

Project Ecuador

Two Wethersfield teenagers; Matthew Jerram (aged 15) and Frances Holliday (almost 15) are raising money to fund a trip to the Republic of Ecuador, South America.

Matthew and Frances, both Year 10 pupils of Tabor Science College, Braintree, each need to raise over £3500 for the 4 week trip taking place in July 2009. Matthew and Frances are among a group of 20 pupils from Tabor travelling to Ecuador and the trip organised by a company called 'World Challenge' is to include some time spent trekking and at leisure but part of the time will be spent on a community project. The project is yet to be defined but World Challenge has established links with a number of schools, children's homes and charities so it may involve assisting to repaint a building or carry out basic construction tasks. There are also an abundance of potential conservation projects, often linked to the preservation of the cloud forest and to promoting eco-tourist agriculture.

The pair have begun their fundraising efforts by starting up their own car washing service in their spare time called 'Squeaky Clean,' which started very well over the Christmas holidays. (Look out for the posters). The cost to have your vehicle cleaned is: £ 5.00 small car, £7.00 large car and £10 extra large.

Please call Matthew

or Frances to arrange for your vehicle to be cleaned on 851354 or 851376.



Matt & Frances hard at work with their 'Squeaky Clean' Car wash service

Matthew and Frances are also available for babysitting at a fee to be arranged and look out for them selling bric a brac/cakes etc on a stall outside the Parish Church on various occasions over the next 18 months.

Pavilion Bid Fails

Wethersfield Playing Fields Association is very disappointed to announce that their bid for funding a "state of the art" new pavilion has finally been rejected, even though out of 1600 bids they succeeded to get down to the last 500.

The Association would like to express their thanks to Jerry Wells and his bid team for all their hard work over many months. The work undertaken will surely stand us in good stead when the next funding opportunity arises. We must also thank the many of you who supported the project by offering their voluntary assistance with the construction and finishing works. We may take the liberty of calling on you next time!!

The PFA have various shelters and gazebos, a bouncy castle and of course the pavilion itself, available for private hire.

Contact Bill on 01371 851094

Fiddler on the Roof

**Wethersfield Village hall
6th-8th March**

This well-known and uplifting show set in a Jewish community in early 20th century has memorable songs including "Tradition", "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Sunrise, Sunset"

Buy your tickets early!

Friday/Saturday nights and Saturday matinees traditionally have been sell-outs. Box Office: Wethersfield Post Office. See article on page 3

Community Initiatives supported by Wethersfield Parish Council

At the January meeting the Parish Council agreed in principle to seek funding from both the Rural Communities Development Fund (up to £5k) and Community Initiative Fund (up to £10k) for projects that would give maximum benefit to the local community.

Initially we propose to seek funding towards the costs of providing good off street parking at Wethersfield Playing Fields.

The project would include clearing all vegetation from the car park next to the tennis court and provision of a macadam surface with parking bays. The area in front of the recycling bins would be marked "No Parking for Access Only".

However, we need to be sure that each project has good public support and request that you return the enclosed slip to Wethersfield Post Office or telephone 851094 ASAP (before 25th February 2008 please).

Wethersfield Local History Group

The Wethersfield Local History Group meets on the second Thursday of the month in Wethersfield Village Hall at 8.00pm. Everyone is welcome. The charge is £1.50 at the door and this includes tea/coffee and biscuits! We do not meet in January and August and the July meeting often takes the form of an outing. If you would like a programme for 2008 please phone 01371 850333.

At the March meeting on Thursday 13th March, John Woollard and Gwenda Hall will be giving an illustrated talk entitled "The bi-centenary of Patrick Bronte's Curacy in Wethersfield in 1808". On April 10th Patrick Denny who gave us a talk on Roman Colchester last year, is returning by popular request. His talk entitled 'To Fetch a Pail of Water' takes a serious but humorous look at water supply and drainage through the ages. On May 8th, Keith Lovell is presenting an illustrated talk on History Through Essex Pub Signs and June 12th is an illustrated talk by Anne Padfield entitled "Local Houses and Buildings of Interest" Please join us if you can.

Wethersfield Pathfinders

The dates for the next few Pathfinder walks are as follows:

February 24th	Wethersfield Green	10:30
March 16th*	Blackmore End Village Hall	10:30
April 27th	Finchingfield (Meet at War Memorial)	10:30

* Moved from Sunday 23rd to avoid Easter Weekend

In addition to the above, we are going to be doing a couple of walks from the surrounding villages with the first being from Finchingfield in April. Please contact Peter Pascoe on (01371 850937) for further information.

There was a good turnout for the traditional Boxing day walk in excellent weather and a 'Queen Mary' bridge across the Pant was discovered! This was the name given to large trailers used in the 2nd world war to transport aircraft bodies around the country. After the war they were scrapped and some obviously put to some unusual uses!



Wethersfield United Reformed Church

Advent and Christmas proved to be the usual busy and enjoyable time in the church, with a good selection of services and events to suit all ages and tastes and the church was decorated and light accordingly.

The Church recently took the decision to donate all collections to charitable causes. The collection during December amounted to £230, which has been donated to Cancer Research.

Everyone is invited to a Coffee Morning in the Church Hall on the third Thursday of each month, 10.30 to Noon. A good occasion to get a free coffee and biscuits whilst enjoying a chat. Our minister Michael Rigney will be attending. The next one will be on Thursday 21st February when the hosts will be Nell & Bill Wilson.

Cricket Club Quiz

The ever popular Cricket Club Quiz will take place on Saturday 15th March in the Village hall, doors open at 7.30 Entry is £7.50 including supper - with a £40 prize for the winning team and a magnificent trophy! Anyone wishing to enter a team of 6-8 people please call Paul Jerram on 851354

News from Wethersfield C of E Primary School

Some members of the local community may not be aware that, following the retirement last year of Mrs Jenny Dunster (who used to write any articles from the school), we now have a new Deputy Headteacher, Mrs Sue Twaites.

The school is growing at present, with a total of 72 children on roll.

Last term, the older children had their five day residential visit to the Kingswood Centre in West Runton, Norfolk, which was greatly enjoyed by all.

We have been part of the government's drive to improve children's participation in sport for the past two years, working in partnership with other local primary and secondary schools. As a result of this we were delighted to learn just before Christmas that Wethersfield Primary school has been awarded the prestigious Activemark award. This accreditation acknowledges the school's commitment to deliver the National Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links Strategy. Thanks are particularly due to Mrs Bannister for all her efforts in co-ordinating all the sports activities done in school and in acting as the lead person on the sports partnership training.

Our Healthy Living Week was held on 28th January, when a range of activities, including hip-hop, street dancing and circuit training featured.

Our much-valued PTA committee are again organising an Easter Tea in the school hall, which this year will be just after Easter, on Friday 28th March in the afternoon. We hope that many residents of the village will come and join us on that occasion.

Showtime with WAP

Wethersfield Amateur Performers formed in 2004 as a musical/dramatic society to bring amateur theatre to Wethersfield and the surrounding local community. Its members, a broad cross section of villagers from 14 year olds to mature persons come from all walks of life.

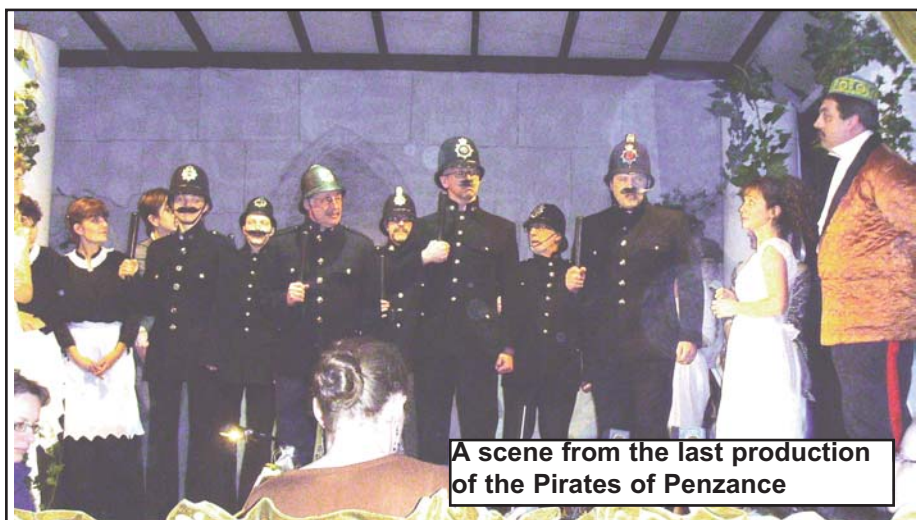
From September to the March production the group rehearse twice weekly but an equally important reason for being involved in WAP is to enjoy the social side and have a laugh.

New members are most welcome, anyone interested should join the company which needs not only actors but those who can help backstage and front of house. Stage production, finance managing, directing, scene designing and building, costumes, props, make-up, and music are only some of the areas where assistance is required. E-mail: secretary@w-a-p.org or tel. Nicky Pearce tel; 01371 851019 for further information.

Successful past productions at Wethersfield Village Hall include "The Gondoliers" by Gilbert and Sullivan 2005, "Oklahoma" 2006, and "Pirates of Penzance" another Gilbert and Sullivan 2007.

Make a note of the next production "Fiddler on the Roof" 6th-8th March This well-known and uplifting show set in a Jewish community in early 20th century has memorable songs including "Tradition", "If I Were a Rich Man" and "Sunrise, Sunset"

Buy your tickets early! Friday/Saturday nights and Saturday matinees traditionally have been sell-outs. Box Office: Wethersfield Post Office.



A scene from the last production of the Pirates of Penzance

Wethersfield Club - Entertainments Diary 2008

- 16th Feb** Valentines Disco and Karaoke.
1st March Darts, Pool, and Snooker Knockout Tournaments - Men and Ladies. (Members Only – see notice board to enter)
15th March St Patrick's Night see notice boards and flyers.
23rd March Sunday lunchtime Children's Easter Egg Hunt (Members Children Only).
19th April Live Music from Sovereign.
10th May Quiz and Chilli Night (teams of 6 non members welcome - bookings required).
31st May 50's Night Live Music with the Fat Cat Trio.
21st June Strictly Come Dancing Final (T.B.C)
12th July Beach Party Fancy Dress Disco.

Please note all of the above are subject to change. Please see notice board, posters & flyers.

Wethersfield Village Hall

Visitors to the Village Hall will notice various improvements taking place in the first half of the year: We already have an extended stage, thanks to Wethersfield Amateur Performers (John McKenzie in particular). New stage curtains will be installed in time for "Fiddler on the Roof", again thanks to WAP with Village Hall committee support. The outside of the building will be given a "lick of paint" and more in the next few months, in conjunction with the demolition of the derelict adjoining property and development being undertaken by our neighbours. Forthcoming special events:

"Cool Britannia" – Light-hearted look at British life, culture and eccentricities by Time of our Lives Music Theatre on Saturday 3rd May 2008. Tickets @ £6.50 on sale at Wethersfield Post Office from 31st March.

Licensed Bar – Doors open 7.00pm for 7.45pm

Wethersfield Post Office – Safe for now

On 1st February this year, Teresa Rhodes has been Post Mistress at our village Post Office for 14 years and she recently found out that her branch will remain open for business for now !

A short time ago Teresa was informed by letter that all of the necessary checks had been made and that her branch is to remain open for business this time. Communities reacted with anger as the Post Office recently revealed a hit-list of 67 branches which are set to close in Suffolk and east Essex.

The Government was accused of failing rural communities after the branch cull was announced. Under the plans, 51 post offices face outright closure, while 16 will be replaced with an "out-reach service", which could see them operating in the likes of village halls, pubs or mobile vans on a specified day each week.

The Government had ordered 2,500 branches to be axed nationwide after Post Office Ltd said it was losing £4million a week and that the existing Post Office Network of 14,500 branches is unsustainable.

An analysis of responses to the Parish Appraisal questionnaire distributed in 2005, revealed that there is extremely strong support for the village post office, with many of the community prepared to pay a slight increase in the Parish Council Tax in order to keep or improve its facilities.

Local Post Offices who have recently faced closure are Bocking and Panfield Lane, Braintree. Braintree's main branch in the town centre is also forced to close from its current location in the Quadrant and there is uncertainty as to whether it will relocate.

Teresa receives between 160-200 customers through the door every day and is proud to be located in such a nice village as Wethersfield. Teresa confirmed that her post office offers many services, a lot of which people may not be aware, such as cashback on various transactions, catalogue returns, Euros available on demand (in most cases) plus currency can be ordered in for the next working day with no commission and free buyback.

An ATM machine is soon to be installed inside the post office - with no charges to its users.

Please support your local Post Office and village shop !

Avid Collector

Debbie Leathlean of West Drive started her collection of dolls at age of seven. On a family holiday in France she spotted a doll she fancied at a shop on the island of Mont St Michel. As she recalled... "my father said that if I could ask for in French, he would buy it - I did so, he did!" That was the start of a collection "which now numbers many hundred, although I have never counted them". Debbie lived in Devon early in her collecting years and added pirates and fisherman on visits to Cornwall.

Married to a merchant seaman in 1966, she travelled round the world for three years on shell tankers, acting as a 'supernumerary' as the only female on the vessel, doing typing etc and "collecting a doll in every port we called into" Since then she has carried on adding to her collection, on holidays abroad, such as recently in Croatia.

But it is not only dolls..... she has a large collection of thimbles and another of teddy bears "kept in the loft ... we really need a bigger house" Debbie remarked.

It seems that the collecting gene has been passed on to Debbie's children.

Richard, still at home, has a huge collection of keyrings mounted on his bedroom wall, started in order to gain his collectors badge in the Scouts.

Her two other sons - in their youth, one collected as many brands of crisp packets as one can imagine and the other collected a multitude of packeted soaps.

A family of Kleptomaniacs?



Debbie with only a small part of her collection and holding her very first doll

Neighbourhood Watch

There will be another meeting in March for those that missed the January meeting. If anyone wishes to know more on what's happened recently or to get constant updates, please pass your email address to Debbie.

Help the Aged with a twist... a man estimated to be in his 70s called recently on a lady in Saffron Gardens with a hamper of tinned food. Having been let in, he proceeded to help her unpack the tins. An accomplice meanwhile helped himself to some cash in the house. Beware distraction thieves - play safe and don't let them in.

Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP) - This is a forum for letting the police know what our priority concerns are and getting feedback on what action they have taken on them. This initiative is a directive of the Government and Essex police are to the forefront - so let's give it our whole-hearted support as, ultimately it is our village community that will benefit. The first open meeting was held at Blackmore End village hall and was somewhat sparsely attended.. However, it was encouraging to note that Wethersfield and Blackmore End, of all the villages involved, had the highest attendance. Three concerns were forwarded to the community Tasking Group - Speeding, Parking and Litter. I shall report on progress in the next newsletter.

Debbie Leathlean 850834

Wethersfield Wine Club

The wine-makers amongst us entered red and/or white wines in our competition evening in November. The chairperson and secretary embarrassed themselves by winning nearly all categories! Thank goodness they didn't have an entry for the AGA food award!

In December, members enjoyed the Christmas Party with a wonderful display of food to share and festive games and quizzes.

January's Members Night gave us very entertaining talks from three brave members.

Future meetings include:-

February - Annual Dinner

March - Wine Tasting

April - Blind Tasting Interclub Competition

May - AGM

For details contact Barbara or Brenda 01371 850978

Police Report

From PC Carter

In the early hours of Wednesday 23rd October myself and PS Page disturbed three burglars breaking into Jesmonds garage in Finchingfield. This culminated in the arrest of three persons and all stolen property being recovered and returned to the garage owner. The vehicle that was used had been stolen from Suffolk. Investigation is still ongoing.

On Wednesday 8th November 5 illegal immigrants were arrested in Blackmore End. Police received a report that these males had been seen leaving a lorry in the Courtenhams yard and were walking through the village.

The first NAP meeting for the Three Fields was held on November 27, 2007, in the Blackmore End village hall at 7pm. Three issues were given to the police to action, these were SPEEDING, PARKING and DITCH CLEARING.

Theft of scrap metal is on the increase. We, along with many other areas, are suffering from this type of crime. I believe the price of scrap metal has increased greatly in the past months. This has resulted in farms, light industrial units, and building sites being targeted. These crimes are usually carried out by people in vans visiting the site late at night and removing what is believed to be scrap metal although good quality metals have also been taken. Please be alert to any suspicious vehicles or people near to where metals are stored.

PEOPLE.....

Presently looking forward to his third summer as a Wethersfield resident, Roger St. Pierre has spent his life travelling the world, visiting 124 countries on five continents in the process.

It was cycling the lanes of Essex as a young lad that gave him his love of travel and also brought him into journalism. At just seven years of age, he rode from Goodmayes to Southend and back and by 12 was riding with a club: "Our runs would often take us through Dunmow, Great Bardfield, Finchingfield and Wethersfield on our way up into Suffolk and Cambridgeshire," he recalls.

As a 15 year old, he wrote to the Romford Times to complain about their coverage of cycling. The net result was his own column, which led quickly to columns in another four local newspapers, a Saturday job on a magazine and work as a 'stringer' for the nationals. He went on to race for 21 years, in seven countries, has organised races and managed national and local teams and helped produce the official Tour de France guide for many years.

Roger's other great passion has been music and in the "Sixties he worked as a full-time sleeve note writer for Music for Pleasure – he now has around 1,200 liner notes for albums and CDs to his credit – and then launched Beacon Records with the number-three hit "Ain't Nothing But A Houseparty".

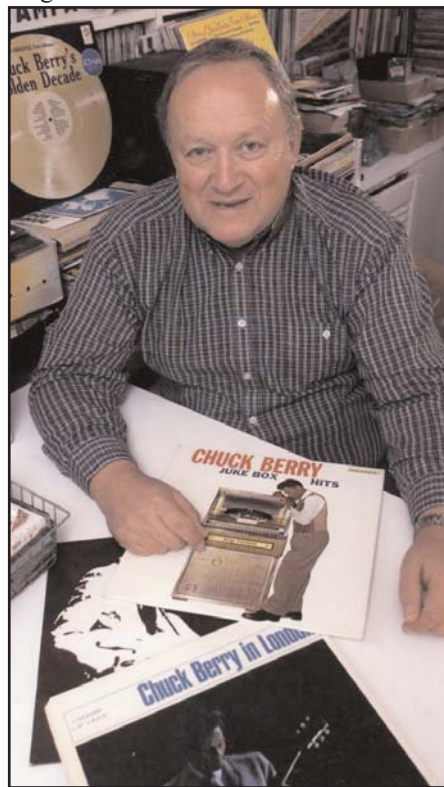
Starting his own club, press, radio and TV promotion company, he and his team worked on six number-one hits and on many concert tours, including the last ever Bill Haley tour and the first by the Jackson Five.

His client list from that period reads like a popular music who's who and includes Diana Ross, James Brown, Glen Campbell, Althea and Donna, JJ Barrie, M, Slade, BB King, the Temptations and Frankie Lane. He also held a recording contract for David Soul.

In 1969 Roger promoted the memorable UNICEF 'Peace For Christmas' concert that headlined John Lennon, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Keith Moon, Billy Preston, Alan White, Klaus Voorman and Yoko – working together as the Plastic Ono Band – with Desmond Dekker, Jimmy Cliff, the Pioneers, Blue Mink and Arrival among the support acts.

Maintaining a parallel career as a journalist and author, Roger wrote for Blues & Soul for 30 years from issue six and had his own pages in Top Pops, New

Musical Express and Record Mirror, reviewing records and interviewing many of the greats of rock, pop, soul music and the blues, as well as editing Disco International and Record Buyer magazines.



Moving into other fields, he was darts' correspondent for the Daily Mirror and the Evening News and has edited corporate magazines for the likes of Eastern Electricity, Sky TV, Citroen and Welsh Water and was launch editor of European Hotelier.

He has been motoring correspondent for many years on the South East London Mercury and, latterly, the South London Press – test-driving everything from humble Minis to the actual Aston Martin that Ian Fleming featured in his James Bond novels.

His own career as an author spans more than 30 books, including best-selling music encyclopaedias; biographies of Marilyn Monroe, James Dean, Bob Marley, Jimi Hendrix and others; a history of McDonald's and the biggest-selling guidebook to Orlando.

Roger has edited Holiday & Leisure magazine for more than a decade and also now edits Business Focus for Bedfordshire & Luton Chamber of Commerce.

With his writing work now spanning travel, business to business, motoring, music, food and drink and other areas, Roger's words also appear in such titles as Cycling, Selling Long Haul, Business Destinations, European CEO, The New Economy, and World Finance and he has

also written for most of the nationals over the years.

On radio he has hosted his own slots on BBC Radio Kent, Skyline Radio and Solar Radio and in recent years he has researched, written and co-produced much acclaimed BBC Radio Two documentary series on Atlantic Records, Count Basie, Chuck Berry and blues' legend Robert Johnson, undertaking extensive field trips in the USA in the process.

A long-time Georgie Fame fan – "From the days when I used to hang around the West End clubs as a mod" – Roger was astonished to find a reference to Wethersfield on the artist's latest album: "On a track titled 'The Old Flamingo', Georgie reels off a list of people and places associated with that famous Wardour Street night spot and ends with 'Wethersfield'," he reveals, adding: "It astonished me but then I remembered that lots of Black American GIs had been stationed at the base and they used to make the weekly pilgrimage to the Flamingo all-nighters."

For Roger, the village is the natural place to settle: "As a youngster I used to fantasise that I'd spend my twilight years trundling round the North Essex lanes with a bike and a pot of paint, touching-up the lettering on the old fingerpost signs, taking time out for a pint and a ploughman's lunch at some country pub or other."

"After 29 years in the same house in Dulwich, South London, bringing up three children as a single parent and dragging them round Europe and beyond, I've just arrived here a bit sooner than anticipated. "I've now got the right house, with the right neighbours, in the right village in the right part of the country". Roger's home is 'The Hoods', opposite the Parish Church.

Anyone for Petanque?

(French Boules)

The Petanque court (located next to Wethersfield Playing Field Tennis court) is available for your enjoyment all year round. During last summer (what summer?)

A small number of Sunday afternoon social events (picnic and boules) took place as well as the now well established annual Wine Club event (not to be confused with Wethersfield drinking competition!). We hope to hold the first 2008 event on Easter Sunday (23rd March) or first decent Sunday thereafter. Contact Terry on 01371 850293