspiration is that the current skateboarding nuisance in Hereward Way and Saffron Gardens can be eliminated. Partial funding for the facility will be sought from the 'Awards for All' scheme.

The Association is seeking simple letters of support, and members agreed to that the Parish Council would support the two projects. The Clerk will write to Mr Norman.

Essex Police Authority Details of a meeting of the Police and Community Consultative Group had been received. The meeting will be held at Braintree Town Hall Centre on Tuesday, 12th November 2002 at 7.30 p.m.

NERIL Details of the telephone helpline for NERIL (North Essex Resource & Information Line) have been received and a notice posted to the Notice Boards. This is a valuable service for anyone suffering from mental health distress. It operates daily from 4 p.m. to midnight. The telephone number is 0845 0900 909.

OTHER MATTERS

Essex County Council - Highways and Transportation Group - Pram crossings
The Clerk had earlier circulated a letter from ECC Highways to Councillors Foster and Tillbrook for their consideration. The ECC request is for suggested sites for pram/wheelchair crossings in the villages. Members discussed the matter, and three sites were proposed for Wethersfield. The Clerk will advise ECC accordingly.

WETHERSFIELD SCHOOL PTA

The fund for the IT Suite, which is part of the building project for the school, currently stands at the fantastic sum of £1510. We wouldn't have been able to reach this amount without your help and support, so thank you very much.

Our aim is to reach our target of £2500 by February 2003, when this amount will be matched by Essex County Council giving us the £5000 needed to equip this new room. So we do hope we can count on your continued support.

Our Christmas bazaar will be held on Friday 22nd Nov. in the village hall, Wethersfield. 7pm until 9pm. Father Christmas will be paying us a visit and have presents for all those children who come and see him in his grotto. There will be mulled wine, mince pies, teas and cakes. Come and see our craft stalls and don't miss your chance to enter our raffle to win a luxury Christmas hamper and many other lovely prizes. Entry fee is only 20p for adults, o.a.p's and children free.

For any PTA matters please contact Sarah Pilgrim (Chairperson) on 850781 or Davina Spackman (Sec.) on 850351.

WETHERSFIELD PRE-SCHOOL

Many thanks to all those who helped and donated to the recent rummage sale, which raised £120 towards new equipment for the children.

Our Christmas Party will be on Friday 13th December, when we will be entertained by Magic Ollie and playing lots of games. The last day of term will be Wednesday 18th December. We are inviting the Mums, Dads and Carers in early to enjoy the mince pies, other goodies, raffle and the childrens Christmas performance. We shall soon be practicing the old favourites and some new surprises.

On November 22nd we are to visit Tumblewoods, giving the children the chance to enjoy physical activities there.

From January, we will be taking children from 2yrs of age, 6 months earlier than before.

Contact Lorriane Smith on 850016

Happenings...

WETHERSFIELD UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

Sunday 1st Dec. - Family Gift Service at 11am in aid of the charity "British Aid for Deprived Children" -Guest George Mills.

Gifts of toiletries for all ages.

Thursday 12th Dec. - "Kids Carols" at 10 am in URC Church. A short Carol Service for families with children under 7 years. refreshments will be served afterwards.

Friday 13th Dec. - Carol singing around the village. Meet at URC Hall at 6.30pm. all welcome. Proceeds to Cancer Research.

Tuesday 17th Dec. - "Candlelight Carol Service" URC Church. Stalls with sales of gifts in aid of Cancer Research.

Christmas Morning - Short Family Service led by the Rev. Nigel Warner

The URC celebrated the 180th Anniversary of the rebuilding of the Chapel on Sunday 27th October with a service conducted by the Minister Rev. Nigel Warner. The Sermon was given by Rev Elizabeth Casweil, Moderator Eastern Synod, United Reformed Church. Following the service the congregation of 80 was invited to tea in the Chapel hall and to inspect the newly refurbished kitchen. During tea a presentation was made to Sarah Pilgrim, Chair of Wethersfield Primary School PTA, of a cheque for £100 towards the PTA's project for an I.T.suite at the school. Contact David Jenkins 850752.

WETHERSFIELD PARISH CHURCH

Sun 1st Dec. - Holy Communion 8am

Sun. 8th Dec - Annual Family Toy Service. Gifts will be given to Braintree Salvation Army for distribution.

Christmas services will include a traditional service of Nine Lessons and Carols - watch out for final confirmation of date and time for this service.

Christmas Day Family Eucharist - 11am

Sunday 29th Dec. Carols in the Cowshed 2.30pm at Boydells Farm

Other Events

The brilliant Jessie Threadgold Concert raised £500 for the Church. The Barn Dance on 12th October, great fun, raised £600. Esther Pilgrim raised £105 in the Sponsored Cycle Ride for Friends of Essex Churches

WELCOME GROUP

5th Dec. - Pot Luck Supper, with entertainment by Miss Jessie Threadgold and her accompanist. If you are coming to this evening, please bring a plate of sweet or savoury or something to drink.

We kick off the New Year with a social

evening on 2nd January.

Our meetings are in the URC Hall and start at 8 pm. Subs are 50p and everyone is welcome.

BLACKMORE END 'BUSY FINGERS' HANDICRAFT GROUP

Meetings are held at the village Hall on the first and third Tuesday in the month from 8 -10pm. All welcome - a good way to make new friends.

30th Nov. - Blackmore End Christmas Craft Fair.

3rd Dec. - Christmas tree decorations - Janet Hitchings

10th Dec. - Christmas Decorations with dried/silk flowers/nut and cones - Paulette Bauckham

17th Dec. Fresh Flower arrangement with candles - Paulette Bauckham

21st Jan - Years planning evening

Contact Paulette Bauckham - Coordinator 850308

WETHERSFIELD FLORAL ART CLUB

Nov 27th - Open Evening - our Christmas demonstrator will be Anne Bell NAFAS on "Magic of Christmas" Tickets available on the door

Jan 29th AGM - talk by Fred Etheridge "Myths & Legends of wild flowers" Contact Paulette Bauckham - 850308

The CREAMER FUND are pleased to report the success of two recent fund raising events. The coffee morning held in Wethersfield £451 and the garage sale at Bardfield £920. For your support and for the individual donations received lately, we thank you. It has been agreed that our next major purchase will be an echocardiogram, and we are saving with that in mind, as we know the great benefit this will be to the community.

Musical Appreciation

I would like to congratulate Jessie Threadgold for the production of the Wethersfield Youth Musical Festival, which took place on September 7th, this being its fifth year. My own children have had the opportunity to take part in the last two concerts and have both enjoyed and benefited from these events.

As has been my previous experience, the quality of performance this year excelled the last and I can only anticipate next years production. The Church was packed out with an unprecedented number of visitors - will we all fit in the building next year!?

Fifty five young people from the

Our next fund raising event will be the Christmas raffle being held in the Freshwell Health Centre 16th to 20th Dec. inclusive, any prizes would be gratefully received and can be handed in at the Health Centre.

Contact - Jean Murphy 851147

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Meets in Wethersfield Village Hall on the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Entrance £1 includes refreshments:

12th Dec. Les Deacon & David Hammond Victorian Wethersfield (1841 - 1901)

Wine and mince pies!

9th Jan. - Blackmore End and Wethersfield Schools during the Victorian era - Lesley Nicks & Keith Sutton

BRITISH LEGION

Thursday 21st Nov. AGM in Wethersfield Village Hall. County President Alan Brooker will be present and all members are encouraged to attend.

Contact - Peter Morton 850626

WETHERSFIELD GARDEN CLUB

Indoor meetings are held on the third Friday of the month in the Village Hall, starting at 7.45pm. New members and visitors most welcome. Contact Moira Clark (Sec.) 851181 or Eve Newell 850957.

No meeting in December

Jan 17th AGM and Cheese & wine Party - a popular event we wish all members A Happy Christmas - Health & happiness in 2003.

MACMILLAN NURSES FUND

Paulette Bauckham thanks all those who attended and/or donated to the recent fund raising coffee morning at Barberry Green. A total of £150 was raised.

WETHERSFIELD PATHFINDERS

Join us for the Boxing Day Walk 10.30am from Blackmore End Village

local area entertained their audience with a wide range of performances, from solo numbers, small groups, bands and a choir of 31 local children. The event was compared by our local MP Alan Hazelhurst.

It is encouraging to see such talent, commitment and involvement from the youth within our local community. I'm sure that all those who attended the festival will want to join me in a big thankyou to all who took part, including the stage crew, family and friends of Jessie who carried out all the unseen back-stage work, not to mention those who provided delicious interval refreshments.

Roll on next year - don't miss it!!

Penny James

People.....

Local Farmer Looks for his Roots

DAVID Thomson of Russells farm, Braintree Road, wanted to commemorate his family farming at Russells for 75 years by producing an illustrated family tree. David found that tracing the family ancestry back to their roots in farming over 350 years ago in Scotland proved an interesting challenge!

David knew that the family originated in the Dumfries area and started by contacting the Dumfries tourist office. They provided him with a list of Ancestral research specialists in the area and David gave one the job of tracing his earliest roots.

The earliest records show a John Thomson farming at Porterbelly in Scotland in 1749. The researcher had to take a scrubbing brush to clean up an 1767 family gravestone to confirm this!

The researcher uncovered many pieces of fascinating information including that one of the Thomson descendants could have been Baron, Lord Thomson of Fleet, the newspaper magnate. Also that John's Grandson, Robert, married a girl from the Nithsdale Estate. Someone from the Estate was associated with helping Bonnie Prince Charlie and was put in the tower as a result!

Robert's Grandson, Sam and wife Mary farmed in Dumfries and later Alloa, introducing dairying to the area. Sam and Mary had about 15 children, most surviving into adulthood. The daughters stayed in Scotland, but the sons moved on to Australia, Canada and California.

However two sons went into farming in Surrey two in Suffolk and one to Essex, Joseph, who took Elms Farm Toppesfield, later incorporating Berwick Hall. He and his wife Anne had 5 children, three surviving. Their daughter is still alive at 103 years! Their son Sam, after early years in Toppesfield moved on to take Russells and Goldens Farm in 1927 as a tenant. Russells was a typical mixed farm and Sam used to sell milk from the Dairy around the village.

in 1934 Sam married Norah, a frequent visitor to Goldens farm, where her Aunt lived. Norah had been a milliner by trade but, with her great affinity for animals, took to farming like a duck to water! The 1930's were tough times in farming but Sam was greatly helped by his wife.

When the Wethersfield Estate of Sir Fortescue Flannery was broken up, Sam and Norah were able to buy the farm. Up to then the farm had sheep, pigs and dairy herd, employing quite a few men, but by 1961 the last of these had gone, and the farming had become arable, and Goldens farm and barn were sold.

During the war Russells was used as a billet for the Kings Own Scottish Borderers (ironic in view of the Thompson's origins!) and German & Italian POWs used to come and work. One of the Land Army girls was Ann Mawdsley - daughter of Robert Mawdsley, the "Archers" first Walter Gabriel!

Sam and Norah had 3 children, one dying in infancy. Norah died in 1980 and Sam in 1998. Russells farmhouse passed to daughter Mary, son James and wife Dianne taking the land and buildings.

Dianne was involved in founding the Wethersfield Girl Guides and was a committed Christian - Church services for animals were held at Russells in the 70s.

In his youth, James was very active in the Young Farmers, where he joined with other Scottish farmer's sons of Scottish origin, travelling to meetings in his WW 2 jeep!

In doing his research, David, son of James and third generation of Thomsons farming at Russells, was reminded how the pattern of farming has changed over the years. Early farms being quite small, labour intensive, mixed farming with poultry, pigs, sheep, dairy as well as arable crops. As labour become more expensive and more machinery came in. the number of labourers was cut back and acreage increased, with surplus farm houses sold off.

After spending over 2 years (part time between farming) checking out his family roots, David's next job is to produce the illustrated family tree to present to his father!

Working Summer in Kenya for Wethersfield Couple



DURING their summer holiday Wethersfield residents Michelle and Andy Carter, travelled to Kenya to help a Christian organisation called Kids Alive.

The main aim of the trip was to build a home for abandoned children living with AIDS and, as a secondary school teacher Michelle was hoping to do some teaching at The Mount Kenya Children's Home, which is an orphanage caring for 86 children ranging in age from 6 months to 18 years.

Andy had heard about Kids Alive and the housing project from a builder friend. Michelle and Andy were part of the UK work team, which included a doctor and wife with their 3 children and a nurse and husband with 4 children, all from Essex. The UK workers paid their own air fares and subsistence, but basic accomodation was available on the orphanage complex.

Andy commented that he "was rather worried about the thought of a month in Kenya with snakes" but was "relieved to find that their house had a door!"

With the help of 12 Kenyan builders the

bungalow was completed in 4 weeks, working from dawn to dusk, 6 days a week. It will house 24 abandoned babies.

As Michelle said "everyone mucked in, including the UK kids" She was also able to teach basic Maths, English and Science to the Kenyan children.

Renovation work was carried out on another bungalow, a baby unit was completed and a new toilet block was built.

Michele added "we were able to worship at the Calvary Baptist Church, which was a totally uplifting experience"

"We saw rhino, elephant, wart hog. Hyena, Baboon and Buffalo. We've loads of stories to tell about our time in Kenya. Each day was truly magnificent"

"We were really sad when he had to return to the UK and leave the kids. Anyway, we're planning to return to the Children's Home again next year.

If you are interested in the work of Kids Alive the UK director can be contacted at the following address. 129 Burnway, Hornchurch, Essex. RM11 3SW. The web site: www.kidsalive.org