

# WETHERSFIELD

BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END

# NEWS

July/August 2003

news@churchhillhouse.co.uk

## Have your say

How often do you hear complaints about traffic through villages of the Parish, or parking problems, litter, lack of facilities for the youth or the elderly in the villages, lack of bus services and so on? The Rev Warner in the recent issue of the URC Community Link writes at length on "What is it that Wethersfield wants?"

Well, there are plans to allow all parishioners to have their say in the development of a Parish Plan. It is Government policy to increase individual participation in public life and for local councils and other public bodies to consult communities about the delivery of services and rural planning matters.

Wethersfield Parish Council have come to realise that the Plan would greatly ease the ability to get grants, for example for such items as the recently improved basketball pad, funded from efforts by the Playing Field Committee. A Parish Plan could be used to influence the thinking of Braintree District Council on planning and funding issues.

As well as containing the views of parishioners, the plan would contain useful information such as traffic/road usage, what numbers of people commute and where, how many work locally, number of dwellings, local businesses and so on.

Whilst the Parish Council are keen that work start on the plan in the near future - it can take up to a year to produce - they are looking for volunteers and an enthusiastic individual to lead the team. Councillors are keen to participate, but want this to be a community initiative. Training and help to facilitate public meetings and develop/analyse questionnaires is available from a dedicated team within the Rural Community Council of Essex and a grant of up to £5000 is available to cover costs.

Details are available on [www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/vitalvillages).

Volunteers are invited to contact the Parish Council direct, or through this newspaper.

## It's An Operatic Dog's Life

FOR the first three weeks of July, Gill Pipe and her pet poodle Marco have been commuting up to the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden so that Marco can 'perform' in *Pagliacci* with tenor Placido Domingo and famous soprano, Angelo Gheorghiu.

One of Gill's friends is a fellow dog agility expert and has a standard poodle which has also appeared in various TV adverts.

Gill explained "she made it known to me that the Covent garden production team were looking for a toy poodle to appear in the forthcoming opera. The dog was not required to sing or even howl to order"

In fact Marco was carried on in the first part of the opera as the carnival/fair enters.

Gill went on: "in spite of the drums, poppers, fire eaters, streamers, every noise you can think of, nothing seemed to worry him - not a tremble or a wriggle in spite of

being handled by two separate singers". As can be seen from the photo, Marco is a somewhat laid-back character.

Gill said "its been quite an experience for both of us. For the rehearsals we had to travel in the rush hour by train and tube and the only safe way for Marco to travel was in a rucksack tied to the front of me. - causing amusement amongst fellow commuters"

Gill had a prime view of the opera from the wings and over the weeks became very familiar with the opera.

"The cast and production staff were so friendly and made a big fuss of Marco, although some confusion was caused due to the fact that the Associate Director was also called Marco and he

wasn't quite so cuddly!"

By the last of the three performances on the final Sunday Gill was very tired but commented "I wouldn't have missed it for the world".



Gill, with 6 year old Marco

## Do you know what this is?



JOHN McKenzie, who lives in Wethersfield Barn, next to the Dog Inn car park has noticed two lines of lettering carved into the bricks high up on the rear annex to the Dog Inn. They appear to be initials, perhaps of one family, as most end in the letter E. Dates of 1880 and 1890 also appear. Can anyone cast light on their origin?

On a separate point, John has read that, in years gone by, when a coaching Inn occupied the Dog site, the local assizes was held there and rumour is that the Barracks cottages were used to accommodate, or 'barrack' the horsemen who drove the coaches and horses.

# PARISH COUNCIL NOTES

**Edited minutes of the meeting of the parish council held on June 18.**

## MATTERS ARISING

**Meadside Bank** - The Clerk reported that he had discussed the matter of vehicle parking with ECC and District Councillor Simon Walsh, who undertook to examine the problem.

**Bird Nuisance** - In response to a letter from a parishioner regarding bird mess, the Clerk reported that he had sought advice from the RSPB and from DEFRA in connection with the rook nuisance. In summary, 'pest species' birds may be killed or taken for specific reasons by an authorised person under the terms of a general licence obtained from DEFRA. Examples of specific reasons are preserving public health or safety or preventing serious damage to livestock, crops, vegetables and fruit. The RSPB did not consider that bird mess nuisance would be a specific reason.

Discussion moved to a consideration of a cutting of the lower branches of trees on the Green. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mervyn Crowe at BDC for advice.

**Essex County Council - Highways and Transportation Group** - ECC have commissioned a consultant firm to survey all the County's byways, and to endeavour to grade them in terms of their flora and fauna, their historical geographical significance and any other unique feature (in respect of being a sole access to somewhere, for example). The first stage of the survey took place in September/October last year, and the next stage has been completed recently. A report from consultants is expected soon, and findings will be published in 'Ways & Means'.

The intention of ECC is to possibly apply traffic restrictions to the byways which are considered as Grade 1, and consider how the others should be managed and maintained once their special features have been established. Additional funds will be required and a full report with recommendations will go before the County Council in due course.

## PARISH PLANS

The Chairman opened the discussion by saying that he felt the development of a Parish Plan was important, and could soon be a mandatory requirement for all parish councils. An information pack was circulated, and the Clerk explained that some local villages had completed their Parish Appraisal or Plan. A Steering Committee is required to get a project under way, and there is help available from RCCE and BDC.

## CORRESPONDENCE

**Essex County Council - Highways**  
A courtesy letter giving details of the current carriageway surface dressing programme in Wethersfield parish had been received.

**Essex County Council - Legal Services**  
A copy of the Public Notice 'Essex County Council (Petches bridge, Wethersfield) (Temporary Prohibition of Traffic) Order 2003' had been received. The Order is expected to be in force for 18 months. An alternative route has been agreed.

**Essex County Council - Highways**  
Phase 2 of ECC's Road Safety Campaign, 'Share the Road' has been launched. New posters were distributed for posting to notice boards.

## OTHER MATTERS

Councillor Tillbrook advised the meeting that Mr Chapman was no longer able to maintain the bus shelter. An alternative arrangement has been made to keep the shelter cleaned.

**West Drive to Village Hall access**  
Councillor Martin reported that overhanging vegetation was causing problems to pedestrians using the footpath. This is a hawthorn hedge on the Primary School boundary, and the Clerk undertook to write to the school.

**Road channel sweeping**  
Councillor Martin also reported that the channel sweeping vehicle had visited on the appointed day (June 5).

**Derek Flannery Playing Field Association**  
Councillor Norman declared an interest as Treasurer of the Playing Field Association. He advised the meeting that the Chairman of the Association was writing to the Parish Council seeking an increase in funding due to increased costs - particularly insurance cover. It was agreed to consider the matter as an agenda item at the July meeting. The hedge at the car park entrance has grown out of control and needs attention. After discussion it was agreed that Councillor Norman would seek a quotation for topping and thinning-out the hedge in the winter.

**Speeding in the village**  
Councillor Clubley considered that vehicle speeding through Wethersfield continues to be a problem. The Chairman advised him of measures taken over recent years, and suggested that the most effective action would be for individuals to ring the Police Station at Shalford with details of specific cases.

**Footpath at Russells Farm**  
The Chairman reported that overgrown hedges were making this footpath impassible, and sought details about ownership of the subject land. Members felt it may belong to Stable Cottage, but Councillor Foster will make further enquiries.

## Letter from America

MY wife and I recently visited Wethersfield to learn more about the town where my great great great, great, great, great, great grandfather, Nathaniel Foote, grew up. He was born in 1593 and was apprenticed to a grocer in Colchester around 1609. He married and came to America in 1634 and was one of the settlers who founded the city of Wethersfield in Connecticut.

We made no prior arrangements for our visit, depending entirely on local townspeople to help us see the points of interest that existed in Wethersfield around 1600. We were overwhelmed with the town and with the people who went far out of their way to make our visit a success.

Gemima Curtis saw me wandering near the Brewery Tavern at 11am and opened the door to ask if she could help. From her we got directions to St. Mary's Parish Church.

After visiting the church, John Tillbrook saw us checking our notes from across the street. He came over and asked if he could help us. From John, we got detailed directions to the old Robert Foote farm near Shalford and the United Reformed Church.

After visiting the farm site we went to the church looking for Doreen French. I stopped Audrey Campbell as she was on her way to meet her husband and asked if she knew Doreen. Mrs. Campbell insisted on taking us personally to Mrs. French's house.

We were given a copy of your newsletter when we returned to the Brewery Tavern. We had seen more than we could have possibly hoped for in less than two hours. A wonderful town. You must, for good reason, be very proud of it.

I am contacting you for help in getting permission to quote excerpts from the Wethersfield web site from Derek Norman. I am the President of the Foote Family Association of North America and the Editor of our newsletter, FooteNotes. The site has several articles on old Wethersfield that would be of interest to our membership.

I would like to suggest that we exchange newsletters with the agreement that permission to reprint is included. My write-up of the Wethersfield visit is in our July issue.

**LYNN FOOTE**  
President, Foote Family Association  
of North America,  
6146 Mines Road, Livermore,  
CA 94550. USA

# Happenings...

## WETHERSFIELD PARISH CHURCH

A big thank you to everyone who took part in the Hobbies and Collections afternoon Held in the Church on Saturday May 17 and to all the Gardeners who opened their gardens on Sunday June 15, we had old faithfuls and some newcomers on each occasion, both afternoons were enjoyed by participants and visitors. Over £300 was raised between these two events and that money has gone towards the Church repair fund. We are looking forward to the Garden Party at Wethersfield Hall on Saturday, July 26 And more dates for your diary : Sunday Aug 3 Special Service with presentation of work from activity week, 3pm.

Jessie Threadgold's Annual Youth Concert takes place in the Church on Sept 6 at 6.30pm October 11. Barn Dance in the Village Hall. Entry free - retiring collection

Sunday School breaks for the Summer, starting again on Sept 14. All children 3-11 welcome. Contact Elaine Ambrose 850244 or Sarah Pilgrim 850781.

RATS - after much hard work this played to a packed Church on May 20. Thanks go to the UP-BEAT band and all who helped make this a success. Over £107 was raised.

## CREAMER FUND

Once again, it is a great pleasure to thank those who give continuing support to this Community Fund. Donations have been received in many forms. Folk who have held coffee mornings coffee evenings or garden parties, have put everything into it, and they have all been very enjoyable. The next fund-raising event in Wethersfield will be on Sept 27 in The URC Hall 10a.m. to 12.30 and will be a French Cafe with Market Stalls. If you have anything to give or loan that might enhance this occasion, this would be appreciated. If you would like to be involved in any way, please ring Jean.

Jean Murphy 851147

## WELCOME GROUP

Just a reminder that we do not have a meeting in August. Thursday September 4 our guest will be Mr. Pete Rogers, an aerial photographer whose programme will be "Essex from the Air". He will endeavour to have something from Wethersfield. We meet in The URC Hall at 8pm, subs are 50p to include refreshments. We extend our welcome to all.

## BRITISH LEGION

Coffee Morning at the URC Hall on Saturday Aug 9, 10am-noon. Cakes, raffle - all welcome 50p inc. refreshments.

## GARDEN CLUB.

Aug 2 outing to Thompson & Morgans

Open Day. Bus leaves Village Green at 11.45 am. Please note change of time. Sept 19 Steve Canham from Mill Race Nursery will be talking on "Water Features for the Small Garden". Meetings start at 7.45pm in the Village Hall. Visitors welcome.

## HISTORY GROUP

No meeting in August Thursday Sept 11 Wethersfield Personalities in 1871 a talk by Les Deacon & David Hammond

## PRESCHOOL

The children enjoyed trips to Boydells Farm and Colne Valley Railway, fed the ducks at Finchingfield and had a visit from the MOD policeman, who took their fingerprints and gave the children a ride in his police car. Due to increasing numbers we are opening for a Rising five session on Tuesdays next term, which starts on Sept 8.

## RAINBOWS & BROWNIES

Recommence in the URC Hall on Sept 9 Rainbows (5-7 yrs) 4.30 - 5.30pm Brownies (7-10yrs) 5.30 - 7pm

## BUSY FINGERS

Blackmore End Village Hall 8-10pm Sept 2 and Sept 6 Victorian Decoupage (covered tray/pot) by Paulette Baugham Contact 850308 or 851004

## SPONSORED CYCLE RIDE

Friends of Essex Churches, Saturday. Sept 13 10am-6pm. Details and sponsor forms from Sarah Pilgrim 850781

## WINE CLUB

Sat Aug 16 Barbecue at Church Hill House in the afternoon. Saturday, Sept 13: Trip to Gifford Hall vineyard and pub lunch. Contact Barbara Mostyn 850 978

## WETHERSFIELD PATHFINDERS

Meet on the fourth Sunday of each month for a 2-hour walk. August meet at Blackmore End 10.30.

## HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Premier Sports Coaching Wethersfield Playing Field from Monday Aug 4 - Friday Aug 8, 2 - 5pm £25/week or £10/day Contact 01787 477909 or 07930 990013

## Braintree Museum

Wed Aug 6	Birds of a Feather
Tues Aug 12	Plastic Fantastic
Wed Aug 13	Impressive prints
Tues Aug 19	Music Factory
Wed Aug 20	Circus Mania
Tues Aug 26	Claycraft
Wed Aug 27	All Things Bright & Beautiful

Sessions 10.30am - 12.30pm & 1pm-3pm Some morning sessions suitable for over

fives., others for eights and over. £3.50/session. Contact 01376 325266 or 328868 for enquiries & bookings.

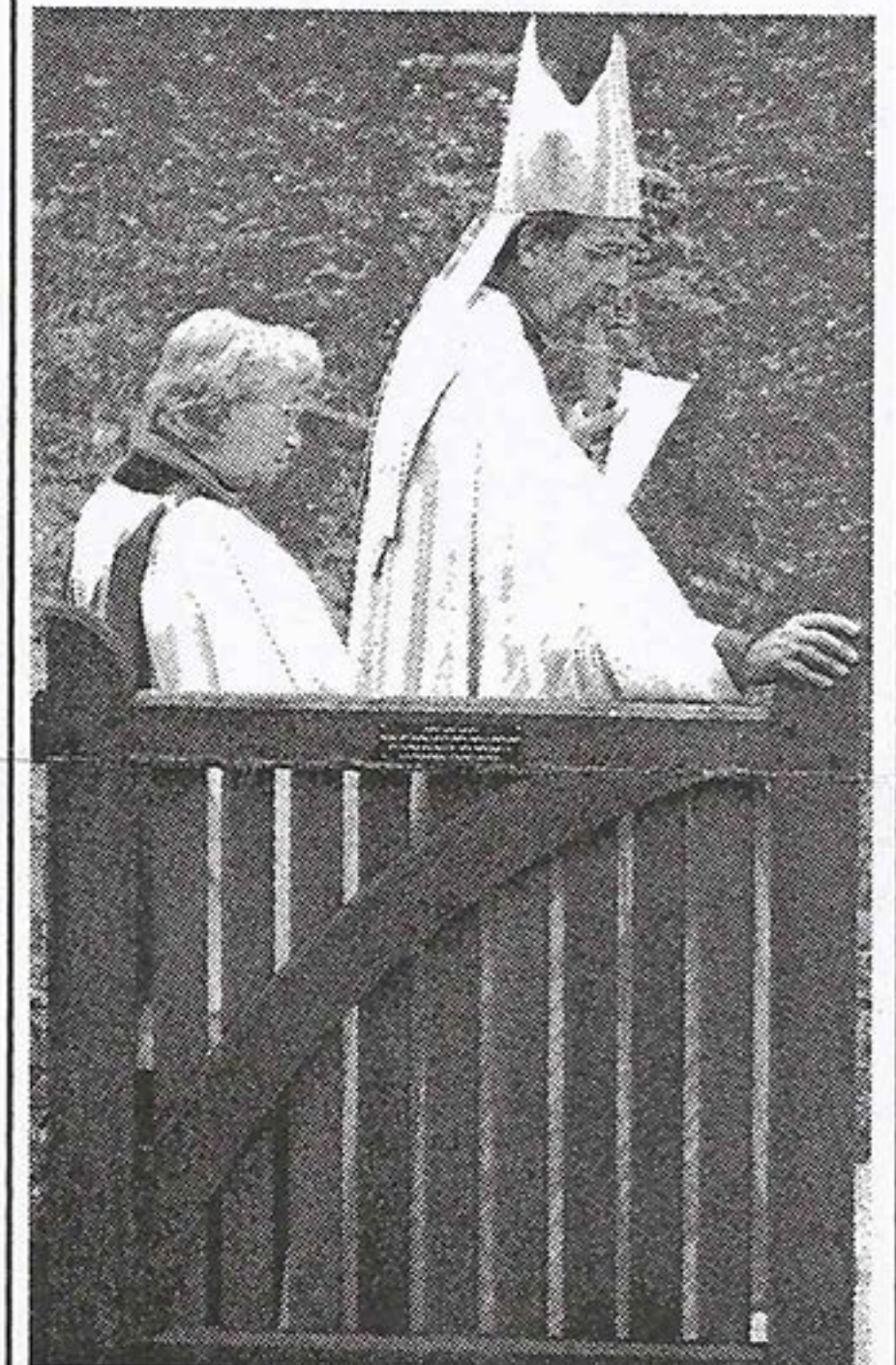
## Braintree District Council Activity Days

FREE days in the area for ages 5-11. Aug 11 Sible Hedingham Village Hall Aug 12 Shalford Village Hall Aug 13 Castle Hedingham Memorial Hall Aug 20 Bardfield Pavilion Aug 21 Finchingfield Village Hall Contact Aaron Wigg 01376 552525 Ext 2308

## Braintree Library Reading Maze

July 24 - Sept 2 Designed to get children reading and talking about books. They get a set of stickers for each book they read with a folder to put them in. There are six sets to collect and children who read six books get a medal too. 01376 320752 for details.

## Bishop of Colchester in Wethersfield



THE Bishop of Colchester was at Evensong in the Parish Church on Sunday June 22 to dedicate the Oak Gates which were paid for by funds raised by Friends of the Church, and also to dedicate the Memorial Book and Stand presented to the Church by Sue Bennett (our one time organist) in memory of her husband Keith.

All Sue's family were in the congregation together with Friends of the Church and members of other parishes. There were lovely floral decorations arranged by our loyal band of flower arrangers.

The evening ended on a convivial note with wine and nibbles being served, allowing time for friendly chat, and for the Bishop to meet with some of the congregation. We closed the doors on a successful evening just before the clock struck nine.

E.N.

# People.....

## Tyred Clappers

### Turkey for Christmas?

NO - we're not talking about winter holidays!

Bill Wright of Nortofts Farm reports that June 30 saw the start of the 2003 turkey producing season in the Wright family. It was in existence as a commercial venture 90 years ago in 1913 and is believed to be one of the oldest.

Bill commented "The business started at Gages Farm, Little Maplestead, Halstead and was run by Wilfrid and Dudley Wright. This carried on until 1940 when, due to ill health and wartime restrictions enforced a break. During the war some geese were reared by their daughter, Connie and later on a small flock of laying hens by me, on leaving agricultural college."

"On getting married in 1956 and living at Nortofts, a setting of turkey eggs were hatched out and the poults fattened for Christmas. We ate one, we sold one and the others were sold live in Braintree market. As demand grew so did the size of the flock."

"We now rear 1,000 birds. In 2003 these will be sold in an oven-ready state - licensed under health and hygiene regulations - to various customers who still prefer a traditional turkey for their Christmas dinner. The operation is still done by myself - youngest son of the above with Bunty and son Howard who now does most of the organisation."



Bill with one of his 3-week old chicks

### Wethersfield CE Primary School News - Summer Term 2003

THIS has been a very long term, packed full of events and visits, including the following highlights:

- A very successful Book Fair was well supported, enabling the school to benefit to the tune of £161-worth of free books.
- The Year 6 children were very successful in their national SATs tests, all achieving Level 4s (the level expected) in English, Maths and Science
- We had a successful 'Writing Week', the highlight of which was a day visit by children's author, Antony Lishak. During the week, the children focused on a wide variety of writing activities including a visit from a local journalist, culminating in a 'Dress-as-a-character-from-your-favourite-story' day that saw many *Harry Potters*, lots of *Star Wars* characters and four James Bonds!
- Year 6 children attended 'Crucial Crew', a personal safety awareness training session.
- The local community police officer visited the school to talk to all the classes.
- The older children had a five-week cricket training course led by Essex County Cricket.
- The whole school attended a performance of *Gargling with Jelly* put on by the students of Braintree College.
- The older pupils attended a music workshop run by The London Mozart Players

and were later invited to a concert given by them in Colchester.

- Year 6 children attended Tabor High School for computer work and for two Induction Days to prepare them for transfer in September.
  - Year 5 children attended a Taster Day at Tabor High School.
  - The school held an Open Evening when all the year's work was on display.
  - The school was inspected by Ofsted for three days in July and we await the publication of the report in September.
  - Years 3 and 4 made an educational visit to Duxford as part of their History work.
  - The year ended with a Leavers' Service held in the parish church, and a celebration disco for all the children, organised by the PTA.
  - The Healthy School Action Plan has been accepted and the school is now entitled to use the Healthy School logo on its letterhead.
  - Three printers have been ordered with the Tesco vouchers.
- The above list is only a selection of what has been happening in the school this term and we must not forget that teaching and learning has continued as normal, alongside all these other events! The staff and children have worked very hard this year and we all look forward to an equally busy and rewarding year beginning in September.

STRANGE noises emanating from the church tower on Saturday mornings have caused much concern and rumour. Has someone important died? Have the bells worn out?

The truth is simply that the Ringing School, run by the Northern District of the Essex Association of Change Ringers, came to Wethersfield for the Summer Term. The school, which is normally based at Coggeshall, caters for ringers from a wide area who are making their first steps in the art of Change Ringing, and 20 or more have made the weekly trip to practise in our tower.

So why the strange noises? The ringing has been done using our computer simulator, which relays the bell sounds to the ringers through speakers in the ringing room. At the same time, the bells are muffled using sections of car tyre around the clapper.

The idea of this is to spare our neighbours the agony of three hours of beginners' ringing each week. Strangely "the air full of bell noises without the bells" as it has been described, seems to have set the rumours flying, and all sorts of ideas have been doing the rounds!

The school has now finished for the summer, and is returning to Coggeshall (Wethersfield tower is renowned for its freezing atmosphere through the winter), but the strange noises might still occasionally be heard as our band practises something out of the ordinary.

R.T.

### PLEASE NOTE THAT SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER COPY DEADLINE IS SEPTEMBER 10.

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.

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