

WETHERSFIELD

BLACKMORE END & BEAZLEY END

NEWS

Spring 2007

In colour on www.Wethersfield-Essex.co.uk

Back to its Roots

AFTER many years of being a village eyesore, the derelict building at the side of Wethersfield Village Hall has finally been demolished.

The building was originally built for the Raven brewery, about 150 years ago, as a two up, two down cottage for one of the workers at the brewery. The brewing process was such that someone had to live on the job. The brewery was owned by the Maberlys who lived in Hill Foot House, Mrs Maberly maiden name being Raven. There is a pink obelisk in the URC graveyard with many of the Raven family names

engraved on it, but Edith Maude, who died in 1942 is buried in the Parish Churchyard. A Thomas Raven is listed as Wethersfield malster in 1848 and may well have been Edith's father, she being born in 1874. Another Thomas Raven ran the Dog Inn in 1895 - possibly another branch of the family?

Edith gifted what is now the Village hall to the parish in 1922, after the brewery closed down.

The building which is now the Village Hall was used for storing the grain used in the brewing process, the grain-hoist still there at the front of the building and the back room of the hall had a mesh floor for drying the hops - the Oast house 'chimney' being clearly visible in the photo below taken about 1920. The actual brewery, with its chimney intact may now be seen behind Hill Foot House.

The last tenant of the the cottage lived in it until the 1940's but sadly after that it fell into disrepair until it was bought by a local plumber about 30 years ago who used mainly as a store for his materials.



He was instructed to demolish the chimney, visible in the top photo, which was deemed unsafe. This had originally served two fireplaces, one on each floor.

Some years ago the plumber sought, and was granted, planning permission for it to become a boutique! However, it became dangerously derelict and the police ordered it to be fenced off.



Happily it has finally been purchased by Rob and Elenor Lambert, the current owners of Hill Foot House who are building an annex on the site. Preparation of the site has revealed an old well adjacent to what must have been the kitchen of the old house.

So, having originally been owned by the Maberlys of Hill Foot House, the building has finally gone back to its roots.

(Thanks are due to Jack Tillbrook, Elenor Lambert, Pam Wenley and Derek Norman for helping with this piece.)

Ecuador Update

Our fund raising for the Ecuador trip is going very well. We are still on target to raise the total cost required, through activities like car washing, jumble sales and babysitting. . Meanwhile at school we shall be taking part in a talent show, which is being organised to raise funds. During the summer months we will also be available to cut lawns to help our fund raising as well as carrying on with car washing.

Matthew Jerram and Frances Holliday

Squeaky Clean Car Washing

If you are interested in having your car washed then give us a call on:

Matthew Jerram 851354

Frances Holliday 851376

Large car £7

Small car £5

We are raising money to fund a once in a life time trip to Ecuador. For 4 weeks we will be trekking through rainforest, and helping to rebuild damaged infrastructures.

Wethersfield Fun Day Saturday 12th July

AFTER months of attempting to plan a Family Active Fun Day at the Base in conjunction with 'Active Braintree' and the MDPGA, plans have fallen through at no fault of the PFA. Therefore we are organising our traditional Fun Day at Wethersfield Playing Field on Saturday 12th July.

We would be delighted if your group / organisation would join with us at the Playing Fields between 2pm and 5.30pm. We are looking for attractions, stalls and events. Proceeds from any fund raising (after deduction of any expenses) are to be split on a 50/50 basis with the Playing Fields Association. *

See page 5 for further details

Please note - no dogs are allowed on the playing field at any time.

Webwise

THOSE folk relatively new to the village may not be aware of the amount of information about the village and its history, which is available on the village website:

www.wethersfield-essex.co.uk.

Wethersfield's sons and daughters keep coming 'home' – thanks to the Internet. Latest arrival to tell tales of his happy childhood in the 1940s on the village website is Edward Bloomfield from Towcester in Northamptonshire.

On the site he writes about riding on the bare backs of the huge Suffolk horses that worked the land at Parsonage farm. Not so easy when you are only three, with tiny infant legs. He remembers being snatched to safety from an angry bull by his mother Muriel who lived at the farm with her brothers Tom and Jack Grimwood, both deceased in recent years.

Muriel's marriage to Sgt Jack Bloomfield united two huge Wethersfield families of the 1930s, the Grimwoods and the Bloomfields of Cherry Tree Gardens on the road to Shalford.

At Wethersfield School Ed gave head teacher Miss Trundle a bit of a problem – she could hardly tell him apart from his cousin David Grimwood. (see picture).

But the boys grew up to lead very different lives. David stayed in Wethersfield to farm at Parsonage and at Tattersalls, Ed moved off to become an engineer. He also followed his Grandad Christopher Grimwood into singing and entertainment. To this he added writing



songs for BBC children's programmes – often about farming in the old days!

On the website click the 'On the Land' button and then click 'They were the new kids on the block.'

WETHERSFIELD VILLAGE HALL

Large Hall (for up to 170 people) and smaller Room (for up to 30) available for hire. Includes stage and catering facilities.

For bookings please contact Eileen Tillbrook on 01371 851204
OR e-mail: w-v-h@hotmail.co.uk

Community Initiatives supported by Wethersfield Parish Council

THE Parish Council are pleased to announce that their recent application to the Rural Communities Development Fund for a £5,000 grant towards the cost of improvements to the Wethersfield Playing Field Car Park has been successful. The Parish Council have agreed to match-fund and the shortfall of £1,750 in the £11,750 total estimated cost of the project will be met by donations from local organisations and individuals.

The Parish Council and Playing Field Association would like to thank all those who sent letters of support and those of you who took the trouble to telephone with comments or complete the voting slip included with the last newsletter.

The main works including surfacing are due to commence on May 27th and be complete within 2 weeks. Car park marking and new hedging to front and west side will be carried out later in the year. We are happy to consider alternatives to white lining that may be considered to be more in sympathy with our rural setting (stone coloured studs?).

The project has received the support of over 60 individuals in addition to the following organisations: Parish Council, Parish Church, Parish School, Pre-School, Cricket Club, Gower Trust, Fitch & Mott Educational Foundation, Derek Flannery PFA. However a small number of residents have questioned the need for the project (less than 10% of total response). Other priorities stated by those who were both for and against the car park project included: Youth facilities (indoor in particular),

Improvements to Village Halls and other Community Buildings and traffic calming measures. The Parish Council will consider these and other community issues in forthcoming meetings.

On the subject of traffic calming the Parish Council is at long last able to confirm the installation of sockets to receive a speed indicator device at 3 locations in Wethersfield and 2 in Blackmore End. The device itself will be shared on a rota basis with Finchingfield and Bardfield Parish's.

This is a photo from recent trial at Great Bardfield.



If successful the Parish Council will consider the possibility of permanent installations, BUT solar powered rather than the currently available system, which is battery operated. Thanks here to Nicky Pearce for agreeing to re-charge the batteries from time to time.

WETHERSFIELD SUMMER BALL 2009

- Do you enjoy dressing for an occasion?
- Would you like to attend a summer evening event that would include, and benefit, the whole community?
- Would you like to get involved in organising such an event?

We are proposing a charity summer gala, to be held in Summer 2009. The idea has arisen primarily as a fundraiser for the village Pre-School and Cricket Club but as the idea has grown we feel that it would be a wonderful opportunity to stage a fabulous event that could raise funds for the above mentioned organisations, as well as others in the village, such as the Playing Field Association and Primary School.

With the village behind us we could make this a truly memorable event and really make a difference. **Help us to make this happen!**

If you would be interested in attending such an event, or assisting in the organisation, then please let us know! Email: lucycfoster@hotmail.com or contact the Wethersfield News.

Wethersfield URC Baby and Toddler Group

Do you have small children and would like to meet other parents? Wethersfield URC Baby and Toddler Group is held in the URC hall every Friday morning (term time) from 10-12. It's £1 entry for each child and includes snacks and drinks for the children and parents. We provide toys to suit all ages and abilities and are a friendly group who always welcome new members. For more information please contact Jacy Thomas on 07936708292

Fiddler review and next?

FROM 6th – 8th March Wethersfield Amateur Performers (WAP) staged Fiddler on The Roof at Wethersfield Village Hall to packed houses at all four performances, which meant record breaking audience numbers for WAP's 4th show since formation in 2004.

The show is a classic, uplifting musical with popular standards such as 'Sunrise Sunset' and 'If I were a Rich Man' set against a backdrop of religious persecution in turn of the century Russia.

Extracts from a review by the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (of which WAP is a member) were:-

"Kiley Threadgold as Tevye dealt well with the main character in this show and gave his own interpretation to the character with some nice touches here and there.

Flora Olney as Golde his wife was a force to be reckoned with.....
The three main daughters Tzeitel, Hodel and Chava complimented each other and sang well. The choreography in "Little Bird" was really well done and danced beautifully.

David Watts as Motel looked just right and Tom Pleasant as Perchik had a good voice.

I really liked the dream scene and in particular Sandy Burdge as Fruma Sarah who was suitably scary.

The chorus balance was very good with some nice-harmonies coming through. Well done to you all on a brave choice. Keep up the good work which was much enjoyed by the audience."

WAP goes from strength to strength increasing membership in 2007/8 by 25% to over 40 members.

The cost of staging our shows is not insignificant and increases year on year. For example, our expenses to stage Fiddler on the Roof totalled nearly £5,200. To buy the rights to put on the show from the copyright owners cost nearly £1,200 alone! Added to this we have the hire of the Village Hall (both for rehearsal and performance), insurance, audio equipment and lighting hire etc. it soon adds up! We rely on subscriptions from our membership, ticket sales, sponsorship, and the generosity of a great many volunteers to cover our costs and we would like to thank everyone who has supported us this year.

In cooperation with the Village Hall, WAP has extended the stage and purchased new stage curtains, all fitted in time for the March production. Our contribution to these improvements was funded from our fund raising events.

WAP's next production in March 2009 will be Return to the Forbidden Planet with auditions in September. This show won the 1990 Olivier Award for Best Musical and is based partially on Shakespeare's Tempest but it will have you literally dancing in the aisles being packed with 50's & 60's rock 'n' roll foot tapping classics such as; Great Balls of Fire, Good Vibrations, Teenager in Love, She's Not There, Shaking All Over, The Monster Mash and many more!

WAP is always looking to welcome new members for both performers and helpers in all other areas and with a contemporary show like 'Forbidden Planet' we could be looking for guitarists, experts in film and sound recording, singers and actors alike. So if this sounds like you please call Nicky on 01371 851019 or e-mail secretary@w-a-p.org.



People....

FORGET New York – Wethersfield is the epicentre of a 24 hour, global business community. You may not have noticed but the village is home to an award winning business with international associations.

Susan Moore who has lived at Olive House with husband Neil and their two children, Robyn and Rory, for almost nine years, runs her business 'Moore VA' from home. As a Virtual Assistant



(VA), Susan works for a number of business clients including lawyers, financial advisers, business coaches and a racehorse owners' club.

A Virtual Assistant does the job of a secretary/marketing/research assistant but works from her/his own office and communicates with clients via e-mail or phone. Because businesses are looking to reduce employment costs, overheads and commuting times, demand for VA's has risen.

Susan works with virtual assistants in Canada and Australia as well as the UK so that work can be turned around overnight.

On 19th April, Susan won the National VA of the Year Award at the industry's second conference judged by the leaders of four UK and international VA associations. Susan says, "I was delighted to receive the award. I decided to set up my own business so that I could work more flexibly and spend time with my children especially during school holidays. My family has been a great help and Wethersfield Post Office has provided assistance on many occasions too. Away from the business, I'm planning to learn to play golf so that I can join my husband on his many golf days!"

Wethersfield Local History Group

On **June 12th**, Anne Padfield will be giving an illustrated talk on Local Houses and Buildings of Interest. Anne has lectured widely for WEA, The University of Essex and other organisations. She specialises in studies of farm buildings and historic houses. She has an excellent collection of slides and her warm and engaging personality makes her a very popular speaker. An evening not to be missed.

The July meeting is our outdoor summer meeting on 10th July. This will be a short walking tour of Thaxted followed by a tour of the windmill. Mr Len Farren, who spoke to us last year about the restoration of the windmill will be our guide. We are then invited to the Old Barn (200 yards from the windmill) for coffee and cake, by kind permission of Mr and Mrs McKernan. Please meet at the Guildhall in the centre of Thaxted at 7.30pm.

The committee are now preparing a talk for **October's meeting** on the Shops and Traders from Wethersfield's Past. When Derek and Rita Norman and others began the History Group some years ago, they had the foresight to record the memories of older people in the village and made a fine collection of old photographs. We shall be drawing on this information for our talk. If anyone in the village can add to our collection of old photographs or illustrations, please contact 01371 850333. Photos can be copied and returned.

There is to be a ceremony in **Shalford on Wednesday 28th May at 12 noon** to dedicate a commemorative stone listing the flightcrew of a B17 bomber which crashed on Peter Douse's land in 1944. The plane caught fire en route from Ridgewell airfield. All the crew baled out except the rear gunner, who could not get out in time. Exploding bombs badly damaged Shalford Hall behind Shalford Church. The father of Ken Tarbin of West Drive, Wethersfield, very bravely tried to rescue the trapped airman from the burning Fortress aircraft in spite of the great risk from explosives. Relatives of the crew are coming from America for the ceremony and at 2.45 in Shalford Village Hall there are to be photos, a film and other events. All welcome.

Wethersfield Wine Club

In February members enjoyed the annual dinner at The Moot House in Castle Hedingham. In March the club were treated to an informative talk and tasting on Chilean wines by Robin Greatorex. In April members hosted a Blind Tasting event where visitors from Braintree, Halstead and Wickham Bishops Clubs had the difficult task of guessing the main ingredient of 10 home-made wines. The committee are, at present, compiling the new programme for the following year. Future meetings include:-

May - AGM

June - Boules and Picnic

For details contact Barbara or Brenda 01371 850978

St Mary Magdalene Church

Wethersfield

Vicar Rev Colin Wilson 810309

Reader Mrs Sarah Pilgrim 850781

Church Wardens

Mrs Joy Fossitt 850823

Mrs Eve Newell 850957

The normal pattern of Services at St Mary Magdalene:-

1st Sunday in the month	8am Holy Communion
2nd Sunday	11am Family Service especially for families with young children
3rd Sunday	11am Parish Communion
4th Sunday	6.30pm Evensong

NB Please contact the Vicar direct for Baptisms, Marriages or Funerals. He is happy to bring communion to those who are sick or housebound. Please contact the Church Wardens if you feel we can be of help in any way.

There is a Memorial Book in the Church to record the names of deceased Parishioners and relatives. If you would like a name recorded please discuss it with one of the Church Wardens.

FLOWER FESTIVAL

14TH AND 15TH JUNE

The theme this year is "Our Village Clubs & Associations" We think this will be great fun with plenty of scope for the imagination. We hope that clubs will be able to help us and to provide "props" for staging. There is a faithful band of flower arrangers but we need and welcome new faces and new ideas. If you are interested or can help in any way over that weekend please contact:-

Joy Fossitt 850823

Eve Newell 850957

Myrna Bragg 851346

We hope that families and friends may wish to make donations for the flowers to commemorate a loved one, or to celebrate an event or just to participate.

Contributions can be handed to any member of the Parochial Church Council with any appropriate dedication. All will be acknowledged in the Church. There will be stalls and refreshments and a raffle plus "The Upbeat Band" will be entertaining at some time.

Joy is looking for items for her Bric a Brac Stall so remember her when you are Spring Cleaning, just give her a ring on the number above.

Wethersfield Floral Art Club

SUMMER OPEN EVENING

Our open evening will be on Wednesday **June 25th** commencing at 8pm, when

NICK GROUNDS will be demonstrating "AN AUCTIONEERS LOT".

Nick is a well known NAFAS demonstrator, who has a wealth of experience in flower arranging, and lots of amusing stories to keep you entertained. He returns to our club by popular request. Tickets are £ 8 to include a glass of wine and light refreshments. Look out for posters to obtain advanced tickets. or pay at the door.

Kathy Rust (club secretary) 851305

CREAMER Fund - Thank you to all who have supported recent fund raising events. Latest purchases have included a Dopplex Assist instrument to help prevent peripheral vascular disease and leg ulcers, and a "Bard" bladder scanner for patients with continence problems. Maintenance contracts and annual service payments have been met.

Contact: Jean Murphy 851147

Many thanks to all the contributors but apologies for any material which has been left out or pruned due to layout constraints.

Summer Issue submission deadline 21st July

The Editors welcome articles of village news, events, ideas and photos.

Writers' names and addresses are required, but will not be published, unless agreed

Pests in the Pavilion !

WETHERSFIELD Pavilion was faced with a mouse problem at the beginning of February.

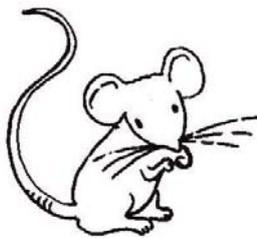
The Pest Control and Environmental Health Departments of Braintree District Council visited the premises and advised that the pavilion building was not fit for purpose by the preschool or any organisations, due to the fact that the mice were contaminating the building and the equipment inside. The premises also needed to be brought up to scratch (!) in areas which were not up to the standard required.

Over the next couple of weeks to follow, the Pest Control Dept made several visits to the premises laying poison bait boxes down to bring the mouse population under control. The Pavilion also undertook a refurbishment, with the help of some very dedicated volunteers from the PFA, Pre-school and cricket club and others, the Pavilion received a new vinyl safety flooring to its main areas, replacement shatterproof lights, installation of a new heater and relocation of thermostats, replacement shelving and improvement to kitchen cupboards and a good old lick of paint.

During the period that the Pavilion building was not fit for purpose (approx 3 weeks) the Pre-school was unable to open for part of the duration but then operated at the Village hall for 4 days - only after a whole new registration with Ofsted including a through inspection of the premises and some stressful form filling had been carried out!

Towards the end of February, the mouse infestation was contained and the refurbishment work all completed. The Environmental Health Dept were called back and gave the premises the green light to re-open to its users !

A big well done to those involved in getting the Pavilion refurbished and re-opened so quickly.



Wethersfield Fun Day

Continued from page 1

Please contact us ASAP if you are willing to provide an attraction, stall or simply lend a hand on the day. We are able to provide a number of small and large shelters but would hope that some groups will make their own arrangements. We are maintaining an up to date list of confirmed events / stalls etc. together with other potential attractions currently not taken up. So if you would like to take part, but looking for ideas, we may be able to assist and also make sure we have no duplications.

Derek Flannery (Wethersfield) PFA - Contact Details:

Chris Richards Tel: 850797
christopher.richards@hertscc.gov.uk
Helen Finbow Tel: 850979

*The DFPFA are a non-profit making registered charity, dedicated to the maintenance and improvement of facilities at the playing field for the benefit of the local community.

Wethersfield Pre-School

Forthcoming Events for 2008:

Saturday 17th May - Pamper Day, Wethersfield Village Hall, 1-5pm

Ladies come and be pampered! There are a whole range of treatments or produce available including manicures, massage, Reiki Healing, hairdressing, jewellery and much more ! This will be a very relaxed, indulgent, child free afternoon! £ 5.00 entry ticket includes goody bag, drink and a slice of cake. Tickets available from Pre-school staff and Elena (01799 586 727)

Saturday 14th June – Rummage Sale and Village Scarecrow Competition
The rummage sale will take place in the URC Hall from 2-4pm. 20p entrance. The scarecrow competition will be open to the whole village. There will be an entry charge of £5.00 per scarecrow. You make a scarecrow (unlimited possibilities!) and exhibit it in your garden/outside your front door so all people passing through the village can see. The best scarecrow in the village will win a £20 gift voucher.

Saturday 27th September - Annual Party
After last years success, the party will be taking place once again at Wethersfield Village Hall, from 7.30pm til midnight. Hog roast, live band 'The Black Caps', licensed bar and raffle.
Tickets are £12.50 each. On sale now !

Please contact Helen Finbow for further information on:
Telephone: 850979 or Email: h.r.f@btinternet.com



Football in Wethersfield

There is a newly formed football team - Wethersfield Athletic. We are still awaiting 100% confirmation of our league acceptance for next season, but things are looking positive.

We will be playing our home games at the playing field and our kit will be Green. Anyone interested in playing, being involved or just has a question, feel free to contact me on the contact details below .

Myself and some members of the squad are currently planning a stall/attraction for the Wethersfield fun day and any support we receive would be greatly appreciated. Also, I am still looking for a kit sponsor, so any interested parties, please contact me. I look forward to meeting some of you at the fun day.

Craig Watson
Chairman, Wethersfield Athletic FC
07841 596252
craigwatsonwhu@hotmail.co.uk

Cricket Club

The cricket club quiz was once again a great success with a record turnout and a good time had by all. The new season is nearly on us with the first match at the end of April, hopefully the snow will have stopped by then.

New players of any standard are always very welcome. If anyone is interested in playing then please contact Captain, Howard Wright on 850314, Secretary, Paul Jerram on 851354 or come along to one of the home games. The first games this season are:

Sat 26th April v Lindsell
Sun 4th May v Wickham St Pauls
Sun 11th May v Cornish Hall End
Sun 18th May Thaxted

WETHERSFIELD GARDEN CLUB

Wethersfield Garden Club would be pleased to welcome new members and visitors to any of their programmed meetings or events. Whether you are a keen amateur, seasoned professional or merely enjoy the fruits of other people's labours you will find a warm welcome awaiting you!

The annual Plant Sale will be held on **Saturday 17th May**, 11.00 in the URC Hall. No-one can afford to miss the range of plants available, and all at competitive prices. We hope to see you there.

Saturday 17th May Annual Plant Sale, 11.00 in URC Hall

Friday 20th June The History and Future of Copped Hall, Epping
- Trevor Roberts, 7.45 in Village Hall

Sunday 6th July Annual Garden Meeting (details from members)

August No meeting

Friday 19th September Gardening Then and Now-Rodney Tibbs, 7.45 in Village Hall

Further details of events from Eve Newell (850957) or Liz Hinton (851015)

Lorna Holmes

8th August 1926 ~28th March 2008

IT IS a great privilege for me to be asked to say a few words in Lorna's memory. I first remember seeing Lorna walking by on Sunday afternoon with her parents and brothers and sisters en route from Rotten End to visit her granny who then lived on what is now the Base, and they had to walk home again!

She used to talk about how they had to walk from Rotten End to Shalford School in all weathers, and if they got wet had to sit in damp clothes all day (how things have changed) the only let off from school was if the river flooded and they couldn't get through, she said we enjoyed those days off!

On leaving school at 14 she went to work for Mrs Wortley at Park Farm Rayne and then Kelvedon. She then had a short spell at Warner's silk factory in Braintree, then moved on to work as a nanny to Dr Wright's 3 children at Panfield Lane, as the children grew up Lorna became more and more involved with reception work in the surgery and ended up as a receptionist at the Group Surgery at Blythe Meadow from which she retired at 62. Two of those children came to her funeral.

Lorna obviously learned to enjoy walking because we all remember her on her daily walks through the village, calling in on friends, stopping to have a word with people she met. Lorna loved people and was interested in them and did untold kindnesses for many she was utterly reliable, a wonderful friend a great help and support to many. A rock for her family.

She didn't have to be asked the offer was always there. She enjoyed taking part in village activities; clubs, coffee mornings, rummage sales, bus trips, holidays and was a loyal member of the Church. She distributed the Wethersfield News for many years. We miss her so much in so many ways. She was a generous supporter of Children's Charities and was always busy knitting goods for sale in a Charity Shop.

Lastly the way she dealt with her tragic illness was an example to us all, she accepted her situation with grace and serenity and those that visited her in her final days came away uplifted by her dignity. The fact that over £1000 has been donated in her memory for the Hospice says it all she would be delighted and humbled.

Eve Newell

Laura Barker

A tribute to Laura Barker who tragically lost her life in a road accident very recently will be included in the next issue. The editorial team of Wethersfield News offer their sincere condolences to Nigel, Jackie, Elaine and Adam.

News from Blackmore End

Happy Villagers !

January saw the **Annual Wine Tasting Quiz** in the village Hall, Ian McBean yet again did a wonderful job with his questions, anagrams and the running competition. Champagne, White, Rose and Red were the wines on offer and teams were neck and neck to the finishing line with lots of fun and laughter while tasting the wines and the wonderful food. A big thank you to Elizabeth & David Foster and Mark & Elaine Taylor who organised such a tantalising supper which everyone enjoyed. Watch this space for next years event as tickets are limited.

Valentines Quiz

46 Adults and 6 Children packed the Village Hall to team up and play the Annual Valentines Quiz. This year Mark Taylor wrote and compared the event and what a fabulous time he gave us. Roses are Red, Wine Bottles are open and the chocolate being eaten. The Red Raffle was a roaring success along with the £1 coin game. The next event will be a Movie Quiz so start revising now!

Please go to our Web Site www.blackmoreendvillage.co.uk for details of forthcoming events:

1st June Donkey Derby.

6th July RSPCA Fun Day

For further information or bookings see website or contact Ian McBean on 01371 851423

Letter from America

LAST December, I had a wonderful time visiting Wethersfield-Essex in England. I am currently a resident of Detroit, Michigan, in the United States. I am a middle-aged woman, originally from Mexico City.

My sweetheart Jim Dobson, who works for the same company as I do, invited me to visit him at his home in Wethersfield, where he has lived for many years. He travels two to three times a year to the States, where he spends months at the time designing projects for the company we work for.

That is actually how we met and how I got to hear of how pretty, peaceful, and friendly this village is. I am very thankful for the great opportunity that I had to travel across the sea to England. I visited the great city of London and spent an amazing, unforgettable New Year's Eve in the lovely village of Wethersfield.

When I first arrived to this place, it surprised me how charming and cozy all the English homes are on the narrow streets, where driving is quite a thrill! It reminded me of my home in Mexico. Every street corner you approach, you look around and see how heart-warming Wethersfield is. You see people walking down the streets having lively conversations, which is something you don't see as often in the neighborhoods of Detroit.

There are many establishments in this place that when you walk in, you immediately feel welcomed. One of the places I spent time in was Wethersfield Club, conveniently right across the street from Jim's house. Even travelling in and around the village is so pleasant because of the beautiful country roads. There are many shades of green and tall trees all around you.

There are also horses and tractors along the sides of the roads which add gentle simplicity to the scenery.

I thoroughly enjoyed every bit of this intriguing English community but what touched my heart the most was being able to meet all of Jim's friends (who are an excellent example of the goodness in the people of England), in a comfy setting right across the street from his home.

Every week there is something exciting going on and the people are very friendly and attentive. I cannot wait to go back for another visit...and I would honestly love to live there and be a part of the village too! **Beatriz Hernandez**

Wethersfield Chess Club

We meet on Tuesday evenings at Wethersfield Club (8 to 11pm). We are keen to recruit new members BUT very happy to entertain visitors of all standards whether on a "one-off" or regular basis (we can offer instruction to younger players up to 9.30 pm on non league match nights).

The Club have enjoyed their best season to date in the Third Division of the North Essex Chess League, at time of going to press in top spot having completed many successful fixtures.

North Essex Chess League DIV. 3 TABLE 2007/2008 - as of 18th April 2008

Team	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
WETHERSFIELD	9	6	2	1	14
COLCHESTER C	8	6	1	1	13
BRENTWOOD B	7	5	1	1	11
BILLERICAY B	8	4	1	3	9
CHELMSFORD D	9	4	1	4	9
CLACTON C	6	3	1	2	7
COLCHESTER GRAM	8	2	2	4	6
WITHAM C	7	2	1	4	5
COLCHESTER D	8	1	2	5	4
BRAINTREE D	8	0	0	8	0

Contact Bill on 01371 851094 or Chris on 01371 850937