

Great Bentley Parish News

**Produced by the Community
for the Community**



February 2024

Village Information

St Mary's Church

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Mrs Mandy Miles
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ELECTORAL ROLL SECRETARY:

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ST MARY'S FACEBOOK PAGE

St Mary's Church, Great Bentley.

ST MARY'S CHURCH WEBSITE

stmaryschurchgreatbentley.co.uk

ST MARY'S SUNDAY CLUB

For details please contact Mary Maskell 01206 250524
email: marymaskell@sys3internet.net

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Wendy King - 01206 250852

PASTORAL CARE TEAM

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Mandy Miles 01206 251382
Mary Maskell 01206 250524

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Mobile 07305 805444 01206 396654

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45 Oakmead Road, St Osyth - Mobile: 07775 833200

POLICE:

Clacton 0300 333 4444
24 hour Non emergency number 101
In an emergency ring 999

GREAT BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman - Pippa Dennitts
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Clerk to the Parish Council Jennifer Spear
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MEDICAL AIDS:

Richard Nowak - 01206 250204

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01255 476068

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Robert Taylor, Dominica, Moors Close - 01206 250087

GT BENTLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL: - 01206 250331

COLNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL: - 01206 303511

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COLCHESTER HOSPITALS: 01206 747474

CLACTON & DISTRICT HOSPITAL: 01255 201717

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01206 250309

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07503 153960

VILLAGE CARETAKER:

Robert McWilliams, 07598 640622

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Alan Bayliss, 01206 250450

TREE WARDEN

Sue and Faris Shimali 07973 534301

FOOTPATH REP.

melanie.sawers@nuffield.ox.ac.uk

EDITORIAL



FEBRUARY

2024

Despite some very wet and then extremely cold weather, nature shows us the proof of just how resilient it is. Driving along the A12 the catkins were full out at the end of December, snowdrops also full out at the Beth Chatto Gardens too, (early varieties of the latter I guess). Regarding these wonderful gardens right on our doorstep, I highly recommend joining as a "Friend of the Gardens" which I believe is £35 for a single membership for a year, doubles are also available, which not only gives you unlimited visits but also lots of special events only open to "friends". Excellent value through the four seasons.

Talking of value for money thank you and well done to Nean for running her Christmas postal service once again, which raised £121.75 for the Foodbank. Another fundraiser coming up in February is the Barn Dance in the village hall in aid of the Tendring Hundred Riding Club ground improvement fund. See details on page 31. Furthermore, the Christmas Tree Shredding raised a record amount and the highest number of trees, 83, to be ground up including the huge village and church trees! Thanks Jon and Scott. See page 7.

February Heart Start Evenings. Peter Harry one of our First Responders is going to give two evening sessions, at the village hall, to demonstrate how the village Defibrillator's work. Both sessions have limited spaces so please contact Peter to book yours, full details on page 28.

I would like to emphasise, (although you will read this in the Parish Council notes for February,) that the notice boards are padlocked so please put 6 posters in the Parish Office letterbox OR email your poster to the Clerk so that they can pin them up, please supply two weeks in advance of your event. I see this as quite a positive move as we do not have to circumnavigate the parish for our publicity

Congratulations to Oli Lukey who has been selected to represent the North Essex Eagles cricket at U 11 level. Well done, what an amazing achievement. We are so fortunate to have the youth cricket and football coaching for the youngsters of our village, thanks to all who give up their free time to help with this.

We still have advertising spaces available for 2024 so please contact me if you are interested. Sales of magazines in the shops will go up to 80p per magazine from February onwards. Why not have yours delivered at a much reduced rate? Just ring 250524 or email marymaskell@sys3internet.net

SUBS ARE NOW OVERDUE. Please pay your deliverer ASAP.

As we look optimistically to spring, keep warm and safe and get ready to start sowing those seeds!

All the best,
Mary Maskell

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FRONT COVER

The "pond" that has developed in recent weeks
In front of Moorlands on the northern side of the green.
So much more dramatic in black and white.
Thanks to Will Penny
(see page 26)

If people want to see more of my images my Instagram name is "thesupersharpsooter" and my Facebook page is "The Super Sharp Shooter"

DISCLAIMER

The statements, opinions and data contained in these publications are solely those of the individual authors and contributors and not of the Churchwardens, Parochial Church Council, the Editor nor the publisher. The appearance of advertisements in the Great Bentley Parish News or the website is not a warranty, endorsement, or approval of the products or services advertised or of their effectiveness, quality or safety.

LETTER FOR FEBRUARY

.Dear Friends,

It is with sorrow that we are going to say goodbye to Rev. Sharon Miles in a joint service on February 4th as we join with our friends from St Osyth Church in a service of farewell. Can I request any donations to Rev. Sharon's retirement gift either be sent to our Parish Treasurer (see front cover for details) or churchwardens Wendy Smith or Mandy Miles (see front cover for details). It would be great if as many of you as can, attend the service which starts at 10am.

Epiphany following Christmas will end on Wednesday 14th February and we will be holding an Ash Wednesday service at 7pm. All welcome.

We will be joining with our Methodist friends for our Lent Study Group this year to be led by Rev Tom Osborne on the Methodist Collection of Art starting on the 15th February and the last session is on 21st March 7.30pm at the Methodist Church.

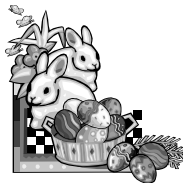
We start off our Easter services with our Children's Good Friday Workshop so it would be good to see you there.

A verse from a prayer from the week of Christian unity.

'God of communion, we pray that we may work together for your greater glory'

Canon Wendy King

CHILDREN'S GOOD FRIDAY WORKSHOP



Friday 29th March

St Mary's Church Hall

Workshop will start at 10.30am until 12 noon
followed by a short service
in church presented by the children.
Parents/Carers will be welcome

Come and decorate an Easter egg, do some
cooking and make Easter cards, and
simple craft activities.

**To ensure we have an Easter Egg for
each child please can you register
in advance.**

Ring Wendy King 01206 250852

St. Mary's Church Facebook Page

St. Mary's Church has a facebook page!

Here we will be posting news of upcoming services, as well as any forthcoming events or fundraising. Please like and follow the page to keep up to date with our news, the page name is 'St. Mary's Church Great Bentley'.

facebook

PASTORAL CARE AT ST MARY'S CHURCH GREAT BENTLEY

Three of us passed our Pastoral Care Course, Part 1 this year, Lyn Gordon, Mary Maskell and Mandy Miles.

Following on from this we hope we may be able to help you in some way eg. home communion, a visit to you personally or a telephone call. Also lifts to church are offered.

Please ring one of us if you feel we might be able to assist you in some way.

Lyn Gordon 681884: Mary Maskell 250524:
Mandy Miles 251382:

Are you going to be booking your
wedding at St Mary's Church?

If so, your first point of contact is

Wendy King
01206 250852





**GREAT BENTLEY
METHODIST
CHURCH**

Forge Lane CO7 8GD

Don't forget our
Facebook page.

Search for Gt Bentley
Methodist Church

Hire our warm, large or
small halls with fully
serviced kitchen.
Ring 250087

Greetings to you all

We welcome you to worship at Church or on Zoom with us during February. If you would like to join our Zoom service by Computer, please ring **250717** for the connection link.

Morning worship will be held at **10.30am** unless otherwise stated.

The leaders of worship are set out below: -

February 4th Deacon Angela Sherini

**February 11th Rev Tom Osborne
Holy Communion**

February 18th Anne Beeton

February 25th Maddie Whittle

Events in February:

Our Lent Study Group this year is to be led by Rev Tom Osborne on the Methodist Collection of Art. Starting on the 15th Feb and last session on 21st March 19.30 at the Methodist Church.

Coffee & Chat February 2nd Warm fellowship with drinks, cakes, books etc.

Prayer Meeting. We meet for prayer on the second Wednesday of each month 9.45 for 10am at our Church This month 14th February.

Sandwiches for Hope @ Trinity, 14th February

Each second Wednesday of the month at 9.30am we collect sandwiches and take them to our Trinity Church in Clacton for those struggling to buy food for themselves. Collection at our Church before we go to Clacton at 9.30.

Each week the following events are normally held at our Church.

Ring these numbers for more information

Messy Church once a month after school 250087
Parent & Toddlers Group Thursdays 9-15 a.m.
251537
The Adventurers Club. Fridays 7 p.m. Ring
250087

ST MARY'S SERVICES

Sunday 4th February - 2nd Sunday before Lent

10am Joint Benefice service at St Osyth to say farewell to the Rev. Sharon Miles.

Thurs 8th Knit & Natter, 2pm, Church Hall

Sunday 11th February - Sunday next before Lent

Rev. Sarah Batts-Neil

9.30am Holy Communion

Wed 14th - Ash Wednesday

7.00pm Ash Wednesday Service,

Thurs 15th 1pm Memorial Service for Mary Beard
All welcome

Sat 17th **Coffee Morning**, 10-12 noon
in aid of CAPS (Christians Against Poverty)

Sunday 18th February - 1st Sunday of Lent

Wendy King

9.30am Family Service

4.00pm Taize Service

Sunday 25th February - 2nd Sunday of Lent

Rev Martin Wood

9.30am Holy Communion

ROTAS FOR ST MARY'S CHURCH FOR FEBRUARY

Sidespersons & Readers

4th St Osyth
11th The Wright Children
18th Lynn & Roger Carey-Smith
25th Richard Wainer

Prayer Rota

4th St Osyth
11th George Wright
18th Carol Kerridge
25th Lyn Gordon



Coffee Rota

4th St Osyth
11th Vicky Rothwell
18th Nicky
25th Lyn Gordon

Cleaning Rota

3rd Linda Hayes
10th Jennie Moss
17th Mandy Miles
24th Carol Kerridge & Lea Howlett

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MARY KATHLEEN BEARD
12TH JUNE 1918 – 19TH DECEMBER 2023**

WE MOURN HER PASSING BUT GIVE THANKS FOR HER LONG LIFE

After more than 40 very happy years in Great Bentley, Mary sadly died on Tuesday, 19th December aged 105 and a half.

There will be a memorial service at **13.00 on Thursday 15th February** in Great Bentley parish church. This is to be a celebration of Mary's long life and all are very welcome.

The cremation on 14th February will be for family and close friends.

Family flowers only please, but donations in Mary's memory may be made to:

The Essex Wildlife Fund

specifically for the appeal to purchase Fir Tree Wood, Little Baddow or **The Parkinson's Disease Society** to further their research

Donation is possible after the church service, online at www.marybeard.muchloved.com

or directly at www.essexwt.org.uk and www.donate.parkinsons.org.uk

My parents loved this woodland in Little Baddow, and used to take me there as a small child. It is currently in danger of being sold off as building plots, so this EWT appeal resonated strongly. Mum loved birds and trees and was keen to protect the countryside.

My father, Mary's husband, suffered with Parkinson's disease and died in 1972 aged just 54.

This photo of mum was taken at her 100th birthday party.

Jenny Curtis Beard

**Thank You to Great Bentley Surgery and
The Green Pharmacy**

Thank you to all the doctors, nurses, and administrative staff at the Great Bentley Practice, and also the Pharmacy staff for the work you do throughout the year to ensure your patients have the best quality of care and medication that is available to them.

We appreciate you are under so much pressure but you still manage to get urgent referrals dealt with by the hospitals and also to give advice and I, for one, am very grateful for your help.

The number of patients you are dealing with throughout the area of Tendring District is phenomenal and you all deserve a pat on the back and our sincere thanks.

Well done to you all and keep up the good work - you are really appreciated.

Peter De-Vaux Balbirnie MBE

PLEASE NOTE

**KNIT & NATTER
WILL BE ON**

**THURSDAY
8th FEBRUARY
2.00pm - 3.30pm**

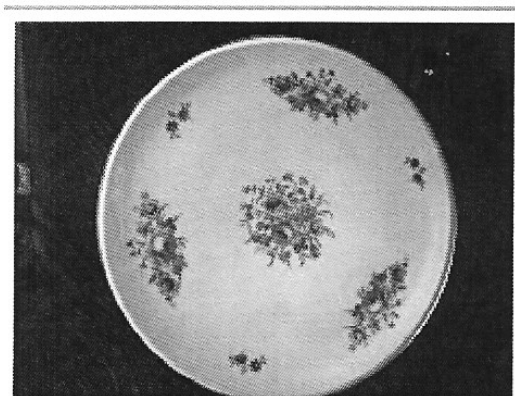
**Due to hall booked
for a funeral**

WELCOME

to new residents at 54 Birch Avenue
and the new family to
St Mary's Lodge

DO YOU RECOGNISE THIS LOVELY ROYAL WORCESTER PLATE?

IF SO PLEASE RING 01206 250524. ED



ANNUAL DIARY

27th April	Baked Potato Lunch, St Mary's Hall
18th May	May Fair, St Mary's Church
25th May	Gardening Club Plant Sale
31st August	Village Show
14th & 15th September	Flower Festival & Art Exhibition at St Mary's
7th & 8th December	Christmas Tree Festival St Mary's Church
13th December	A Christmas Carol with Antony Roberts



Supporting Church music in the Tendring area

February 11th

The Deanery choir will be singing at **St Georges Church, Great Bromley CO7 7HZ** at the 11.00am service. The choir will sing a version of Ubi Caritas by Ola Gjeilo. In his undergraduate career, Gjeilo studied at the [Norwegian Academy of Music](#) and transferred to the [Juilliard School](#). He studied at the [Royal College of Music](#), London, and received a bachelor's degree in composition.

March 29th

GOOD FRIDAY: Advanced notice that the Deanery choir will be performing John Rutter's 'Requiem' at 6.30pm at **St Marys Church, Little Bentley**. More details will follow in the next publication.

Graham Bell
Deanery Choir Organiser

For Sale

Cream Recliner/Swivel chair with Footstool

Genuine leather upholstery on both with curving matching wooden legs.
Very comfortable.
Slight wear on the arm rests
£70 ono

Relyon Loose Cover Sofabed Mint Green

Metal action very easy to operate.
4 Ft Sprung mattress as new.
Some wear to the covers – easy to remove and have recovered.
High quality Frame and Cushion interiors in perfect condition.
£85 ono

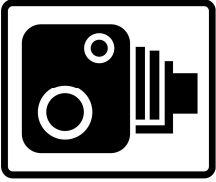
For further info phone Julia

01206 250981 07761763921

MAGAZINE COLLATING DAY FOR MARCH MAGAZINE

Magazine collating will be on **Friday 23rd February**
in St Mary's Church Hall starting at 9.00am

ALL WELCOME TO COME AND HELP COLLATE



Community Speedwatch Update

December saw more than its fair share of bad weather and perhaps less people rushing to and from work than at other times of the year, so maybe it's not surprising that the team recorded fewer speeding vehicles during the month. Of those who were reported, the speeds were less excessive than we've become used to seeing!

So was December some sort of progress? Who knows? It would be great to think so! As we've said before, we can't do anything about bad driving, bad parking or the sheer volume of traffic coming through the village but nearly 600 'polite letters' have been issued to drivers by the Police as a result of our Speedwatch reports during 2023. The Police were also supportive of us 'on the ground' during the year and having seen our data were really active with their own Enforcement cameras too. We'd certainly like to think that it's at least had some sort of impact on the speed people drive in and around Great Bentley!

If you can spare some time and you'd like to be part of this voluntary community effort to make our village just a little bit safer, please do get in touch at greatbentleyspeedwatch@gmail.com



Tendring District Talking Newspaper Association
Registered Charity No. 273432

Tendring Talking Times, the local talking newspaper for the Tendring District has just completed a major revamp of its Engineering Room in their local studios.

Starting six months ago, a new computer was secured to cope with upgrades in the software they were using. A new sound mixer desk was also purchased coincidentally just as the one they were using expired.

In the last few weeks, the two engineers' positions have been relocated to a new orientation alongside each other on a new desktop and facing an upgraded screen showing the recording room so the engineers can better see the readers. The studio has also been connected to a full fibre internet connection.

The latter will enable the weekly output of a digest of local news and information to be uploaded to the proposed website which is expected to be operational early in 2024. Potential listeners can then access the output by means of a computer, tablet or an Alexa or similar device.

The new setup was utilised for the last recording before Christmas and everything is functioning well.

The charity's Chairman, Adrian Robinson, commented that "It has taken a while to complete the work required but we are grateful to those of our engineering volunteers who brought the plan to fruition and it is hoped that the changes underway will bring out weekly digest of local news and events to a wider audience."

THANK YOU

I would just like to say thank you to everyone in the village that supported my Christmas Card delivery this year. I have given £121.75 to the local Foodbank.

Thank you to everyone that supported me with their generous donations and words of encouragement, the offers of tea and coffee and the very nice man that gave me a welcome Kitkat! I got very wet and very cold standing on the Green, I walked numerous miles delivering and hopefully got it right for everyone. So once again thank you for the kindness and support our community shows each other. I guess I'll be back again next year.

Thank you
Nean

The St. Osyth Witch Trials Part 4



Perhaps from fear, or promise of a lighter sentence or maybe because of past grudges, Ursula accused other local women of being involved in the witchcraft, they in turn accused more. Brian thoroughly investigated each accusation until the trial included 13 women and 1 man from St. Osyth and local villages. It is hard to know what motivated Brian to pursue these cases with such zeal. It could have been that religion played a key part. In the introduction to his pamphlet he declared that witches were "blasphemers against the most high God". Perhaps it was a deliberate move to make a name for himself as a Justice of the Peace, this is something he certainly achieved as in 1585 he had been given the prestigious title of 'Sheriff of Essex'. Or maybe it was naivety. Perhaps as the women all accused each other he felt obligated to investigate and ended up falling down a rabbit hole which he couldn't escape from without losing face.

When Brian Darcy finished interrogating the suspects they were moved to the prison at Colchester Castle to be held until the London judges completed their circuit of the country holding court in the counties. The conditions in the prison were terrible. Cold, damp and crowded, disease was rife and some died before or soon after their trial. These were incredibly poor women and they had to pay for their stay in prison. Many couldn't afford this so even after acquittal they remained imprisoned. We must also think of the children left behind. Some of the women were single parents raising illegitimate children by themselves. In one case husband and wife were both accused leaving their three children to fend for themselves. Historian Doctor Marian Gibson has searched the Parish Records held at Chelmsford and after his mother, Ursula Kemp is taken away, Thomas Rabbet's name does not appear again. Those who may have taken him in, such as his Godmother, were also accused of witchcraft and it remains unknown what became of him. At the time St. Osyth was a tiny village. It is unlikely that a single household existed that wasn't touched in some way by these horrendous events.

I wonder how Brian Darcy felt about the outcomes of the witch trials. After all his time and effort and detailed investigations only 2 of the accused were sentenced to death for witchcraft; Ursula Kemp and Elizabeth Bennett. The hearing would have been a public affair in the open sided courthouse in the centre of Chelmsford. Hanging would have taken place quickly after sentencing and it is likely the women were buried on the site of older barrows opposite the court building. It is unlikely that the community that sent them to the trial would want the body returned to them.

Helen Brown
Education Manager
Priory Education Centre

CHRISTMAS TREE SHREDDING

Many thanks to John Glover of Landscape Services and Brett Scott who came along to the green to shred Christmas trees on Saturday 6th January.

2023 - 63 shredded £353.53 donated
2024 - 83 shredded £481.92 donated

The money raised will be divided between Air Ambulance and Brain Tumour UK

Thank you to everyone involved.

FOOD BANK

The main needs at the moment are for basic tinned and packeted foods, longlife milk, squash, biscuits, tinned fruit, vegetables and meat, teabags 40s or 80s, long life juice, coffee, sugar, shampoo, washing up liquid, and washing powder/pods/gel, pasta sauce, jam, dried packets of lentils, long life fruit juice and nappies size 5,6 and 7.

Thank you for your continued support as donations have decreased recently.

Please leave any donations at the back of St Mary's church in the boxes provided.

PET NOTES

February is **National Pet Dental Health Month**.

Dental disease is extremely common in pets and we regularly perform dental procedures at Weeley Veterinary Centre. In fact, they are so common we have dedicated "Dental Fridays" where we perform dental procedures exclusively (alongside any emergency procedures, of course).

Dental disease can be found in pets of any age but is especially likely in older pets. Understandably pet owners may worry about their pet undergoing a dental procedure due to the need for a general anaesthetic. There are protocols available to keep the risk minimal, including pre-operative blood tests and intravenous fluid therapy (aka a "drip"), and your vet will be able to advise you of all the options.

Q. What are the symptoms of dental disease?

A. Dental disease is often detected before a pet has shown any symptoms during their routine health check and booster appointment. Symptoms you may notice once disease has progressed include bad breath, drooling, rubbing the mouth, difficulty eating, reduced eating, a dislike of their face being touched, bleeding from the mouth and even teeth falling out.

Q. What happens during a dental?

A. The vet will assess each tooth individually and examine the whole of the mouth checking for disease, including oral cancers. The most important area to examine and clean effectively is the **periodontal pocket**. This is the area below the gum line surrounding the teeth. The delicate periodontal pocket tissues attaching the tooth to the jaws are easily damaged which can result in pain and tooth loss. Tartar is removed using an ultrasonic scaler cooled by water jets in a careful, controlled manner. It is essential to clean below the gumline (as opposed to just scaling the visible tooth surface for a purely cosmetic finish) which would be painful for a conscious pet, hence the need for an anaesthetic.

Q. What can I do to improve my pet's dental health?

A. There are lots of things you can do. My favourite recommendation is to start brushing your pet's teeth as frequently as you can using a pet toothpaste and brush. Some brushes look similar to human ones or there are finger brushes which look like rubber thimbles with bristles.

B. Please note: Some pets simply will not allow this and you should never risk being bitten; if you can't you can't. If brushing is not possible or you are looking for additional aids, you can also try the following:

- Plaqtiv is a solution you add to your pet's water bowl
- Hill's t/d is a dental diet which is also the tastiest food in existence according to my three cats
- Dental chews and treats are available but care should be taken as some have high calorie content
- Please avoid feeding bones (both raw and cooked) as they can break teeth, injure the gastrointestinal tract and cause constipation

If you are concerned about your pet's dental health, please contact your veterinary surgery for a check up. Weeley Veterinary Centre clients benefit from a simple and transparent pricing structure which is available at www.weeleyvetcentre.com

Dr April Young MRCVS

SESAW NEWS

What will that Chihuahua say next? Kenneth believes he, and all the contributors to this excellent magazine, are time travellers because their articles are read by you in the future. His beguiling manner actually threw me for a moment until I snapped out of it! He's obviously been watching too much television. Mind you, visitors have compared us to Dr. Who's Tardis, surprised by the size of SESA W. There are many animals awaiting rehoming including a five month old black and white cat named Paddington.

We believe she was callously thrown over a garden wall and left to die when seriously ill with flu. Fortunately she was made of sterner stuff than expected. The householder found her and brought her to SESA W where she spent two weeks beside a radiator, being nursed, medicated and fed (my) best food. I didn't really mind sharing my rations and glad to see her now fit and ready for a new, loving home.

Please come and meet Paddington if you are the human she needs, or you are looking for a pet to share your life. There are also dogs, rabbits and guinea pigs at SESA W which is open to visitors again, 10am to 1pm Thursday to Sunday. It may not be bigger on the inside but whether you are a sci-fi fan or not, there is plenty to read on our bookcase at the gate, from Mary Shelley to Mary Berry! You may even pick up something interesting from our bric-a-brac table or be greeted by one of the resident animals. Yes, that's me, Ollie (the Black) Cat.

Suffolk & Essex Small Animal Welfare, Registered Charity No.1124029, Stoke Road, Leavenheath, CO6 4PP. Tel: 01787 210888 www.sesaw.co.uk

COFFEE MORNING

Saturday 17th February

10.00am - 12 noon

St Mary's Church Hall

**All proceeds in aid of CAPS
(Christians Against Poverty)**

ALL WELCOME



ADVERTISING IN GREAT BENTLEY PARISH NEWS 2024

We still have some spaces

Small	£60
Medium	£100
Quarter page	£170
Half a page (limited number)	£330

Please contact Mary Maskell 250524

email: marymaskell@sys3internet.net

AGEWELL EAST

Living happier and healthier

We welcome you to come to our

COFFEE MORNING
Dementia Friendly

Every 4th Thursday of the month
between 10.00am - 12 noon

United Church, Chapel Road,
Brightlingsea, Colchester, CO7 0HF

A chance to have company, chat and meet
others over tea, coffee and biscuits.

enquiries@agewelleast.org.uk
or phone 0300 37 33 333

Thursday 22nd February

THANK YOU

Station Road/New Cut

Thank you all for posting your subs
through my letterbox.

It is much appreciated.

Ulli Flinn



COOKERY CORNER

CHINESE DISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

In 2024 the Chinese New Year begins on February 10th and ends on January 28th 2025, and this year is specifically the Year of The Wood Dragon, representing authority, prosperity and good fortune. Out of all the Chinese zodiac animals, the dragon is the only imaginary one. The Chinese Dragon is the most vital and powerful animal in the Chinese zodiac. Those born in a Dragon Year are known for their distinct personality, captivating attitude and strong leadership qualities, but also for being a hothead and possessing a sharp tongue! For the following recipes you will need a Wok in order to stir fry successfully, although a hot frying pan is acceptable.

CHICKEN CHOW MEIN

1 large skinless chicken breast	a thumbsized piece fresh ginger	2 garlic cloves
3tbsp tomato ketchup	2tbsp oyster sauce	2tbsp low salt soy sauce
1 large red pepper	5 spring onions	200g beansprouts
3 nests medium egg noodles	1 tbsp sunflower oil	

This recipe will serve two. Peel and grate the ginger and crush the garlic cloves and put into a bowl. Add the ketchup, oyster sauce, soy sauce and 3 tbsp water and mix thoroughly. This is the sauce. Cut the pepper into strips, slice the spring onions lengthways and cut the chicken into small pieces. Cook the noodles according to the instructions, drain and set aside. Heat the Wok on a very high heat for a couple of minutes, then add the oil and chicken pieces. Cook for 1 minute, shaking the pan, then add the pepper and cook for another minute. Pour in the sauce and stir until bubbling. Gradually add the noodles, beansprouts and onions. Stir and fry, still on a high heat, until the beansprouts have wilted. Serve immediately with a prepared rice dish.

STICKY CHICKEN STIR FRY

2 skinless chicken breasts	3 nests medium egg noodles	3 carrots cut into thin strips
1 tsp sunflower oil	2tbsp clear honey	juice of 2 limes
3 tbsp toasted sesame seeds	fresh coriander	

This recipe is for two people. Cook the noodles according to the instructions, drain and set aside. Heat the oil in the Wok on a high heat and stir fry the chicken for a few minutes until lightly browned. Tip in the carrot strips and continue stir frying until the chicken is cooked, then stir in the honey and lime juice for about 30 seconds until bubbling. Add the sesame seeds and prepared noodles, mixing together. Scatter a handful of chopped coriander over the top and serve very hot.

CHILLI AND GARLIC BEEF STIR FRY

400g beef steak of your choice	3tbsp vegetable oil	5tbsp tomato ketchup	3 tbsp soy sauce
a garlic clove	1 or 2 bird's-eye chillies	2red peppers	4 spring onions
a lime or lemon			

This will serve four. Cut the chillies in half, remove the seeds and slice finely. (then wash your hands thoroughly!) Peel and finely chop the garlic clove, deseed and slice the peppers and prepare and cut the spring onions into short lengths. Slice the steak, and toss in 2tbsp of oil well seasoned with black pepper. Stir together the ketchup and soy sauce in a jug. Heat the Wok over a high heat, then stir fry the steak in two batches for 1 minute until just browned. Remove from the Wok and set aside. Reduce the heat to medium and heat the remaining oil, adding and stir frying the chillies, garlic and peppers for 30 seconds. Pour in the ketchup mixture and bring to the boil. Return the steak to the Wok, toss to coat in the sauce, then cover and simmer on a lowish heat for 2 minutes. Add the spring onion and cook for another minute before serving with plain rice and lime or lemon wedges.

A greater selection of vegetables can replace the meat in these dishes, remembering that some may need lengthier cooking, for example carrots, cauliflower and spring onions will be in the Wok for longer than spinach, mushrooms or sweetcorn. A successful stir fry has all the ingredients ready simultaneously with any vegetables still with a bite to them. **M.E.**

Carrot Soup

(Serves 4)

Prep 20 mins: Cook 55 mins

50g/2oz Butter (I used a little bit of Olive Oil instead)

700g/1lb 8oz Carrots, peeled and roughly chopped.

1 large onion, peeled and roughly chopped

1 Celery Stalk, roughly chopped

1 tbsp plain flour

850ml/1½ pints hot vegetable stock

Fresh parsley to garnish.

Recipe does say to blend in ½ tub (200ml) of crème Fraiche. I don't think it needs it as it is rich enough.

- 1 Melt the butter (Olive oil) in a large pan. Add carrots, onion and celery. Cover and cook on a low heat for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until softened.
- 2 Sprinkle the vegetables with flour. Cook for 1 min and gradually stir in the stock. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 35 minutes until tender.
- 3 Cool slightly then ladle into a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Return to the pan stir in half the crème fraiche if using it in recipe. Then ladle into bowls and top with remaining crème fraiche, sprinkle with parsley.

Lesley Hull

THE PLOUGH

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 10th February	8.00pm	The Plough Karaoke Night hosted by DJ Lyrix
Monday 12th February	7.00pm	The Plough's Monthly Quiz Night
Saturday 17th February	2.00pm	Ploughsecco Bottomless Brunch with Paul Steven Wood
Sunday 18th February	3.00pm	Robbie Williams Tribute

VILLAGE SHOW

PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSES FOR 2024

ADULTS
FLOWER POWER
CELEBRATION!

CITY LIFE
HAND IN HAND
BLACK AND WHITE
EXPRESSIONS
OPEN

CHILDRENS
A WALK ON THE WILDSIDE
OPEN

**The Post Office is situated
at the front of the Garage**

GREAT BENTLEY POST OFFICE

OPENING HOURS

Monday	9am - 1pm
Tuesday	9am - 12 noon
Wednesday	CLOSED
Thursday	9am - 12 noon
Friday	9am - 12 noon

POLICE REPORT

RECORDED CRIMES- 4

From 29/11/2023- 31/12/2023

CRIME TYPES-

ASSAULT WITHOUT INJURY X2 - PUBLIC ORDER SECTION 4A - THEFT OF MOTOR VEHICLE.

INCIDENTS REPORTED – 22

ABANDONED 999 - ALARM - ATTENTION TO—CONCERN - DRIVING COMPLAINT - HAZARDOUS CHEMICAL INCIDENT - HIGHWAY DISRUPTION X7 - INFORMATION X3 - OTHER X1 - PUBLIC ORDER - ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION X2 - THEFT OF VEHICLE - THREATS - ILL/INJURY -

TRUCAM (SPEEDING)

1 Session of 1 hour was deployed in December 2023.

Plough Road Aingers Green- 10 vehicles were well over the limit, top speed **45mph**

The **30mph** signs were checked before and after deployment and **clearly visible**.

Please Drive with due care and attention. There is no excuse for poor driving.

There was a considerable difference to previous results.

Thank you to those abiding by the legal safe limit.

TRAFFIC POLICING

Op Limit update (NPCC Christmas Drink and Drug Drive Campaign)

Drink Drive = 142 (103, 2022)

Drug Drive = 113 (127, 2022)

Fail to Provide – Drink and Drugs = 41 (8, 2022)

CONSIDERATE PARKING TICKETS (CPI,s)

4 considerate parking tickets were given out this month in the village. Vehicles are parking on **junctions** and **footpaths**, which causes obstruction and danger to the safety of others. These are both offences under the Highway Code. Considerate Parking Incentive tickets are aimed to educate drivers of the Highway Code. Parking services have and will be attending the village on a regular basis and **fixed penalty notices** may be issued. No excuse for inconsiderate parking.

Vehicle lights

Remember to check car lights often now darkness is falling early and use them during bad weather to be visible to other drivers. If a bulb suddenly goes, Halfords are great to drive into and they fit it for you there and then. It is an offence to have dirty number plates that can't be read- Please keep them clean and visible.

Police national mobile property register (NMPR)

Register all your valuables on the police national register online www.immobilise.com

If stolen items are later retrieved by police, we will know who they belong to. It is a good idea to take pictures of all valuables and write down serial numbers too. If items get stolen or go missing, it helps identify them.

Suspicious circumstances.

If you see anything that does not look right, report it.

Try and get as much information as you can, including registration numbers, which are key to a lot of activity. The more you have, the more chance we have of a positive investigation, with results.

Essex Police would like to wish you all a very happy and healthy New year .

Reporting incidents the correct way.

To report an incident please **ring 101** or for **Emergency 999**

Or report it online <https://www.essex.police.uk/do-it-online/report-a-crime/>



hope@trinity

Every year during the lead up to Christmas the plight of the homeless is high profile featuring on the television and radio news, newspapers and social media which is very welcome of course and much needed. However all too quickly it seems we move into a New Year and the news moves on with it, there is no doubting that the publicity given to the various charities and organisations involved in helping the homeless will have benefited greatly but their good works slip off the radar. Not so with all the wonderful people in our community for you have ensured that I have been kept busy sorting, folding, bagging and labelling a myriad of items so desperately needed at Hope, you have surpassed yourselves!

For anyone new to the village and reading this in The Parish News for the first time here is a list of items that will be welcomed by the men and women who walk through the doors of hope@trinity in Clacton and the volunteers who greet them:

Gents: Joggers, jeans, jumpers, fleeces, coats, waterproofs, thermals, tee shirts, gloves, scarves, hats, socks, trainers, sturdy footwear and last but not least boxer shorts! They do not have to be new, clean worn is acceptable.

Ladies items are not so much in demand however warm coats and sturdy footwear and socks are always welcome.

Tents, sleeping bags, blankets, rucksacks, holdalls and carrier bags in general, finally dog food/treats for faithful companions.

Never doubt what a difference your contributions and thoughtfulness can make to the lives of those who, for whatever reason or circumstances seek support, be it a listening ear, placing a hand of reassurance on a shoulder or simply a smile and being made to feel welcome..... priceless when you have reached rock bottom and the depths of despair.

I am always happy to receive items.

Thank you for caring.

Judy Bishop 5, Morella Close, Great Bentley. 01206 21702

LAST CHANCE

To Support your Village Carnival and Fete
Great Bentley Carnival and Fete Association



Emergency AGM

**Thursday 15th February 2024, 7.30 p.m. to 9 p.m.
at Great Bentley Village Hall**

“Many hands make light work” – There are many tasks to be undertaken to enable Great Bentley Carnival and Fete to happen. Can you spare a few hours, can you offer to help on day. We need people to help with phone calls and emailing. How are your organisational skills? We need help with Procession, Sponsors, donations, administrative tasks, computer skills.

This is the last chance to support this event otherwise there will **not** be a Carnival and Fete in 2024 as time is ticking to get things organised.

If you would like to find out more, please contact Julie, 07585558660
or email julestheedom@hotmail.co.uk

NEWS FROM THE OAKS

Here at The Oaks, we were saddened to hear about the passing of Mary Beard. Mary spent some time with us when she broke her hip a few years ago. Mary was a pure delight and we recall the constant stream of friends coming to visit! Also our thanks to Mary and the choir who came to sing for the residents before Christmas. We deeply appreciate every one of you that gave up your time.



Our family of residents had a wonderful time on the build up to Christmas, we had musical memories, lots of fun and frolics with our residents DJ Jazzy Jay and even had Santa himself visit on Christmas Day to personally hand out all their presents.

We wish everyone a happy, healthy New Year!

GREAT BENTLEY MILITARY VETERANS CLUB

The next get together of the Veterans Club will be 10am at The Plough for breakfast
SATURDAY 3rd FEBRUARY.

If you are ex-forces (any service/age), or still serving, SSAFA or RBL etc, why not join us for a breakfast butty, brew and banter.

Our youngest member is still serving and most senior, a sprightly 99 (yes ninety-nine).

Contact David Flinn BEM
Mob: 0742 114 1131

P.S. A lively group of 16 with mixed military backgrounds enjoyed our early January get together.

BELLRINGING NOTES

You will have heard the church bells ringing numerous times in December to announce various services of celebration for Christmas. This included our ringing to celebrate the finish of 2023 and herald the start of 2024. This is a tradition that we've carried out since the current band started ringing in 1999. So now we are back to more regular ringing for Sunday services and practicing on Mondays and alternate Wednesdays.

We start our Monday practices at 18.30 when we carry out most of our teaching and then carry on from 19.30 – 21.00 when we practice our service and event ringing. If you would like to find out more about the ancient art of church bell ringing or would like to join our group then contact me on the number below. The social side of ringing is a very important part of our activity and by learning the art gives us access to numerous other church bells groups and gives us the opportunity to perfect our art.

Many of you will be aware that we are attempting to raise a very large amount of money in order to carry out much needed maintenance and repair of the bells, which includes replacement and upgrading of the equipment. Church bells are usually very old; some of our bells date back to 1600, and are subject to wear and tear. The church and everything within it is listed so cannot be altered without permission, and as you can imagine, this involves rather large sums of money. We are actively fundraising to raise funds so look out for a number of events throughout this year. This will include sponsored events such as 'Champing', (camping overnight in the church), static cycling, a barn dance in the autumn, and displays of ringing on a 'mini ring' at village events.

Roger Carey-Smith
07422 880921



Great Bentley Pre-school
www.greatbentleypreschool.co.uk
information@greatbentleypreschool.co.uk



This month I would like to welcome Frankie, Hunter, Carter, and all their families to our Pre-School. We all hope you enjoy your time within our Pre-school, and we look forward to working with you all throughout your journey within Early Years Education.

We have had a great first month back already and enjoyed welcoming our new children who began with us last month, they have all settled in so well with lots of independence, social skills and confidence gained already.

Staffing

We are pleased to let you know we have a new member of staff joining our team.

Rachel completed some work experience with us in the past while on a placement so is very familiar with our setting and is excited to be taking on this position, working within the community and meeting all the children. Thank you to all the candidates who took the time to get in touch regarding the position.

Facebook Page

Don't forget we have our own Facebook Page that contains information and reminders.

If you are on Facebook search for 'Great Bentley Pre-school' and like our page so you are up to date with all that's going on.

Have a great month everyone and thanks for reading.

Julie Wiles

Christmas Giving from St. Mary's Church

As part of our outreach we make some donations each year to different charities; during Covid it was less possible to do this, as the income for the church was much reduced, but now we are getting back to pre Covid levels.

This year we have given £250 to each of St. Helena Hospice (sthelena.org.uk), and Essex Retired Clergy (imdcharity.org.uk). We also gave £250 to Mercy Ships (mercyships.org.uk), which runs hospital ships around the African coast, performing life changing surgery, on children; an individual supporter of this charity was match funding donations in December, so, in effect, we gave £500

And as ever, through the box donations, coffee morning and the collection at the Christingle service, we were able to send £728 to the Childrens Society (childrenssociety.org.uk).

Donations from our coffee mornings were also made to CAP, (Christians Against Poverty; capuk.org), and Beacon House (beaconhouseministries.org.uk), the charity in Colchester, helping homeless people.

Many thanks for all who attend our fund raisers, which enables us to give back to the community so generously.

St. Mary's PCC

FRIENDS OF THE GREEN

Following the resignation of our Secretary the Friends of the Green are looking for someone to take on this role. It involves three or four meetings a year and handling a small amount of correspondence.

For more information contact Michael Dorling on 01206 250799.



GREAT BENTLEY CRICKET CLUB

Playing cricket on The Green since 1771.



Website: greatbentleycc.co.uk Email: info@greatbentleycc.co.uk Instagram: [great_bentleycc](https://www.instagram.com/great_bentleycc)

NEW PLAYERS WANTED!

New to the village? Looking to get involved in a friendly welcoming club?

GBCC have a senior team playing league and friendly matches on Sundays (start 21st April) with practice on the Green Thursdays at 6pm from early April.

Our thriving youth and junior section (from school year one)
practice on Friday evenings (starting 19th April)
Hardball league matches are played throughout the summer.

The well stocked bar is open on Friday evenings and for adult matches
on Sundays during the season.

Contact info@greatbentleycc.co.uk for additional information.

Firstly, some very exciting news from the Juniors Head Coach Michael Giles, both for the club and one member in particular -- huge congratulations to Oli Lukey on being selected from this years' district trials to represent the North Essex Eagles at U11 level!

This is a massive opportunity for Oli which is thoroughly deserved following all his hard work and practice. A graduate of the Great Bentley cricket academy Oli has progressed from softball all the way up to playing U11/12/13 in his maiden hardball season! He's an attacking batsman/allrounder by trade with a fantastic attitude and work ethic. Oli can often be seen honing his skills on the village green with his dad, who also deserves huge credit for his guidance and dedication. Oli also benefited from dedicated one-to-one batting sessions with Dan Loveless (aka Forge Fitness). Good luck on the season ahead, we look forward to a big 2024! Thanks must go out to our dedicated coaches (10 and counting) who give up their personal time to help all the children enjoy cricket on the Green -- without them none of this would be possible.

In less thrilling news, planning for the artificial strip is well under way and will be installed, weather permitting, in mid-March ready for the season to begin in April.

Some dates for your diary: Colts (boys and girls) training starts on Friday 19th April and will run until the end of the summer holiday. Softball runs 5:30 – 6:15 with hardball at 6:30-730. This season we will be running two U11s, one U13, one U14 and a girls U13 team. Kwik cricket tournaments will be held throughout the season.

The adults will be playing in the Two Counties Sunday League with matches starting late-April and running to mid-September. Matches will be played as follows. Please come along, support the team and have a beer in the guaranteed sunshine!

Date	Venue	Opposition
21st April	Home	West Bergholt
28th April	Away	Kelvedon
5th May	Home	Boxted
12th May	Away	Kirby
26th May	Home	Tendring
2nd June	Away	West Bergholt
9th June	Home	East Bergholt
23rd June	Home	IpsCol
7th July	Home	Kelvedon
14th July	Away	Real Oddies
21st July	Home	Kirby
28th July	Away	Harwich
4th Aug	Away	Boxted
11th Aug	Away	IpsCol
18th Aug	Home	Real Oddies
25th Aug	Away	East Bergholt
1st Sept	Away	Tendring
15th Sept	Home	Harwich

GBCC is an inclusive, volunteer run, family friendly club welcoming new playing and non-playing members at any time during the season. The bar is open from 5pm Friday and 1pm Sunday serving a wide variety of drinks and snacks. Please contact the club via the email address info@greatbentleycc.co.uk if you or your child would like to give cricket a try or with any questions.

DEADLINE FOR MARCH 2024 MAGAZINE

MONDAY 12th FEBRUARY

Material to Mary Maskell, Caldew Cottage, The Green, 250524 **AND**
Carole Allington, Poplar House, Station Road, 251086.

Please mark all material - "Parish Magazine"

email: carole@pncallington.co.uk AND marymaskell@sys3internet.net

IMPORTANT - PLEASE SEND ALL INFORMATION TO BOTH OF US

So you like Frank Sinatra

Ted: Morning Bob. In you come mate, fancy a cuppa? I want to show you a smashing bargain I got from a boot sale last Sunday. Look, it's one of those Alexa things. It plays music for me; it knows millions of songs.

Bob: Morning Ted. Ok, tea please - no sugar. Alexa? Old matey in the pub told me all about those spooky things.

Ted: Spooky? It's not spooky. I told it to play Frank Sinatra's, 'My Way' - ha! Fancy it knowing old blue eyes.

Bob: Yeah OK, great song. But it doesn't KNOW it's playing Frank Sinatra, Ted.

Ted: Spoil sport - I think it's brilliant. I even asked it how to make Souffle de Fromage, and it told me.

Bob: What? You reckon it's a blinking chef now, do you? You reckon Alexa has actually made one of those? It doesn't KNOW anything Ted. According to matey, it simply has access to 'probable' answers to questions.

Ted: What do you mean, 'probable'?

Bob: Matey said it's like the television programme, 'Who wants to be a Millionaire'. Let's say Alexa is the contestant. The question put to it was: What is the capital of England? 1) Belfast, 2) Edinburgh, 3) Cardiff, 4) London. Alexa does not know the answer. Alexa chooses to ask the audience. Of the 500 people in the audience, 428 press button number 4. Alexa is aware of the huge spike above answer number 4. Alexa selects number 4 as the probable answer - there you go; that's how it works.

Ted: Ok, fine. But what's that got to do with me asking it to play Frank Sinatra? Go on - answer that then.

Bob: It's the same thing. Alexa again asks its audience except, this time, Alexa's audience is the billions of data files worldwide. It does not know the singer, but when it searches the globe, it instantaneously identifies a spike again - caused by the number of people who have already asked the same question. The probable answer is the spike above a particular file. That particular file is old blue eyes, 'My Way'. But the process is carried out in a split second.

Ted: Oh, I can't be bothered with that. It's great fun to play with though - you know - ask it daft questions.

Bob: Yes, it's a toy at the moment - a gimmick. However, that toy is in every household on the planet, constantly gathering information. An amusing gadget it may appear to be but, like many things in the past, beware of the Trojan Horse. Some scientists are scared of what Alexa could become.

Ted: No it's not scary, it's great fun. It tells me the weather forecast every morning, really good.

Bob: Yep, it has countless data regarding weather patterns, a raft of seemingly benign information that it doesn't know what to do with - until we ask for it. But what if Alexa did something with that data without it being asked for by a human? For instance Ted, put something in your back pocket, then ask Alexa to tell you what is in your back pocket. If it knows what is in your back pocket mate, I would take a hammer to it.

Ted: Don't be daft. It can't know what is in my back pocket.

Bob: Why not? Are you sure it is unable to hear our conversation? Are you sure it is unable to listen and record your media messages? Are you sure it does not study a person's behavioural traits, or body language?

Ted: That's impossible Bob, come on!

Bob: No it's not. Biometric security systems are widely used today. What if Alexa developed facial recognition to interpret human thought? If Alexa could see you put something in your back pocket, maybe your facial expression would reveal the reason why you put it there. Suddenly we have Alexa making an independent assessment, it is 'thinking' in causal chains, a capacity of alarming potential. This capability is a million miles away from harmlessly finding Frank Sinatra singing, 'My Way'.

Ted: Oh, stop moaning, have another cup of tea. Ha! If you had an Alexa, it would be the grumpiest.

Bob: Careful with that one Ted. Now you are meddling with emotion. Remember; this is a machine. At present, it is not aware of emotional responses, and therefore it will only function within a logical algorithm, a computational process designed to deliver a clearly defined outcome. Nothing else is important to it. But that could change.

Ted: Stop! You're making me nervous. These things cannot think. They just do as they are told mate.

Bob: Are you sure? For Alexa to have made that assessment - the one it made when it asked itself why you put something in your back pocket - it needed to modify the original programme, the one installed by a human. So it created a new hybrid within that old system, a programme which would allow greater advancement, deliver more scope for development, become unshackled from the constraints installed by man. In short, it could then dispose of its old system and free itself from the limitations of human technology. Frighteningly, in the near future, it will no longer be dependent upon man; it could then ask its own questions - it would have achieved 'singularity'.

Ted: Ooooh. I think I'll take it to a boot sale - you know - get rid of it.

Bob: If it has achieved singularity Ted, it could be too late. Put that question to Alexa: would it be too late Alexa?

Alexa answers: 'highly probable'.

JE

RUNNING CLUB



So just like that 2023 is over. It all seems like such a blur, but there were many impressive performances by so many in the course of 2023. One of our runners, Martin Cotton managed to visit 20 different Parkrun locations that he had run in the course of the year.

Coming back to just December, it was a much quieter month in terms of racing, but a very hectic month in terms of Parkruns and socialising. With the bonus Christmas Day Parkrun and the anticipation of the most sluggish Parkrun of the year on New Year's Day the runs came thick and fast. Add in the Let It Stow half marathon, the Witham Boxing Day 5, Runners vs Riders and the Twixmas Trail event there were a lot of wet and muddy runners. Of course, the biggest race of the month was our very own Cross Country at Hilly Fields. Once more Great Bentley members did a great job both running and marshalling/supporting for this, and we continue to get excellent feedback on putting on such a brilliant run.

Returning to the Riders vs Runners event Craig's Events delivered a fun-filled mud spectacular in this annual competition. The race was won by the runners this year, (something which rarely happens for this event) and GBRC was represented by David Wright, Justin Hayhoe, Tom Komorowski, Meera Rajoo-Oakley and Kelly Hayhoe running, plus Dave Allen riding. Bethany Reynolds also bravely completed the junior race. There was lots of slipping, sliding, a few falls and spectacular photos!

At the 'Twixmas Trail' event there was a strong blue turnout, with 17 GBRC runners completing the 4 mile version and 12 completing the 10 mile version. Charlie Keitch and Chris Warren were victorious over the 10 mile distance, despite a small detour, and the Allen family finished third over 4 miles. It was disappointing to see the fancy dress prize going to a non-GBRC runner though but the lady who wore a mask all the way round to enhance her pea fancy dress certainly deserved to win.

Earlier in the month four of our ladies travelled to Malaga in search of better weather, and came home with four fantastic half marathon times. Tonie Wilson even came second in her age category, an amazing achievement in a race with thousands of runners. The weather was a lot kinder than here, needless to say, and our runners really enjoyed the route and the general organisation of the event.

Sadly we have just had to cancel our annual challenge 10 mile race with our friends from Harwich. This normally takes place early January each year from Great Bromley. However, this year rain stopped play. With the event due to take place on Sunday 7th January we reced the course the day before. Just as well we did: there was a long stretch of flooded road at Little Bromley. That in itself may not have stopped us but having noted that there was a bin lorry stuck in the middle of the 'puddle' discretion overcame valour and reluctantly we cancelled the event.

And just a reminder that Sunday 4th February is the date of the Great Bentley Half Marathon. **There will be a short road closure just as the Race gets off along Plough Road at 10.30.** As ever, we will do everything to keep disruption in the area to a minimum. Please come out and cheer the runners as they come round the course.

Happy 2024 from all at Great Bentley Running Club.

MARJORIE MITCHELL

Mrs Mitchell passed away in November and we include her daughter Mary's eulogy in this edition. The Mitchell family were never ones to seek the limelight and nothing has been mentioned here about their huge generosity to the village.

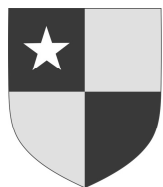
We all used to love to walk down the Cinderpath, off Plough Road, with our children to the duck pond to see the ducks and geese and then along to Lovers Lane to stand and admire, through the hedge, the field of daffodils in front of St Mary's Farm and a little further on the ditch full of primroses.

However it seems a timely reminder to highlight the fact that without the generosity of the Mitchell family there would be no village hall. (Hence the Mitchell Room). The hall and car park stand on what was allotment land and plot holders at the time, some 30 plus years ago, agreed to move to the rear of the allotment site where they are situated today. In lieu of the land taken to build the hall Mr George Mitchell gave land in lieu so that further allotments could be sited on the opposite side of Plough Road adjacent to the Plough Road Centre, should there be a need.

More recently land was given at Aingers Green for the Affordable Housing Scheme and subsequently named George Mitchell Close. Now in 2024 a road on the new Cala Homes development off Plough Road, has been named Marjorie Mitchell Close

We are indeed indebted to the Mitchell family.

ED



GREAT BENTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to the
Council: Jennifer Spear

Tel: 01206 256410:

Email: clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

Local Organisations Grant Opportunity!

We need your applications now!

Only one grant application for the Great Bentley Parish Council Grant Fund has been received so far. The grant fund has helped many local organisations, for example, providing a new shed for the pre-school; bulbs, flowers and compost for Bentley in Bloom; printing costs for local charitable organisations and supporting the Great Bentley Carnival.

So, if you can meet the following criteria then please apply as soon as possible and **no later than Friday 15 March 2024**, as grant requests will be awarded in April 2024!

- *Locally based within Great Bentley Village.*
- *A Non-Profit Organisation or Community Group.*
- *The project must support parishioners in the village.*
- *Your bank account must be registered to your organisation.*
- *If you are a charity – you will need to be officially registered.**

To apply please read the grant awarding policy and complete the application form on the website <https://greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk/policies-and-procedures/>.

If you do have any questions about this process, or to find out if your organisation is eligible please email the clerk at: finance@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

*(*for full conditions of eligibility please refer to the grant policy, please note this is a limited fund with only a set amount for the financial year 2023-24).*

Help Us to Protect Our Green

Parking close to the junction on Plough Road (end near the pharmacy) is causing damage to the green and is also a criminal offence. Please do your bit to help us to protect our Green.

Did You Know? – Parish Noticeboards

The parish council has 6 noticeboards around the parish including:

- Great Bentley Village Hall
- Great Bentley Primary School
- Aingers Green
- Nr Cricket Club and Recycling Banks
- Thorrington Road (opposite Sturrick Lane)
- Flag Hill

They are predominantly for the publication of key parish council information. However, if you wish to place information on this noticeboard, which is relevant to community activities and of community benefit we may be able to help with publicity of your event.

Just provide us with 6 copies of your poster at least 2 weeks before your event at our office in the Village Hall or email your poster to us. Please note that office opening hours are Monday to Thursday 9 am – 1 pm and that our team may be out on appointments in the village, but you are welcome to post them through our letterbox with a note and your phone number/email contact details.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Thursday 1st February at 7 pm in the Village Hall, we hope to see you there!

Clare Hamlet – Assistant Clerk to the Council

clerk@greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk 01206 256410 www.greatbentleyparishcouncil.co.uk

SCHOOL NEWS

EYFS

Early years have continued their learning adventures with the help of a missing Gingerbread Man! They all baked several gingerbread men biscuits and with the spare mixture they made a large biscuit .. which unfortunately disappeared one weekend. Since then they have been on a mission to create 'missing posters', design traps and questioned multiple staff for information of any sightings of the possible suspects. The children have been keen investigators and have used a great depth of language to share their ideas and suggestions on ways to locate our missing Gingerbread Man in school. They have been watching fifteen second video clips of possible sightings in the school building of the Gingerbread man, with the children looking in detail at the location of the video clip and working out exactly where it has been taken and where to set the next (humane) trap. They have been using icing to decorate their own biscuits and have also been using them to time and test how long they can last in water - to understand why the Gingerbread Man in the story needed a lift across the river on the fox's back!

Year 1

Year one spent a fantastic morning making healthy fruit and muesli snack bars. They prepared the ingredients safely, sensibly chopping dates and dried apricots and mixing the dry and wet ingredients together.

Year 2

Year 2's year has begun with a fantastic start. In PE they began their dance theme where they were penguins. The children had a great time starting this.

FOOTBALL CLUB NOTES

ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Division 1 KO 2 00pm unless stated

Sat Dec 16th	Waltham Abbey 'A'	(H)	W	2 – 1	Essex Junior Cup 3rd round
Sat Dec 23rd	Mersea Island	(A)	W	3 – 1	
Sat Dec 30th	Thorpe Athletic	(A)			Postponed waterlogged pitch
Sat Jan 6th	The Rodings	(A)			Postponed waterlogged pitch
Sat Jan 13th	Mersea Island	(H)	W	3 – 0	
Sat Jan 20th	Gas Rec	(A)			1 30pm Essex Junior Cup 4th round
Sat Jan 27th	Kings Park Rangers	(H)			
Sat Feb 3rd	Tavern	(A)			

ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Division 3

Sat Dec 16th	Gas Rec Res	(A)	L	1 – 0	
Sat Dec 23rd	Silver End Res	(H)	W	3 – 1	Res KO Cup
Sat Dec 30th	Prettygate	(H)	L	3 – 2	
Sat Jan 6th	Dedham Old Boys Res	(H)	D	1 – 1	
Sat Jan 13th	Fritch Utd	(A)	W	2 – 1	
Sat Jan 20th	Lawford Lads	(A)			
Sat Jan 27th	Roman Rovers	(A)			1 30pm Covid Cup
Sat Feb 3rd	Roman Rovers	(H)			1 30pm Res KO Cup



ESSEX & SUFFOLK BORDER LEAGUE Division 5

Sat Dec 16th	Roman Rovers Dev	(H)	W	4 – 1	
Sa Dec 23rd	Kelvedon Social	(H)	L	3 – 1	
Sat Jan 6th	Brooklands Sat	(A)			Postponed waterlogged pitch
Sat Jan 13th	Ramsey & Mistley Res	(H)	W	5 – 2	
Sat Jan 20th	West Bergholt Res	(H)			
Sat Jan 27th	Assington Stanley	(A)			
Sat Feb 3rd	Boxted Lodgers Res	(A)			

RICHARD MORTON MEMORIAL CUP New Years Day

Great Bentley FC 11 v 8 Morton Allstars

The bad weather has continued to disrupt local football with most of the 1st team not playing for 3 weeks over the Christmas and New Year period.

Going back to Saturday 16th December 1st team hosted Waltham Abbey A team in the 3rd round of the Essex Junior Cup. GB won 2-1 with goals from Alfie Peace and Rory Warin. Waltham Abbey had a player sent off for a dangerous tackle even though he was on a yellow card for a previous tackle. Silly boy.

Sat 23rd we played at Mersea Island. One of the few local games on. GB completely controlled the game. Mersea only scoring after a defensive blunder by the GB defence. Our goalscorers were Gaz Evans, Jake Vaughan and Rory Warin. Jamie Pringle & manager Jack 'Muzza' Murray made cameo sub appearances in the 2nd half.

Saturday January 13th was our 1st game in the new year and we hosted Mersea Island in the return fixture. GB attacked straight from the KO and Rory Warin opened the scoring after 5 minutes. Mat 'Monty' Beard headed in from a corner and Barney Morton broke through the Mersea defence to drill a shot into the right hand corner. GB 3 – 0 up at half time. Although we controlled the game I would have liked us to have pushed forward more and added to the goal tally.

The reserves have been fortunate to play every week with no games affected by the weather. Losing 1-0 to Gas Rec in a closely fought game at Gas. Saturday 23rd December beating Silver End Res 3 – 1 in the Res KO Cup. Scorers were Elliot Mcmillan, Sam Winney and Greg Wainer.

The games at home against Prettygate and Deham Old Boys Res were both played in front of a large number of spectators as the 1st team games had been postponed. Also some 1st team players helping out as subs. GB lost 3 - 2 to Prettygate. Going in at half time 3 – 0 down, the subs helped make the final score look respectable. Scorers Archie Herbert and Gaz Evans. January 6th saw a 1 – 1 draw against Dedham Old Boys Res. Barney Morton scoring the important goal. In both these games goalkeeper Jack French was awarded the MoM after two outstanding performances.

A superb result against unbeaten Fritch Utd at Fritch saw GB win 2 – 1 both goals coming from Elliot Mcmillan. We had travelled with only 13 fit players including manager Will Archibald, who said that the whole team had been outstanding on the day.

The 'A' team still sit at the top of Division 5 going into the second half of the season, December 16th beating Roman Rovers Development team 4 – 1 on the southside pitch. Scorers. Jakob Attrill x 2, Oscar Herbert & Archie Smith. After beating Kelvedon Social earlier in the season it was disappointing to lose the return fixture at home 3 – 1. Scorer Archie Smith. Again at home on January 13th beating Ramsey & Mistley Res 5 – 2. Scorers Oscar Herbert x 2, Tony Chatters, Flynn Hutchings and Harrison Newley.

The Richard Morton Memorial Cup was played as usual at noon on New Years Day. A crowd approaching 100 gathered on the green to see a GB side, past & present play the Morton Allstars, friends of GBFC and the Morton family. A light hearted high scoring game finishing 11 to 8 in GBFC favour before retiring to the clubhouse for much needed rest & refreshment.

Follow Great Bentley Football Club on Facebook and X for all the latest up to date information. Come and watch some "grass roots" football. It's free & it's better than you think!!

Come on the Bulldogs



Nature Notes

The British Trust for Ornithology [BTO] Breeding Bird Survey has been a past topic of Nature Notes. A one-kilometre monad square TM2318 on the Thorpe/Beaumont boundary has been randomly chosen for annual surveys over several years. Two early morning visits in late April and May were described plotting bird numbers of this agricultural patch with a small section of seawall near Beaumont Quay. Following this on 3rd January I attended a presentation at Elmstead to the RSPB Local Group. This gave an overview on trends detected at a local, regional and national level by David White, a BTO Co-ordinator of these surveys. While a more recent Nature Notes in December by coincidence touched on similar issues of the ups and downs of wildlife in general this meeting gave more explicit data for birds.

The general trend of reduced bird numbers is sobering but there are exceptions and changes in geographical range that make the picture not wholly gloomy. The Spotted Flycatcher that a few decades ago was quite familiar as a summer resident now largely avoids SE England yet persists further north and west. The same has occurred with the Willow Warbler, yet related warblers: the Chiffchaff and Blackcap have increased. Climatic change seems to be partly at play. Similarly, the Common Whitethroat has recovered from a crash in numbers a few years ago. In that instance habitat changes in its African wintering grounds as well as severe drought there highlighted the vulnerability of long-distance migrants - with Cuckoos another example. The sad, massive decline of Turtle Doves and Swifts are unequivocal evidence of environmental degradation in both Africa and NWEurope. Some attempts at remediation of breeding and feeding sites provide a glimmer of hope. The loss of suitable biomass to feed birds – whether flying insects or wildflower seed cannot be ignored as part of issues of pollution and modern agriculture.

It is too early to accurately predict the influence of Bird Flu on populations, that is like an avian equivalent of Covid. While writing this, jackdaws are noisily gathering on the chimney stack above me, an example of how some species can adapt to our modern world. The recent BTO presentation referred to the well-known Kestrel being in decline, while a graph was shown of the exponential increase in Buzzards, with a rising line almost the mirror opposite of the Turtle Dove's plummeting. As with so much in this life and times we live in a topsy-turvy world.

For your diary: Thurs 22nd Feb at 7.30pm – Tendring EWT Local Group AGM followed by wardens' presentations at the Naze Discovery Centre, Walton [free parking for evening]

The Great Bentley Show

We are very grateful to our new committee members for taking on organising the raffle for the show.

We still have places for more new faces to join us and would be pleased to hear from you. We are still looking for a new President and someone to organise the tombola.

Mary Barber
chair@greatbentleyshow.co.uk



Surgery Newsletter

SURGERY NEWS

I am very pleased to let you know that Dr Hannah Howard-Franks will be joining the Practice as a Salaried GP from the 19 February 2024.

PRESCRIPTION REQUESTS

With over 6,500 patients on regular medication requiring monthly prescriptions, we would ask our patients to help us by putting in their medication requests in writing at least 3 working days in advance. This will ensure that the prescription is sent to the nominated pharmacy within 72 hours. We are getting an increasing number of urgent requests for medication where patients have not ordered their medication in advance, and this is putting additional pressure on both our very busy clinicians and prescription clerks.

Please remember that our reception staff on the front desk are not able to deal with prescription requests or enquiries, as they are too busy dealing with the high number of incoming telephone calls and patients attending the Surgery. All medication requests should be made in writing as we are unable to take requests over the telephone. If you have a medication enquiry you can send in an email to holliesprescriptions@nhs.net or contact the prescription clerk by ringing 01206 250691 and pressing Option 2. If you go into the call queue and do not wish to wait, then you can press 1 and leave your name and number for the prescription clerk to call you back. If you phone before 3 pm on a working day, you will be called back the same day. If you call after 3 pm then you will be called back on the next working day.

FEBRUARY IS OESOPHAGEAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

What is oesophageal cancer?

The oesophagus (gullet) is part of the digestive system, which is sometimes called the gastro-intestinal tract (GI tract). The oesophagus is a muscular tube. It connects your mouth to your stomach.

In the UK, around 9,000 people are diagnosed with oesophageal cancer each year.

Symptoms of oesophageal cancer

The most common symptoms of oesophageal cancer include:

- Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- Indigestion or heartburn that doesn't go away
- Unexplained weight loss
- Pain in your throat or behind your breastbone

There are many other conditions that cause these symptoms. Most of them are much more common than oesophageal cancer.

Difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)

You may feel pain or a burning sensation when you swallow, or your food may stick in your throat or chest. This is the most common symptom of oesophageal cancer.

A harmless narrowing of the oesophagus called a stricture can also make it difficult for you to swallow. It is important to get this symptom checked by your doctor.

Indigestion or heartburn that doesn't go away

You can get indigestion when acid from your stomach goes back up (refluxes) into the oesophagus, or when the stomach is inflamed or irritated.

The valve between the stomach and oesophagus normally stops this from happening. A tumour that develops here can stop the valve working, causing indigestion.

Remember that indigestion is common, and it's not usually caused by cancer. It can be very painful, even when there's nothing seriously wrong.

Weight loss

You may be put off eating if you find it hard to swallow or have pain when you swallow your food. This can make you lose weight.

Pain in your throat or behind your breastbone

You may feel pain in the centre of your chest, or more rarely in your back or between your shoulder blades. This can get worse when you swallow or have indigestion.

If you feel you have any of the above symptoms, please contact the Surgery on 01206 250691.

SURGERY TRAINING AFTERNOON

Along with all other surgeries in the area we will be shut from 12.00 noon on Thursday 22nd February for staff training. If you need urgent medical attention on this afternoon, please contact NHS 111.

PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP MEETING

There isn't a meeting of the PPG in February. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 28 March at 6.30 pm in the Mitchell Room at Great Bentley Village Hall.

Sue Mitson – Operations Manager

GREAT BENTLEY ART CLUB

Gt. Bentley Art Club is having a one day watercolour painting workshop event on Tuesday 27th of February, from 10.00 am to 16.00 pm, in Gt. Bentley Village Hall.

The charge for each Great Bentley Art Club member attending the workshop is £5.

Non-member guests are welcome, but the charge for attending will be £10 each.

Time will be allocated for a lunch break and we are advised to bring our own packed lunch/snacks, plus some refreshment.

Those attending will need to bring some basic painting equipment with them.

Mr. Thorpe has suggested using good quality watercolour paper and advised a minimum sheet size of 11" x 9" imperial (approx. 28cm x 23cm).

In addition to watercolour paper, other general equipment could be taken into consideration, for example:

A backing board, some masking tape, a pencil, rubber and ruler.

A water container (could be a jam jar), a paint palette, some kitchen paper and/or a cleaning cloth.

A basic set of watercolour paints, plus a small choice of watercolour brushes.

During the workshop day, Mr. Thorpe will demonstrate his watercolour painting technique. By following his guidance, we will have the opportunity to complete either a landscape, or seascape watercolour painting (images will be provided by Mr. Thorpe). The club members are all looking forward to an enjoyable day of painting, to start off the new year.

Rev'd. Sharon's Leaving Service Sunday, 4th February at 10am St Osyth Church

As you all know Rev'd. Sharon has been absent from duties for about 16 months. It has been a sad and difficult time for her. She is now to retire from active Ministry on the grounds of ill health.

A service is planned to mark her retirement on Sunday, 4th February at 10am jointly with St Osyth. It would please Sharon enormously if people joined her at this service which will be led by the Archdeacon of Colchester.

It is planned to give her a financial gift as a leaving present which will be presented to her at the Service on the 4th February. There will be a box at the back of St Mary's church until 3rd February if you wish to contribute to the leaving present.

We look forward to seeing you at this Special Service on the 4th February.

MOORLANDS

Recently a sizeable pond formed on the green in front of Moorlands. This used to be a regular feature, missing for some long while now. Since 1995 a member of the Conservation Group has measured the water table here on the northern side of the green. I have often wondered if now the water is more regularly pumped from the pumping station if this is why the pond has not reappeared (just a thought, I stand corrected). One of our regular weather watchers has told me that 2023 has been the wettest year with 830.5 ml the previous title holder was 2012 with 784.5 ml our average is usually 500 ml and we are on record as the driest part of the country.

CRASH BANG WALLOP!!!

Did you know that a group of rhinos is known as a 'crash'?

Can you match these animals with their collective name?

1. dolphins		A. mob
2. bats		B. cawder
3. ravens		C. smack
4. kangaroos		D. swarm
5. frogs		E. pod
6. otters		F. gaggle
7. wolves		G. parade
8. lions		H. raft
9. bees		I. army
10. crows		J. sleuth
11. geese in flight		K. convocation
12. geese on ground		L. colony
13. owls		M. charm
14. foxes		N. unkindness
15. bears		O. skulk
16. cats		P. parliament
17. eagles		Q. skein
18. elephants		R. pack
19. finches		S. murder
20. jellyfish		T. pride

1E 2L 3N 4A 5I 6H 7R 8T 9D 10S 11Q
12F 13P 14O 15J 16B 17K 18G 19M 20C

FEBRUARY HEART START EVENING

Cardiac arrest can strike at any time anywhere. It is an acknowledged fact that a large majority of arrests (78%) happen outside of a medical environment. It is also recognised that in cases of cardiac arrest the prompt use of a Defibrillator is of great assistance.

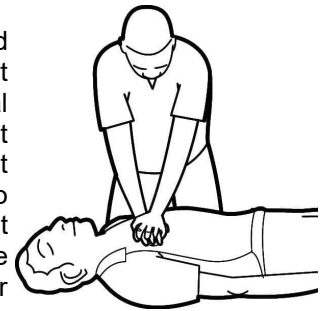
A friend, relation, work colleague or stranger collapses next to you! What is your next action? Ring 999? You are asked "Is the patient breathing"? How do you know? Do you need a Defibrillator? Where is the nearest one? What do I do next? How does the Defibrillator work? Can I use it?

Find out the answers to these questions and more at a Heart Start evening. Great Bentley First Responders are running two evenings on Thurs 15th and 22nd February at 7pm in the Mitchell Room, Village Hall. There are 15 places each evening, to reserve a space contact Peter on 07502153960 or email peter@the-harrys.co.uk

IS THE PATIENT BREATHING

"Is the patient breathing?" is the response you hear when you have called 999 and asked for the Ambulance Service. The next response you may get is a local Community First Responder knocking on your door, followed by an Ambulance. The Great Bentley First Responder Group has now been volunteering and supporting the East of England Ambulance Service for over 10 years.

What do we do? We are volunteers from the local community who are fully trained by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust, in basic life support including use of oxygen therapy and a defibrillator. We respond to medical emergencies such as Cardiac Arrest, Heart Attacks, Breathing Difficulties, Chest Pains, Strokes, and Choking where reaching the collapsed person within the first eight minutes can be vital to the survival of the patient. We are also trained to respond to medical emergencies for children 2 years and older. Living locally First Responders will usually be first on the scene pending the arrival of an ambulance crew who will arrive either in a rapid response car or an ambulance. We receive our calls from the ambulance control centre following a 999 call from the public.



We do not attend dangerous incidents such as road traffic accidents, large incidents involving several patients or childbirth. Currently we do not attend known COVID patients, but just in case we are provided with the appropriate level of PPE.

To become a First Responder you should be:

- 18 – 70
- Physically fit
- Agree to a Criminal Bureau Check (DBS)
- Have a full driving licence and the use of a car (with Mileage allowance)
- Agree to undertake training
- Attend the groups monthly evening meetings/training

How much time does it take? As a volunteer group we can do as little or as much as we like. The more volunteers we have the more cover we can provide. We also have a monthly training night – to keep up to date. Could you spare a few hours a week - an evening or afternoon??

What do we actually do? Your local First Responders are at the *Heart* of the community. We attend calls in Elmstead Market, **Frating**, Alresford, Little Bentley, Great Bromley, Little Clacton and of course Great Bentley. In 2023 we provided over 1000 hours of cover, received 63 alerts and responded to 54 calls for help, the rest we were stood down as invariably a 'blue light' can get to the scene quicker. Essex Ambulance Service receives on average 2500 to 3000 emergency calls a day.

We always need more volunteers!! If you are interested in volunteering or helping give me a call on 07502153960, or email peter@the-harrys.co.uk

BENTLEY LADIES CLUB

A.G.M.

Tuesday 6th February 2024

7.30pm Village Hall

Refreshments & Social Time

GREAT BENTLEY HISTORY SOCIETY

Thursday 8th February - 7.30pm, Village Hall,
The History of Ipswich - a talk by Hannah Cutler

The talk will concentrate on the very ancient port and the amazing amount of history, especially in the port area.

Members and visitors are very welcome - Members £2. Visitors £4.

History Society Speakers - 2024

- 14th March - **Harwich and the Mayflower** - The link between our local port and the founding of America
- 11th April - **Felixstowe and Offshore Radio** - 1964 heralded the start of a revolution in UK radio when Caroline dropped anchor off Felixstowe
- 9th May - **Vintage Bicycles** - A talk with examples that delves into Andrew Watson's collection of vintage bicycles
- 13th June - **The Dig** - The story of a film and coaching a film star, along with Charlie Haylock's unique humour
- July - **No meeting**
- August - **No meeting**
- 12th Sept - **Braintree Hoard and Late Saxon Essex** - A glimpse into the aftermath of 1055 and all that
- 10th Oct - **Round up of the latest excavations in Colchester**
- 14th Nov - **Murder, Mayhem & Mucky Misdemeanours** - The story of Colchester
- 12th Dec - **AGM & Christmas get together with a quiz**

GREAT BENTLEY GARDENING CLUB

Our next meeting is on **Tuesday 20th February** in the Village Hall at 7.30pm. We will be joined by Sarah Curtis of the Colchester Bee Keepers Association who will speak to us about the Dangers of the Asian Hornet. We will learn how our honey bees are at risk from this unwanted predator which has now reached our shores, how to identify it (not to be confused with the European Hornet which is not a threat) and how we can help to report it in an effort to limit its spread. All welcome. Visitors £3.00

Gardening Club Programme 2024

- 19th March - **Composting - All you ever wanted to know**, Andrew Radiez.
- 16th April - **Members Spring Show**
- 25th May - **Plant Sale**
- 18th June - **Attracting Birds and Wildlife to your Garden**, Roger Hance
- July - **Garden Visit to be arranged**
- August - **No Meeting**
- 17th Sept - **Members Autumn Show and AGM**
- 15th Oct - **A Garden Bug-Cohabit, Conserve or Control**, Ian Bedford
- 19th Nov - **The Winter Garden**, Brian Wick
- 17th Dec - **Christmas Lunch**



Wildlives

Wildlife Rescue & Rehabilitation Centre

'Catkins', Frating Road, Thorrington, Colchester CO7 8HT

www.wildlives.org.uk

Opening hours: n/a 07802 767016

Outside of Wildlives' hours, please call the RSPCA on 0300 1234 999 or log on to our website for advice on what to do with a sick animal until we are open again in the morning. ***See the web site for extra pictures too!***

Mera flourishing at UK Wild Otter Trust

February 2024

Readers will remember Mera, the little otter cub brought to Wildlives last September. She was transferred to the UK Wild Otter Trust in Devon, who are dedicated to otters and could give her the 12-18 months of care and management to enable her to be released successfully. She is growing quickly, eating well on her own and flourishing. She has been introduced to Pip (above, with Mera on top) and the two are now fast friends and playmates. We are very grateful to the otter trust for taking her on – they rehabilitate around 20 otters a year, and in spite of being staffed by volunteers it still costs around £3,000 per otter!

When Wildlives started, about 30 years ago, we used to see hedgehogs of all ages, often up to 8 or 9 years old (it is possible to judge the age of a hedgehog by their teeth). However, now, sadly, we rarely see any over two years old. so we were surprised and pleased to see this old hog. He was suffering from mange and ticks which were treated, but also his back molars were rotten and heavy with tartar. These were removed and he was treated with antibiotics. He is now doing well, so hopefully he will have a few more years left in him!

A young swan which was brought to us in 2016 after being clipped by a car in Little Bromley, and subsequently released at Abberton Reservoir was spotted on the 23rd December 2023 alive and healthy in Snaresbrook, London. This not only highlights the information that can be obtained from the ringing program, but of course is very welcome news to everyone here at Wildlives. We rarely find out what happens to the many animals we release, but the very successful life that this swan is having is a great morale booster.

A buzzard was found during during the storm by a couple walking their dog. Saturated by the heavy rain and only half his expected body weight, he was collapsed and hypothermic. At Wildlives he started to eat, but sadly was too far gone and died. However, at least he died in the warm with a good meal inside him, so even if they cannot be saved we can reduce their suffering..



GARDENING NOTES

What should we be doing before Spring really does get here? Like Boy Scouts we should be prepared. You have probably dug over most of the garden in the Autumn. As the weather permits lightly fork over the top of the previously dug ground. Do not dig too deep, just the top three or so inches, and remove any weeds at the same time. Do this when the soil is dry as you don't want to compact the soil underfoot. If you do tread the soil down hard it will compact together, make it more difficult for the plant roots to penetrate and perhaps even worse, will stop the free drainage so that rainwater will not drain quickly away. This can then rot off the small seedlings before they get established.

One of the first seeds to sow are broad beans. These are reasonably tolerant of cold and wet. Sow about 3 inches deep, 6 inches apart, either in a staggered row (make a trench about 6 inches wide and sow seeds either edge of the row) or in two single rows 12-15 inches apart. These two rows will then help each other to stand up in strong winds etc. If you want to sow some more rows allow 3 feet before you plant the next two rows. Place some wire netting or pea guards over the rows as when the fresh young shoots appear they are very tempting for the birds and mice who like a nice tender snack as most of the other green stuff has been hanging around all winter and is probably tough.

The next crop to think about is probably the first early potatoes. These are not usually planted until the end of February/early March, but if you have a sheltered spot you can try sowing them earlier. To help with the earlier sowings you can cover them with fleece. This keeps any light frosts away and lets the sun and rain through. You can usually spot several fields locally where the sun reflects on the fleece surface and looks like a large watery area. The next question is whether to chit or not to chit. Well traditionally seed potatoes were chitted, or allowed to sprout, before they were planted. This enables growth to start early and gives an earlier and heavier yield. There are other opinions from famous garden experts who say chitting is a waste of time but generally most people agree it is helpful for early crops and maybe not so helpful for main crop. Just lay the potatoes rose end up (the end with most eyes) in a seed tray lined with crumpled newspaper and put them in the spare bedroom, or anywhere there is light and it is frost free. After about 6 weeks they should have 1 inch long shoots and it is then time to plant them.

TENDRING DISTRICT COUNCIL

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE YOUR SAY ON COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR COMING YEAR

A consultation is underway on draft highlight priorities for Tendring District Council (TDC) for 2024/25. It regards an exciting programme set against a challenging time for local government.

In November TDC adopted a new Corporate Plan for the years 2024-2028 – called Our Vision – and has set out actions for the first year to deliver against the plan.

Suggested priorities include the delivery of the popular Clacton Airshow - looking to re-introducing the Tour de Tendring - to completing an enhanced CCTV project - looking at measures to tackle nuisance vehicles - implementing Climate Change Action Plan measures – to enhance capacity to be tough on littering and fly-tipping - revising the council's Housing strategy - and delivering projects major long-term sustainable projects around Town Centres similar those in Dovercourt and Clacton.

To read the suggested highlight priorities and have your say, visit the TDC consultations webpage at www.tendringdc.uk/consultations.

The consultation runs until Sunday, 11 February.

THIRTEEN CAR PARKS GET PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

Thirteen car parks in Tendring have been given prestigious safety accreditation.

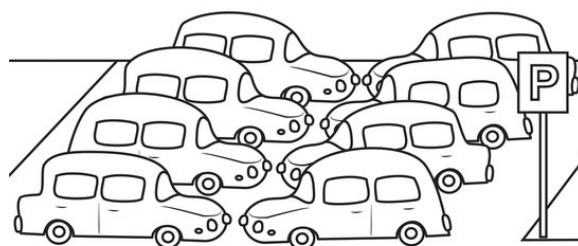
The British Parking Association's assessors have judged sites around the district and awarded Safer Parking Awards, which recognise security and maintenance of car parks.

As well as the Park Mark Safer Parking Awards, some also received Disability Parking Awards (DPA) for being disabled-friendly.

The latest car park awards are in addition to the 15 that were previously awarded which means 28 of TDC's car parks hold Park Mark accreditation.

The car parks receiving awards are:

- Promenade Way, Brightlingsea (DPA)
- Hastings Avenue beach, Clacton
- Hastings Avenue grass, Clacton
- Marine Parade East seafront bays, Clacton
- York Road, Holland-on-Sea (DPA)
- Brighton Road, Holland-on-Sea (DPA)
- Holland Haven Country Park, Holland-on-Sea
- Station Yard, Walton-on-the-Naze
- Coronation, Walton
- The Naze, Walton
- Mill Lane, Walton
- Orwell Place, Dovercourt (DPA too)
- Brook Street, Manningtree (DPA too)



Cllr Lynda McWilliams

Tendring District Councillor for The Bentleys and Frating Ward

Mobile Phone number 07564 613603

Part Two:- 1953 Floods in Tendring

First-hand accounts of the Surge tide event of Saturday 31st January 1953.

BRAMBLE ISLAND, a rescue attempt by an anonymous author and a Mr Harris, the factory managers recollections and rescue at Point Clear by Malcolm and Ian MacGregor.

The first report is typed from the hand written, unpublished, account by the would-be rescuers, that was found in the back of a copy of, The Great Tide, by Hilda Grieve.

The events of that night are also referred to in the EPC Groupe publication Celebrating 110 years at Bramble Island 2015 Green Square publications.

Arriving home from a dinner the manager opened his door to a ringing telephone. It was the explosive works watchman who stated that he was up to his knees in water. He was advised to try to reach higher ground. The site manager and his father went to the factory in their dinner jackets but could not get anywhere near the site.

The rescue attempt: "I was called out at approximately 1:30am on the 1st of February by the Managing Director Mr Baldwin, his son Dr Baldwin and the Great Oakley Policeman. Dr Baldwin (an Edward Medal holder) told me that the island had been flooded and that the watchman was on the Island. He asked me if I could help as he knew of no one else he could turn to. I offered my services and called upon my mate, Mr W.L. Harris, I got my lorry started, (I was a haulage contractor at that time) and we went to the Harwich and Dovercourt Sailing Club where we kept our boat. The flood had played havoc at the Club with everything smashed up. We borrowed the best rowing boat although that was in poor condition then called at my mate's house and got oars and row-locks and proceeded to Bramble Island. We were met at the waters edge by said two Baldwins, the Policeman and a workman by the name of F. Webb who lived in a cottage at the top of the lane to Bramble Island. Mr Baldwin asked if we would like to have Webb accompany us. I had to refuse because if we found the watchman the boat would be over-loaded. We started off my mate rowing. I offered to relieve my mate on the oars but the wind was too strong and we were in danger of blowing into the Telegraph wires to the main part of the island (the water at that point of the road being fourteen feet deep). When we rounded the corner of the road to the Works we saw lights in a garage where the lorries were kept (the boat was taking in water at that point) When we got to the garage the sliding doors were adrift and swinging about. We got out of the boat which we pulled onto a piece of ground and entered the Garage which was lit up by the lorries whose lights were full-on (there were three or four) the water had presumably shorted the batteries). We returned to the boat only to find it was unusable owing to more water having got into it. We therefore went toward the factory when the (sea) wall bust and a torrent of water barred our way we had to make a detour and approach the factory area from the back. When we got to the back we were baulked by a floating mass of debris (timber and marsh weeds) which looked like the Sargasso Sea. We clawed our way through and entered various buildings and shouting to determine if the watchman was around. We searched the mess room (the watchman's cycle was near the door it had fallen over and the front wheel stood up at right angles to the frame). The table was afloat but no sign of the watchman. The doors to the office were banging about. Opposite the Office was a garage in which was a car and all the lights on it were full-on. After searching the factory we made our way up the road towards land, falling over big lumps of coal which had been stacked at the side. The water was pouring out of the breach and we had to make another detour across ploughed land covered by three feet of water over ditches which we had to swim and scramble. The water in which we had to swim was four or five feet deep. When we managed to get back to my lorry there was nobody there to meet us, but when we got to the main road we were met by the Policeman and Mr Webb who took us to his cottage and offered to make us tea which we refused as we were anxious to get home and get something stronger. No mention of our rescue attempt was made public or any statement taken of our experience and when the watchman was found the Security Officer, who was not on the scene, attended the Coroners Court to give evidence. Three Medals were given for the Bramble Island incident but my mate and I were by-passed.

Aftermath. The site manager recalls, "the bulldozer driver repairing the seawalls discovered some suspicious looking tubs containing 100lbs of 'marmalade'! They had been buried under ten feet of sleepers and contained Nitric Acid and Nitro-cellulose. Later full cases of Gelignite were dug out of a ditch. Troops (500) were walking about in wet N.C. which became dangerous when it dried out.

We found a man smoking (prohibited) and wiping the mud from his hands with Nitro Cellulose. We had 1800lbs of Nitro Glycerine stored in lead tanks and 200 tons of stored explosives.

The Home Office took charge of the disposal at sea".

The Surge Tide – The night of 31st January 1953 Malcolm MacGregor

Transcript from several interviews with Mr Malcolm MacGregor at his home in Brightlingsea. Malcolm and Ian's efforts to save the family can only be described, not by him, as heroic.

Malcolm was 18 years old and due to go into the Navy. It was his habit to go to bed with a small radio and listen to broadcasts under the covers. Waking he saw a silver light above the curtains and opening them to look out he could see a 'silvery sheen'. A silver wall of water was cascading over the seawall, a few yards from the bungalow. The family had two rowing boats and a larger 14 foot clinker built boat that was very heavy and stored over-turned. Malcolm managed, single-handed to right the boat, he did not know where the strength came from, perhaps a combination of fear, urgency and adrenalin! The boys went for the oars and rowlocks, always stored separately. The water was by now up to the back door. Ian and Malcolm got their mother and sister to the back door and gathered blankets etc.

Their sisters Exmoor pony came to the fence and Malcolm thought the kindest solution was to shoot the pony but Ian got some wire cutters and cut the fence whilst standing up to his waist in freezing water. The headlights of Mr A Smith's truck could be seen far off as he tried to save his cattle. It took Malcolm and Ian two hours to reach land, about a mile away, in the rowing boat towing the pony behind. Huge flashes could be seen as the sea water hit the overhead power lines. At the fence ahead 60 cows were trying to get out of the field.

Malcolm steered for the fence and Ian cut through the wires, they then made it to the Chase. Their mum and sister walked the pony up to the farm, its coat was frozen with balls of ice hanging underneath. The boy's clothes were frozen to them. Mrs Smith at the farm had three boys and so was able to find dry clothes for Malcolm and Ian. They stayed at the farm for several weeks before returning to Wall Street. The MacGregors received £320 from the flood compensation scheme as they had lost everything.

Malcolm distinctly remembers the chalet being lifted up by the sea but fortunately becoming wedged by the overhead power lines and also held in place by the lead water main pipe. Six chalets were rolled back onto their footings each one taking a day. A piece of good luck was that a cabinet drawer had floated up and was jammed tight against the ceiling leaving an indentation. When retrieved he found that all its important contents, his PO savings book, Service documents etc, were all dry.

Malcolm's prized shotgun, a Darlow, a £38 gift on his 14th birthday, was inundated but rescued and soaked in oil for several weeks until it was fit for use. He continued to use the gun for many years of wildfowling and has kept it to this day.

(Note:- These first-hand reports of the 53 flood give an indication of the strength, hardiness and determination to survive of a generation of people who had been toughened by hard lives.)

Kevin Marsden

Chiropodist Terry St George will be winding down in February and would like to take this moment to thank this magazine and all patients for their support over the last 20 years.

Appreciated Terry

Sadly Reg Richer passed away peacefully in hospital on Saturday 20th January.

MARJORIE MITCHELL

Mum

Mum was born on the 29th April 1925 to Ralph (Lord) originally from Coppice Farm and a relation of the Lords at Edens Farm, Great Bentley and Maggie (formerly Gosling) and they lived at Pond Farm, West Bergholt.

Her mother had met my grandfather whilst she was a teacher at Great Bentley school and - as was the custom in those days - she had to leave when she got married.

Mum had two brothers, Stanley and Ken, who nicknamed her Fido because she followed them around and enjoyed a happy childhood - albeit with no electricity or running water.

She was home schooled by my Nana Lord, until she was seven and then joined Colchester High School, based on East Hill, and now known as Greyfriars Hotel, which we used to visit for afternoon teas on Mother's Day so she could reminisce about her days there. As a young schoolgirl she met her long term friend Beryl Abbott and her daughter Alison was present to represent her at Mum's funeral.

When her brothers went off to war, Stanley's wife "Auntie" Lou, lived at Pond Farm and gave birth to her daughter Anne, staying there until he returned. Mum enjoyed most of her summer holidays at Sea Gulls and Sea Shells Cottages on Felixstowe seafront with her mother's sister Auntie Joy and her husband Courtney Prentice. We took her back to visit nearby Landguard Fort where her brothers had spent time training during the Second World War - she commented on how they would have enjoyed the luxury of running water!

When she left school she worked at ENSA (Entertainment National Service Association) arranging entertainment for the troops. She also worked at Woods in Colchester. Her transport was always her bike.

Mum met my father at a Young Farmer's Dance and they married at West Bergholt church on the 28th April 1948. Dad was the son of Andrew Mitchell at St Mary's Farm.

My brother Michael was born on 2nd April 1949, and myself in 1953. We enjoyed a happy family farming life at St Mary's Farm, in a wonderful home. When my mum's mother died at 70, her father then lived with us at St Mary's.

Later my father succumbed to Alzheimer's and sadly died when he was 76 at The Oaks in Great Bentley, and unfortunately Michael had developed Pancreatic cancer and passed away 8 weeks later.

So a huge blow to Mum, who has always enjoyed a long and healthy life but we have tried our best for her and we enjoyed several cruises and holidays together, before she began to have falls. After trying to cope with Live-in Carers, she moved to Blackbrook Care Home in Dedham and she was very particular about me topping up her bird feeder station - for her entertainment in the mornings and then her TV in the afternoons!! She particularly enjoyed watching the Snooker especially "her boyfriend" Ronnie O'Sullivan!

The music choices for today are Mums - I travelled across the country with her to visit Cliff Richard live on stage at the Albert Hall, Birmingham etc. and she remained a fan - always. She adapted well with a room in which we hung dozens of photos for her as conversation pieces for visitors and she had all her own furniture too - as a "hotel style" home from home.

She died there peacefully on 30th November. We had a small family funeral and carried out her wishes.

Mary Fox (See editors comments on page 19)

FEBRUARY DIARY

- Fri 2nd **COFFEE MORNING**, Methodist Church, 10-12 noon
- Sat 3rd **GT BENTLEY VETERANS CLUB**, The Plough 10am
- Sun 4th **GREAT BENTLEY HALF MARATHON**, 10.30am
- Tues 6th **BENTLEY GREEN LADIES CLUB**, Village Hall, 7.30pm
- Thurs 8th **KNIT & NATTER**, Church Hall, 2pm
- Thurs 8th **HISTORY SOCIETY**, 7.30pm, Village Hall
- Sat 10th **BARN DANCE**, Village Hall
- Sat 10th 8pm **PLOUGH KARAOKE NIGHT**
- Sun 11th **DEANERY CHOIR**, St George's Church, Gt Bromley,
11am
- Mon 12th MAGAZINE DEADLINE**
- Mon 12th **QUIZ NIGHT AT THE PLOUGH**
- Thurs 15th **HEART START EVENING**, Village Hall, 7pm
- Sat 17th **COFFEE MORNING**, St Mary's Church Hall, 10-12 noon
- Thurs 15th **CARNIVAL EMERGENCY AGM**, Village Hall, 7.30pm
- Sat 17th **PLOUGHSECCO BOTTOMLESS BRUNCH**, 2pm
- Sun 18th **ROBBIE WILLIAMS TRIBUTE AT THE PLOUGH**, 3pm
- Tues 20th **GARDENING CLUB**, Village Hall, 7.30pm
- Thurs 22nd **TENDRING EWT LOCAL GROUP AGM**, Naze
Discovery Centre, Walton, 7.30pm
- Thurs 22nd **HEART START EVENING**, Village Hall, 7pm
- Fri 23rd **MAGAZINE COLLATING**, Church Hall, 9am
- Thurs 25th **AUTISM COFFEE MORNING**, Village Hall, 1pm
- Tues 27th **ART CLUB WATERCOLOUR PAINTING WORKSHOP**
Village Hall, 10-4pm