

# WETHERSFIELD

## BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END

# NEWS

March/April 2003

news@churchhillhouse.co.uk

## Tough on Crime ?

**One could** almost hear a collective groan over the Parish as those brown envelopes plopped through the letter box, informing us that we would all have to pay an extra 16% on our Council Taxes. I wonder how many people read the pile of bumph telling us just why the rise is so high? Putting aside the news that the low grant from Government accounts for much of the increase (another stealth tax?), a look at the leaflet on Essex Police Services might give some concern for those of us living in the Rural area.

It appears that whilst the number of police officers has fallen slightly compared to last year, the number of support staff has risen by 10%. The tax increase prompted Wethersfield News to make enquiries to help clarify our position on policing in this area.

Firstly, it seems that the increase in support staff is to help divert paperwork tasks away from the police and enable them to spend more time crime-fighting. A chat with PC Paul Norman, based at the Shalford 'temporary' Station helped to clarify some of the local issues. He confirmed that Shalford is really a 'base' for seven Police Officers, headed by Sgt. Ken Midwinter. As such, it is not permanently manned, as staff are often out on patrol, attending court etc. Staff from Shalford also cover some duties in Braintree. In fact from 24th March Paul will be joining a problem solving initiative targetting Braintree, where "some peoples lives are being terrorised". Specific responsibility for Wethersfield will be taken over by PC Nick Hurst, who will effectively cover the former patch of PC Richard Buckland, currently covering Dumow.

Paul mentioned that staff at Shalford would be happy to answer non-urgent enquiries on 01371 851632. However, specific crime reporting would be best addressed to the Braintree station on 01376 551312 where it would be logged on computer. Obviously urgent calls should be to the 999 services. He stressed the need to report crime, not suffer in silence. Wethersfield is seen as relatively crime-free, although he was aware of recent cases of vandalism - smashing of the tennis court net posts (twice), breaking of panes in the phone box etc. - and had made enquiries on these matters. He commented "Unless people report, even petty crime, resources will be used in more urgent areas". Paul also mentioned the Community Post Box in Wethersfield Post Office, which is emptied once a week. This is there for comments and reports, which

residents are free to make on an anonymous basis - "basically we want to do all we can to encourage better communication between public and police."

Another move in this direction is a new mobile police station, currently doing the rounds in Halstead, Dunmow, Finchingfield, Braintree etc. and soon to be calling in Wethersfield. This parks up for a couple of hours on a regular basis on a published schedule. It is manned by PC Kevin Wilson, a team of desk assistants and representatives of the local authority. The objective is to increase police knowledge of local community issue and reduce the fear of crime. The mobile station may be contacted on 07939

Let's make most of our Council Tax and use the systems which have been set up to improve police/community relations and be tougher on crime!



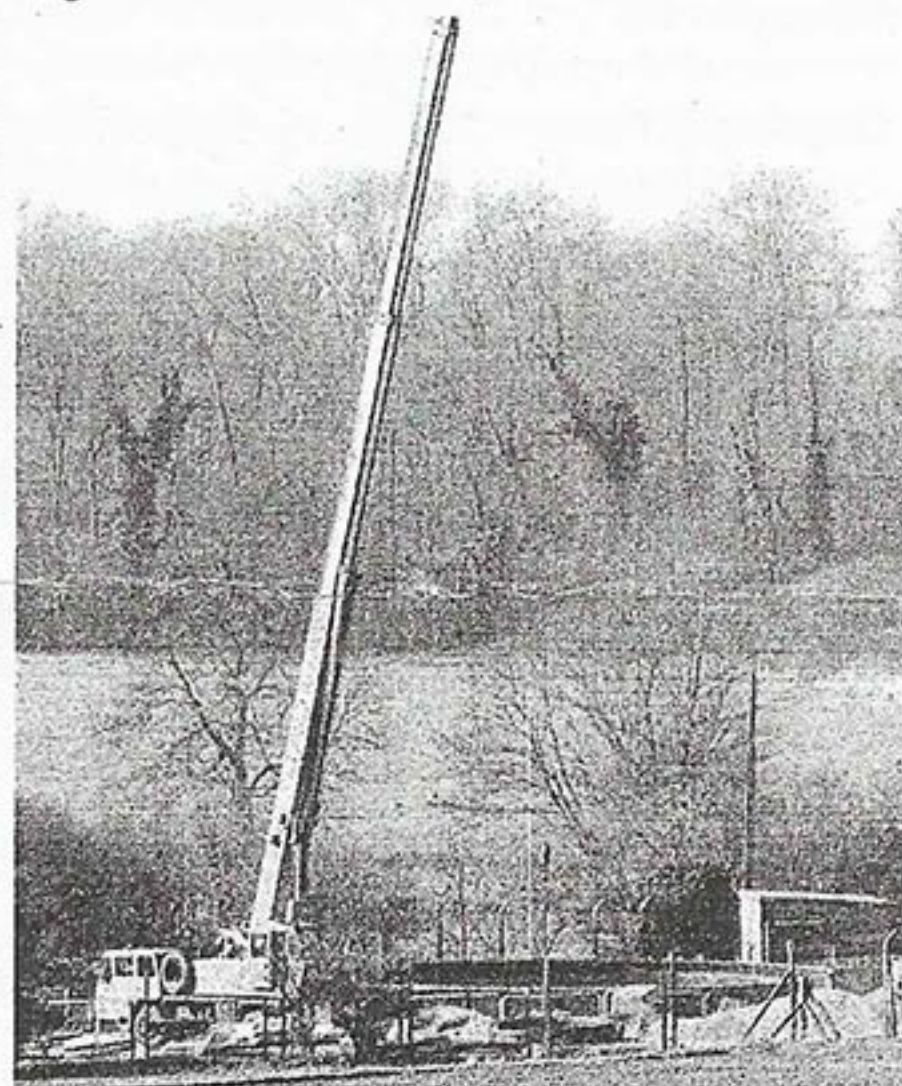
The mobile police Station

## Waterworks

**Precautions** against the sort of deluges we have come to expect over the last couple of years have been put in place in the past weeks.

Extensive work has been carried out on Wethersfield sewage works at the end of the 'cinder track'. A huge surge tank has been put in place to prevent the works being overloaded by flood water and potentially washing untreated sewage into the river Pant.

This work has made necessary by new regulations.



Crane used to place sewage works tank

Anglia Water has also carried out dredging on the river between the bridge at Cherry Gardens and Codham Mill to try to avoid flooding of the road.

Flooding of the road at the bottom of Hudson Hill, a particular hazard in icy weather, has been countered by putting in a new pipe under the road to allow water from the ditch on the north side to drain through to that on the South side.

Finally a new watertight door has been fitted to Wethersfield Club!

For ONE NIGHT ONLY  
a Special Performance of

## RATS

(an adaptation of The Pied Piper of Hamelin)  
by

1st Wethersfield Brownies with Wethersfield Rainbows  
and The Off Beat Band in  
Wethersfield Parish Church

on

Tuesday 20th May

Book the date in your diary NOW!

# Happenings...

## ANYONE FOR ROUNDERS?

The Wethersfield Rounders Team will soon be meeting to start the 2003 season. We have our league matches on a Tuesday night from late April through to August. Last year we won the second division, so matches this year in the first division may be more challenging! Although we like to win, having fun is more important! So if you are female, over 14 years old (our current ages range from 16 to 60!) and fancy joining us (even if it is only for practices), we welcome you all. For more information, ring Niki on 850501.

## WETHERSFIELD GARDEN CLUB.

Bring & Buy Plant Sale. URC Hall at 11am. **May 17th.** Come and support this popular village event. Great bargains to be had. Our Club outing to Mill Race Nursery will be on **May 31st.** Own cars. Depart from village at 2p.m. This nursery is well worth a visit. **June 20th.** Talk on Hardy Ferns by Margaret Nimmo-Smith

**CREAMER FUND** The Easter Raffle at the Freshwell Health Centre, will take place from Monday 7th April to midday Tuesday 15th, when the draw will take place. If you would like to donate a prize, this would be greatly appreciated, and it can be handed in at the Centre. Thank you for the many ways you support this community project.

**WELCOME GROUP** On Thursday April 3rd we have a return visit of Jackie Wisby with a slide presentation of "Highlights of China". Jackie's gentle commentary and superb photography ensures this a good evening, 8p.m. in the U.R.C. Hall, 50p includes refreshments. Bring and Buy stall this evening.

On Thursday 1st May we are going for a guided tour to the Dunmow Maltings and Museum. Full details and names taken at the April meeting. As usual, we are pleased to see "you" at any of our meetings. and extend a warm welcome.

**WETHERSFIELD PARISH CHURCH** After the success of last years Craft in Action we are planning a similar event this year on the afternoon of Saturday May 17th, this will be Hobbies and Collections' we hope that many who took part last year will come along again to share more of their hobbies. We are also seeking people with interesting Collections e.g. Stamps, Coins, Old tools etc. who would like to share their interests with others. If you can help please phone Joy on 850823 Elaine on 850244 or Eve on 850957 they would be delighted to hear from you. Later in the year there will be Open Gardens, a Unity Picnic and a Garden Party details in the next issue. **AGM - Tuesday April 29th in Church** All Parishioners Welcome.

## SUNDAY SERVICES

**March**  
**23rd** 6.30pm Evensong  
**30th** 11am Mothering Sunday Service  
**APRIL**  
**6th** 8am Holy Communion  
**13th** 10.30am PALM SUNDAY PROCESSION starting at the Green, concluding at church for 11am family service  
**17th** Maunday Thursday 7.30pm Holy Eucharist  
**18th** Good Friday 11.30 'Way of the Cross'  
**17th** Easter Eve 5pm Said service of evening prayer  
**20th** EASTER DAY 11am Eucharist  
**27th** 6.30pm Evensong  
**MAY**  
**4th** 8am Holy Communion  
**11th** 11am Parish Eucharist

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

**April 10th** Geoff King DFC (ex Bomber Command) - 'Critical Moments' - Wartime Experiences  
**May 8th** Graham Slimming Paintings of Constable  
 Meetings start at 8pm in Wethersfield Village Hall

**British Legion - Saturday April 12th**  
**Jumble Sale** 2pm at Shalford Village Hall. All donations, bric-a-brac, cakes etc to be taken to the hall at 9.30 Sat. morning or contact David Brown 850743

**PTA News** -The PTA organised a very successful and enjoyable sponsored pancake toss recently to finish off the fund raising for equipping the new IT Suite which is part of the new building project that the school is undertaking this year. It is hoped that we can present the school with a cheque for £2500 at our Easter Tea which is to be on Thursday 10th April. We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped us with this fund-raising project. This is a fantastic achievement for such a small school in just one year, so THANK YOU.

## BLUE PETER WATER WORKS APPEAL



Frances Holliday, Emma Spackman and Rhea Paparestis-Stacey held a bring and buy sale on Saturday 15th March, to support this years Blue Peter water works appeal. They

managed to raise £80. Well done girls. Thank you to everyone for supporting this event and for all the donations the girls received.

## CHARITY EVENING WENT WITH A BANG!

Bangers and mash and spotted dick and custard were on the menu last month when the local Conservatives put on their annual charity supper in the village hall. This year the chosen charity was the Farleigh Hospice, and about 90 guests heard Steven Rezzell talk about the foundation, work and future of the organisation. Money from the entrance fee, donations and a raffle raised a record sum of £765. And that's in addition to the many gifts donated for sale in the Hospice shops.

Both the Farleigh Hospice organisation and the local Conservatives would like to thank everyone who gave so generously to make this so-worthwhile donation possible.

## BUSY FINGERS HANDICRAFT GROUP

Meets on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of each month in Blackmore End Village Hall.  
**April 1st** - Handmade Easter cards - Margaret Jacks  
**April 15th** - Fresh Flowers - 'An Easter Arrangement' - Paulette Baukham.  
**May 6th** - Sugar Craft demonstration - Mr Ray Peak.  
**May 20th** Outing - Hatfield House 'Living Crafts Fair'

**CRICKET CLUB** The recent Quiz night was voted the most successful ever, raising about £800 towards ground maintenance etc. Many thanks to all who supported the event and particular thanks to John Pygram - an excellent quizmaster!

**CANDLEMAS SUPPER** - A big thankyou to everyone who supported this evening. £1500 was raised for Farleigh hospice and Wethersfield Parish Church

## UNITED REFORMED CHURCH

**April 6th** Thursday 8pm - Welcome Group - "A Magistrates Lot"  
**April 7th** Friday 2pm - Finchingfield Church - Womens World of Prayer  
**April 10th** Monday 1.45pm House Group 74 Saffron Gardens.  
**LENT COURSES** - to be held jointly with the Parish Church in the Vestry of the URC. Two parallel sessions are being held to accommodate both those who work during the day and those that are more free. Weekly sessions are  
 Mondays 2pm-3pm  
 Tuesdays 8pm - 9pm

## WETHERSFIELD CLUB

**April 5th** Hypnotist & Disco  
**April 19th** Karaoke  
**April 26th** Curly Circus Band (Live music)  
**May 3rd** Disco -TFG  
**May 17th** Country & Western Night (Fancy Dress) - Live music

## WETHERSFIELD PATHFINDERS

Meets on Wethersfield Green at 10.30am on April 27th and May 25th. Everyone welcome including dogs.

## PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

EDITED MINUTES of the Meeting of the Parish Council held at Wethersfield Village Hall on Wednesday, 19th February 2003

### MATTERS ARISING

Essex County Council - Parish Paths Partnership. Correspondence had been received giving an update on the scheme. The Chairman agreed to complete the schedule for the next year.

The District Council have accepted that the Three Fields Ward remains part of the Braintree Area.

### CORRESPONDENCE

Essex County Council - Planning Department Consultation documents have been received dealing with the County's Community Strategy and Joint Structure Plan, which are concerned with shaping the future over the next twenty years. Leaflets were circulated and Councillor Wright agreed to peruse the major document and comment at the March meeting.

Transportation and Operational Services The annual progress report on the Essex Local Transport Plan for 2002 was circulated to the meeting. Copies available from the Clerk.

Leader of the Council In respect of the Government's White Paper about elected regional assemblies, Lord Hanningfield has published a briefing paper setting out the main elements of the proposals and a summary of key points made by ECC in its response last year. In summary, ECC consider:

1. Regional Assemblies should be

accountable to local people, rather than central government.

2. The White Paper has failed to bring unelected, unaccountable regional quangos under democratic control.

3. ECC is unhappy about any shift of planning powers away from the county.

4. Under the proposals, Essex would form part of the East of England Region (including Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk).

5. Each Assembly member in the East of England would be required to represent 100,000 -230,000 people.

6. Reorganising local government in regions where Assemblies are set up will create major disruption to public services. In the Eastern Region where only 12% of the population live in Unitary authorities, this disruption to service delivery will be greater than anywhere else in the country.

Locality Youth Service The 'Contact' Summer Roadshow will be operating in the area during August. This is a mobile unit offering many resources including lap top computers with Internet access, Playstation and games equipment, board games, arts & crafts and information relating to young people's issues.

Braintree District Council Housing - Research and Development The BDC Rural Housing Guide has been published, following public consultation in 2001/2. It highlights the shortage of affordable housing in rural locations, and sets out steps that village residents can take to make the most of the opportunities for the provision of new affordable housing. Copies can be obtained from the Clerk - or directly from the BDC Research & Development Team on 01376 552760.

Braintree District Council - Chief Executive's Department A letter had been received from the Leader of the Council including a petition form sponsored by Sir Alan Haselhurst opposing the construction of further runways at Stansted Airport. Parish Councillors did not consider the petition a matter for them.

Essex Police (See cover story) - The Essex Police Authority is seeking suitable members of the public to join the Authority's Custody Visiting Scheme. This is a scheme which gives appointed members of the public opportunities to visit local police stations unannounced to observe and report on the treatment of detainees and the conditions in which they are held. Interested people should contact the Clerk to the Essex Police Authority, Room C328A, County Hall (01245 430355) or visit the website [www.essex.police.uk/authority](http://www.essex.police.uk/authority).

The Braintree Crime Reduction Partnership (BDC, Essex Police and ECC) is undertaking a short term project concerning drug related community safety issues. The aim is to produce an overview of drug related matters relevant to each Parish.

Rural Community Council of Essex Documentation for entries for the 2003 Essex Village of the Year and Best Kept Village competitions is available from the Clerk. The deadline for entries is 4th April 2003.

Anglia Innkeeping Services Application for a full transfer of the justices' licence at the Brewery Tavern, Wethersfield to Mr Jack Beresford Simpson had been received.

---

## PROPERTY NOTES

A view of the local scene by Bev Baxter, Gray & Co

I suppose you will all by now be thoroughly fed up about the proposed three new runways to be considered at Stansted Airport. My view is that they are probably after one runway and have asked for three so that when they finally agree to one runway everyone will breathe a sigh of relief.

However, there will undoubtedly be an affect on property prices but I am unsure as to whether it will be for good or bad. One school of thought is that it will force prices up as people will wish to live in a nice village within easy reach of the Airport. On the other hand if the aircraft traffic increases and the village starts to get badly over-flown, it may serve to depress prices. We will have to wait to see what develops.

Nonetheless if I were to have a wager, my view is that Wethersfield will benefit in the long term; what with the A120 and the possibility of huge new developments close to the Airport, not forgetting the Governments desire to provide low cost housing for Public Sector workers.

I notice that building societies are advocating a rise in interest rates as a method of stemming the rise in house prices. I would have thought that it would be far better if the societies themselves reduced the extraordinary multiples of salary that they allow, or alternatively increase the deposit required in the first place. Either of these measures would achieve the same result.

The market place continues to be patchy, with buyers being more and more concerned with price and value for money. It might well be that prices are beginning to harden with buyers becoming reluctant to join the headlong flight into anything at any price. Finally, one further indicator is that over the last few weeks when we have been asked by building society surveyors to provide comparable values, all the properties have been re-mortgages rather than new business.

Estate agency can be a very frustrating business. In January there was nothing coming on the market and there were a large number of buyers. Now the properties are coming on and the buyers have vanished!

# People.....

## The Commuting Fryers!

Every Thursday evening around 8.30pm, Wethersfield is alerted by the tootling horn of Brian's Fish & Chip van and local residents scuttle out to collect their evening meal. Few realise that Max and Jo have been 'commuting' to Wethersfield from their home in Great Bentley since 1982!

They came down to this area from Manchester at a time of recession up there and at a time when Jo's mother, who lived locally, was taken ill. Max recalled "We bought the original van and chip round from Brian's Fish & Chip shop in Halstead when he sold up. We couldn't afford a signwriter to change the name on the van - so it stayed as Brian's!"

The original round of Saling, Finchingfield, Bardfield and Wethersfield is covered on Thursdays. Now other rounds are on Tuesday (Bentley area), Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday (Ardleigh boot Sale). Its a busy life, but "we don't expect to retire in the foreseeable future"

Jo remembers the period they used to go up to the Wethersfield USAF Base, at their request at the end of the Saturday night discos "It got so popular, the Base supplied two armed guards to keep the queue in order!" On certain evenings their arrival coincided with the US weightwatchers club turning out and "certain rather overweight ladies would make a bee-line straight over to the van and always ask for a LARGE portion!" Max and Jo were often paid in dollars and had to change them at the Base bank.

The current van is their third and covers about 350 miles a week. Jo mentioned "We have become quite good diesel

fitters over the years!" About 4 years ago in the centre of Great Bardfield a gas pipe fractured and caught fire and flames shot out of the chimney. "It looked very dramatic in the dark but some of the elderly residents produced a ladder and helped us put it out, so we were able to carry on and serve them!"

Another time the fryer caught fire at a boot fair and had to be shut down - "what about our chips!" was the cry from the disgruntled queue.

At one stage the pair tried to increase their margins by buying raw fish direct from the auctions in Lowestoft, rather than ready filleted from the wholesaler in Ipswich. At 3am they found themselves the only females at the auction.

Having bought several crates of fish "by tugging on the sleeve of the auctioneer", they then asked if he could show them how to fillet it - his response "You are joking??" The pair commented "After a few weeks of 3am auctions and hours of filleting fish we decided to go back to the middleman in Ipswich!"

The ladies clearly enjoy the human contact side of their round and have "watched many kids grow up over the years. One lady in Tey had 11 children, claiming she was going for a football team! Often, as the more elderly regulars become too infirm to get out to the van, we take the fish & chip meal to their home. One old lady used to put a big letter F (for fish!) in her front window, with a light behind it when she wanted a delivery. On one occasion she didn't respond when we knocked, so we went back to check if she was all right - it turned out she had nodded off!"

Jo & Max also remember local character Bill Wyatt as a regular. Every week he drove to Finchingfield from Petches Bridge to collect. They were devastated to hear of his death in a car crash.

Commenting on their many customers, from such a wide range of social backgrounds, Max observed "we're all the same underneath, with our basic needs" She added - Russell Harty, who was writing a book, never finished due to his death - it's title was 'Life is a fish and chip shop' - his parents ran one in Preston!"

If you're worried that you might miss your fish, you can catch the van on 07889 600034!

## Hanging up his kit!



Many of you will recognise Bruce May from the picture & many of you will know that he was a member of the Wethersfield Fire Station crew. Despite all of our efforts Bruce decided to hang up his fire kit for the last time at the end of last year, having been with the service for 6 years.

The remaining crew took Bruce out for a meal and presented him with a small token of our appreciation. It's obvious from the photo that his 'disappointment' at our choice of trophy could not be hidden from the camera!!

If you feel you would like to enquire about becoming a Fire-fighter at Wethersfield please contact 01376 345537.

Darren Hockley

**PLEASE NOTE THAT MAY- JUNE COPY DEADLINE IS MAY 5th**

We are always looking for ideas for articles. Correspondents and editorial volunteers most welcome.  
[news@churchhillhouse.co.uk](mailto:news@churchhillhouse.co.uk)

Letter and comments are welcome, but please note that they will not be used unless name and address is supplied. This information will not be published unless the writer wishes.



Max and Jo prepare for customers