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# SHEERING NEWS

[www.sheering.org.uk](http://www.sheering.org.uk)

DECEMBER 2005

93

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## STAN BARKER

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Stan Barker. He died, aged 76, on September 7th whilst watching Essex playing cricket at Chelmsford. He, himself, had been a keen sportsman, as wicket keeper and goal keeper.



Stan retired as a parish councillor in 2000 after 30 years. He had been chairman for the two previous years and from 1973 to 1976. He continued as a member of the Sheering Village Hall Management Committee and a Sheering School Governor until his untimely death.

Stan was a founding member of the Sheering Short Mat Bowls Club and was well known around the village for all the practical work he did voluntarily. It is good to see that it is intended to continue with the walks along the parish footpaths which he organised for many years.

The Parish Council would like to commemorate Stan, and would appreciate any suggestions, which should be sent to the Clerk to the Parish Council (see page 7). Suggestions so far include a plaque in the Village Hall and a cup linked to one of his interests in the village.

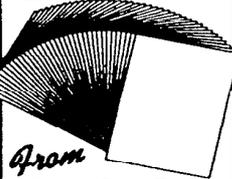
Stan's widow, Barbara, is an active participant in village life, including the Women's Institute and the editorial team of Sheering News. She has our heartfelt condolences.



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## Diary

### December

- Saturday 3rd Bowls Club Social in the Village Hall 8.00
- Friday 9th Happy Circle Carols and Mulled Wine in the Village Hall 7.30
- Thursday 15th Carol Singing round Sheering Village. Meet at the Cock pub 6.30. Wrap up warmly and bring torches. Contact Irene Harriss 734334
- Sunday 18th St Mary's Church 11.00 Children's Christmas Service; 4.00 Carol Service
- Saturday 24th Christmas Eve 11.30 Midnight Communion
- Sunday 25th Christmas Day 11.00 Family Communion
- Monday 27th Christmas Walk 10.15 Village Hall car park. Details from Lee Tennant 734580
- Saturday 31st New Year's Eve Party in the Village Hall. Contact Lynda Case 734774

### February

- Saturday 18th 'Love Letters' at St Mary's Sheering. Tickets £10 from Irene Harriss 734334. See page 14
- Saturday 25th Pre-School Quiz Night in the Village Hall 8.00

### Weekly

- **Short Mat Bowling Club** Mondays and Thursdays 7.00 - 10.00 Thursdays 1.30 - 4.30 in the Village Hall
- **Workout Class** in the Village Hall Mondays 7.30 - 8.30
- **Brownies** Church Room Wednesdays 5.30 - 7.00 Anne Croft 734391
- **Guides** Church Room Wednesdays 7.00 - 8.30 Jo Stewart 835689
- **Library Van** Wednesdays Crown car park Sheering 10.00-10.15 & Lower Sheering Bus Shelter 4.50-5.10
- **Bridge Club** Thursday in the Village Hall 7.15 Mary Harris 734202
- **Pre-School** Every day term time in the Village Hall Beryl Gurteen 734316

### Monthly

- **Women's Institute** meet on the second Tuesday of the month in the Village Hall at 7.30 for 7.45 You will be made very welcome whether you come along as a visitor or join on a regular basis. December 13th : In-house Christmas Dinner; January 10th ; February 14th; March 14th
- **Happy Circle** meet in the Village Hall on the last Wednesday of the month at 2.30. Bring and Buy and Raffle at all meetings in the hall. January 25th ; February 22nd "Send a Cow" talk by Christine Middleton; March 29th Bus passes and Table Quiz.  
\* indicates chiropodist available at meeting.
- **Bingo** December 20th; January 17th; February 21st; March 21st in the Village Hall in aid of Village Hall and organisation funds. All welcome.

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# Letters

Dear Editor

Some twelve years ago, whilst we were still an active Mothers Union Branch, a few members agreed to take on the task of knitting squares for providing blankets for war-torn countries.

Having had a large family, I was in their early years always knitting for them, so had accumulated a sizeable amount of surplus wool, sufficient in fact to keep production of squares going until the last year or two. There have been some kind friends too, who have further boosted the supply.

For some time now, our only knitting enthusiast has been Mrs Doris Kemp who at 90 years of age is, remarkably, still most active with her knitting needles, and enjoys doing so, (as she remarks). I feel she really deserves recognition for a sizeable amount of the work which has resulted in some 7000 squares, making to date 100 blankets - the 100th is here shown with Doris - still at work!!

For me it has been a pleasure to take on the

finishing task of sewing each set of 70 squares, and crocheting an edging to the whole blanket, quite an amount of work as each blanket measure 4 feet by 6 feet.

It is rewarding to know that in some stricken countries our blankets may be keeping children in warmth and some little supply of comfort through desperate times.

Yours sincerely,

Pamela Gunn

St Mary's Women's Circle of Friends  
Group Leader

The following letter was addressed to the Parish Council but was also offered for inclusion in *Sheering News*

Dear Sirs

Yet again we see the infiltration of our village environment by that most traditional of materials: plastic. This time in the form of astroturf!

But, never mind, it is positioned below our tasteful plastic Seringe sign centrally positioned in our plastic clad, plastic windowed street.

Is this the place for Ye Olde Plastic Stocks one asks oneself for youngsters hanging around with nothing to do, or for dog fouling of the plastic variety? Easy washing down of this most traditional of materials would certainly make it an appropriate place of punishment for misdemeanours!

When will the scales fall from your eyes so that you realise what is attractive about a village like this? Some of us try desperately to maintain the old attractive properties that formed the reason for people coming to live here in the first place.

In anticipation of your positive action.

Yours faithfully

Lesley Paine

(See Parish Council Chairman's comments page 7)

Dear Editor

I am writing to inform you of a British Red Cross service which currently exists in the County to provide transport for those persons in the community who, for whatever reason, are unable to access public transport, or community transport schemes, especially for hospital and doctor's appointments.



Those clients able to sit and not requiring medical assistance whilst on the journey will normally be transported in a volunteer's private car.

Journeys are calculated from the volunteer's home address and car users will be paid 40p per mile. All out-of-pocket expenses (car parking, congestion charge etc) will be charged at cost to the client.

This is a very well subscribed serviced which provides a lifeline and means of independence to members of society who would otherwise find difficulty in making arrangements which to many of us are commonplace.

Your area has been identified as one in which there is an urgent need for volunteers for this service.

If there are any queries, please do not hesitate to call me on 01245 291011 or Brian Smith on 01245 291012.

Yours sincerely

Martyn Garwood

Service Manager British Red Cross  
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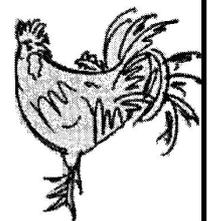
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### Blood Donors Given Awards

Blood donors who have donated a combined total of 300 pints of blood have had their efforts recognised at an awards ceremony.

Sheila Caves, a member of the Sheering News Editorial Committee, received an award at the ceremony to thank her for her 75 blood donations.

The ceremony was a small token to mark the selfless life-saving actions of long-term donors. With each donation potentially saving the lives of up to three people, the people receiving the awards could lay claim to saving the lives of at least

225 people.

Claire Noonan, NBS communications officer, said:

"On behalf of the National Blood Service I would like to offer thanks and congratulations to our award winning blood donors. These donors, through years of quiet and unassuming heroism, have done something truly amazing.

"They have been responsible for giving the gift of life to hundreds of people." The NBS is constantly looking for new blood donors. If you are aged between 17 and 60 please call 0845 771171 or visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk)



Sheila Caves

### Blood Donor Sessions Save a life - Give Blood

#### The Latton Bush Centre Southern Way

December 7th; 15th; 20th  
14:00-16:00  
January 24th, 2006 14:00 -  
16:00  
February 8th, 21st, 27th,  
14:00-16:00  
March 20th, 30th, 14:00-  
16:00  
April 2nd 10:00- 12:30

#### Bullfields Centre Sawbridgeworth

February 12th, 14:00 to  
16:00  
April 4th, 14:00 to 16:00

#### Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church Hall South Street

February 16th, 14:00 to  
16:00

#### Bishop's Stortford Rhodes Centre

December 8th, 14:00 to  
16:00  
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February 2nd, 14:00 to  
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## Parish Council News

### Stan Barker

On behalf of the Parish Council we would like to remember Stan for the 30 years he gave as a Parish Councillor, twice in this time as chairman of council. You could always recognise Stan on his Honda 50 with his red crash helmet or on his push bike with his woolly hat on. You would usually find Stan down a footpath with a lawnmower or repairing something around the village. Stan was always there for the people of Sheering and undertook many tasks in all weathers and helped in any way he was able to.

The Parish Council nominated Stan for the Citizen of the Year award and although he did not win this award he was awarded a commendation 2 years running. We feel had he still been with us this time round he would have won the title as Citizen of the Year.

Sadly, Stan is not with us now but for us he will always be our citizen of the year for Sheering.

John Harrington  
Chairman Sheering Parish Council

### Astroturf

Most of you will have seen or heard about the Astroturf which has been laid around the area of the village sign in The Street. This came about by being offered to the council as a pilot scheme totally free of charge by county council. We chose this piece of land as it was in total disrepair and looked a mess, many complaints had been received. It was totally levelled and landscaped and the Astroturf laid. I viewed the site on completion and felt it was a total transformation for the better. At the September parish council meeting 3 members of the public came along to complain about the Astroturf, but I have also had words of commendation from other members of the public.

At the October parish council meeting it was unanimously agreed by all councillors present to review the Astroturf in 6 months time as to its condition over the winter. We would like to hear your feelings on the Astroturf. Would you like to see it stay or would you like to see it removed and it goes back to how it was?

Send your remarks in a letter to the clerk of the Parish Council.

John Harrington  
Chairman Sheering Parish Council

### Other News

District Councillor Richard Morgan is investigating whether we can have speed camera signs along The Street, with or without cameras.

An insurance claim is being made in respect of damage to the cricket hut. A meeting has been arranged between councillors and the police regarding antisocial behaviour.

## Sheering Parish Council

Parish Council meetings are open to any Sheering resident. Time is set aside for public participation to discuss any parish problem at the regular monthly meetings.

Meetings are held in the Village Hall starting at 7.30 pm. The next meetings are:

<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>25th</b>	<b>January</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>22nd</b>	<b>February</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>22nd</b>	<b>March</b>

#### Parish Councillors

• John Harrington-Chairman	722556
• Ron Ainsworth	734333
• Bill Bedford	734229
• Graham Bishop	830234
• Sheila Caves	725578
• John Huff	734724
• David Le Grys	734160
• Isobel Marsden	734281
• Richard Morgan	731243
• Rodney Northwood	724514
• Joyce Thomas	734259

#### District Councillors

Heather Harding Lower Sheering	421755
heatherharding@btconnect.com	
Richard Morgan Sheering Village	731243

#### Clerk to the Parish Council

Mrs Donna Harris  
Laurel Cottage The Street Sheering Bishop's  
Stortford CM22 7LT 734039

## Parish Council Tree Wardens

Isobel Marsden 734281  
David Le Grys 734160



# LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

## Happy Circle



Since my last contribution to the Sheering News, we have visited Broadstairs. As it was Gala Day, there were plenty of stalls and attractions along the promenade to enjoy, and the weather was an added bonus. Afternoon tea was enjoyed in the Barker's garden later in the month, and home-made cakes supplied by Barbara which were much appreciated. At the annual Sheering Flower Show, we once again ran the Tombola stall. Thanks to all members who supplied tins, bottle etc and to all those who helped us raise £65 for club funds.

An enjoyable trip on the river Stort in September was our next outing. This time we travelled towards Stortford, and passed 'Beckingham Palace' plus tree house in the grounds before turning round just after the Harlow Mill lock. We had hoped to reach Sheering lock, but time was against us. Luckily it was a beautiful early Autumn day, so we were able to sit outside and watch the scenery glide by.

The September meeting in the Village Hall was a social afternoon.

Members have recently attended the annual birthday lunch of the club, which is always a good occasion, excellent food being supplied by Walkers Catering and musical entertainment by June Barrie.

On 16 November, our annual Christmas shopping trip takes place, and this year we're off to Colchester.

In November, Barry Kauffman-Wright will be paying a welcome return visit, when he will give a talk with slides, on Pond and River Life.

The Christmas Carols & Mulled Wine Evening is on Friday 9 December in the Village Hall, commencing at 8 o'clock. Music will be supplied by the Epping Forest Band as usual. Admission is strictly by ticket only. Please contact me on the number below, or purchase them from your usual outlet. Cost is £3 for adults and £1 for children, which includes sausage rolls, mince peas, mulled wine or juice, and of course, the opportunity to sing carols.

The club would like some new members, so if you are over sixty years of age, I shall be happy to welcome you to the Village Hall on the last Wednesday of every month. We have

speakers at some meetings and others are given over to socials. Outings during the summer months are also enjoyed. Transport can be arranged from Lower Sheering if necessary.

Valerie Monk, Leader of the Sheering Happy Circle Club. 832502

## Rivers Nursery Orchard Sawbridgeworth



Everyone is welcome to join in any of the activities, just bring your enthusiasm!

For practical tasks no experience is necessary and all tools are provided but please wear suitable clothing and bring a packed lunch if you are staying all day.

Sunday 4th December Seasonal maintenance in the Orchard 10.30 - 2.00. Mulled wine and mince pies for refreshment.

Saturday 7th January Wassail with music and refreshment to enjoy around a blazing bonfire while wassailing the trees in the Orchard 6.30.

Sunday 5th February Planting in the Orchard 10.30 - 2.00

Sunday 5th March Pruning in the Orchard 10.30 - 2.00

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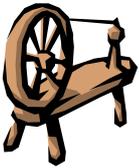
Sunday 2nd April Springtime maintenance in the Orchard 10.30 - 2.00

The entrance to the Orchard is through the red gates at Brook End, off The Crest, Sawbridgeworth. The site is private land owned by East Herts District Council and access is by invitation of the District Council as landowner and no public rights of access are implied.

[www.riversnurseryorchard.org.uk](http://www.riversnurseryorchard.org.uk)

Further information: Hazel Mead 01279 724503 Kate Yarnold 01279 723617 Susan Clark (Rural Enterprise Project) 01920 822735

### West Essex and East Herts Guild of Spinners, Weavers and Dyers



Come along and join a friendly group while enjoying interesting and relaxing crafts. We meet at Harlow Museum which is off First Avenue and Muskhams Road, have workshops, visiting speakers, demonstrations and outings. Membership only costs £15 per year and there are books, equipment and videos to hire when you join. Our forthcoming meetings are:

Saturday 14th January 1.30 - 4.30 Spinning

workshop

Saturday 11th February 10.00 - 4.00 Spinning for beginners and problem solving with Sue McNiven

Saturday 11th March 11.00 - 4.30 Spinning home grown flax

Thursday 13th April 7.30 - 9.30 Rag Rugging. Lecture and slides with Shirley Page.

Further information from Hazel Mead 01279 724503 or Carolyn Green 01992 892080

### Stan's Christmas Walk



By now most of us have heard of the very sad death of Stan Barker. One of the many things he did for the village was to organise our footpath walks. We would like to continue these

walks in his memory, and because they are very enjoyable and no doubt good exercise. The Christmas one is usually 27th December 10.15 (meet at the village hall car park) and return in time for lunch. As this has worked well in the past we will stick to this arrangement. We do not over-stretch ourselves, but it is a good opportunity to

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burn off some of the Christmas over-indulging. If you would like to join us just turn up. See you there. Any queries phone 734580.

Lee Tennant

### Trees in St Mary's Churchyard



Observant walkers in Church Lane may have noticed that one of the two large chestnut trees next to the church has not looked as healthy as usual this year, with quite a lot of die-back in the upper branches. People using the

church car park may also have noticed decay in the trunk of the flowering "locust" tree just inside the hedge of the church yard.

We have asked the tree expert at Essex County Council for advice, and his report indicates that, sadly, both of these beautiful trees may be nearing the end of what he calls "safe useful life".

He says the chestnut is probably suffering from well-advanced *phytophthora* root disease, which kills trees roots and leaves them open to infection by other decay-causing organisms. This causes dieback in the crown of the infected tree, and the death

of roots also has an adverse impact on the tree's stability. Fortunately he tells us that at present this tree does not appear to be dangerous, so he recommends that we keep an eye on it over the next year or so to see if its condition worsens. If it has a full crown next year the dieback is unlikely to be associated with root death and the tree is likely to have few more years of safe life. However, if the dieback is similar next year, or worse (which is what he anticipates), it is highly likely that the tree is suffering root death, and it would be advisable for us to have it removed.

He also tells us that the "locust" tree (*robinia pseudoacacia*) is an over mature specimen that has partially collapsed at some point in the past. It has major deadwood and a large wound in its trunk from the previous collapse, which is decaying. (Some of us vividly remember one such collapse when we were in the Church Room one windy Sunday morning, and a large branch fell off, brushing the windows with the tips of the branches!) He advises us that there is some risk that this tree will continue to collapse; and it would be prudent to remove it within the next year or so.

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We are very sorry that on the basis of this advice the PCC has had no option but to seek approval from the church authorities to have the *robinia* removed. At the time of writing, we do not have a clear idea of when this will be done. The good news is that the tree has produced a sucker which we hope to be able to recruit as a replacement. We will continue to monitor the chestnut for the time being.

Elsie Baker  
Churchwarden

### Harlow Theatre Company Sleeping Beauty



An exciting new and magical play for children - based on the story of Sleeping Beauty - comes to the Victoria Hall Theatre, Bury Road, Old Harlow in December.

Harlow Theatre Company has, for the past few years successfully presented plays for children in December (Wind in the Willows, The Magic Treehouse, Railway Children, Nutcracker Prince to name a few) and with this brand new script and experienced and talented cast we are confident that Sleeping

Beauty provides a pre - Christmas treat for young people.

Modestly priced tickets at £7.50 (£5 concessions) are now on sale - 24 hour answer phone service 01279 420062

Evening Performance 7.30 Thurs 8 - 10 & Wed 14 - Sat 17 December.

Matinees at 3.00 Sat 10, Sun 11 & Sat 17 December

Victoria Hall Theatre is a friendly little theatre with raked auditorium seating 100 and a licensed bar in the foyer.

Nina Forth

Treasurer - Harlow Theatre Company

### Short Mat Bowling Club



Members were saddened by the sudden death in September of Stan Barker, one of the Founder Members and past President of Sheering

Bowls Club. We shall all miss his presence at the club meetings.

We started our last four months with our Annual B.B.Q in July, which was a great success. 30 members enjoyed a lovely evening. We made over £44 from the games for our charity, Essex Air Ambulance. Great

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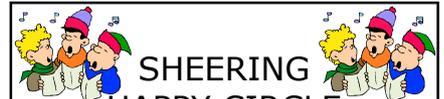
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SHEERING  
HAPPY CIRCLE

Carols & Mulled Wine  
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(Doors open at 7.30)

Admission by ticket

adult £3 child £1

incl. sausage rolls and mince pies

Raffle

01279 832502

thanks to Valerie and Ron Monk for their hospitality.

Our greatest event of the year was our Charity Bowling Day held on 31st July, in which 72 bowlers and helpers raised £1,100 for Essex Air Ambulance. The organiser Bob Wright went out with begging bowl and had great response. There was a collection at Tye Green Bowls club of £56. United Friendly League gave £100; Sheering Bridge Club £20; Friday Boys £20; Stapleford Abbots Bowls Club £30; Queens Head Pub (Sawbridgeworth) and donations & collection £45. Messrs Trundle, Terry, Gardiner, Mears gave £5 each. 72 players gave £216. A Raffle, prizes donated by Tesco, Mecca Bingo, Tuck Shop and Budgens, which raised £231, also items to sell which raised £137. The Sheering Restaurant raised over £200 from cakes, rolls donated by members, and also the sale of Strawberries and Cream 64 punnets of which were donated by Waitrose Head Office and Bishop Stortford store. A truly great day was had by all.

A Special Thank You for Sheering Village Hall who made it all possible. We applied for a further donation through an internal

scheme and have just heard from Waitrose that we have been awarded a cheque for £1,000 for our Charity.

The 3rd August saw another evening at Harlow Dogs and on the 12th October we joined up with Sawbridgeworth Bowls Club and over 70 of us enjoyed a great evening. Later in October, we held our Annual Captains Fun Day a good bowling day with different rules. November sees our Odd Pairs competition. Our league programme is now well under way and at the moment are second. More Friendlies are planned for later.

We are now organizing our Annual Presentation Dinner/Dance to be held on Saturday 3rd December.

Maureen Wright (Secretary)

### Sheering News

The editorial committee of *Sheering News* meets twice before each edition. The first meeting (usually on the first Tuesday of the month) is to discuss any copy and new advertisements we have been offered. We proof-read the edition and come together at the second meeting, a fortnight later, to agree any corrections or changes. Between

## Paying more than you should for your Mortgage?

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the two meetings, there is a window of about ten days to compile the edition. Please try to get your copy to us by the deadline shown on the back page.

We really value the faithful band who bring you your *Sheering News*. Valerie Monk (832502) would like to hear from anyone in Lower Sheering who could undertake to deliver some copies to Pryor's Court or the new development in Sun Street.

### Village Hall

I have to open this report with the sad news of Stan Barker's death in early September. Stan did a phenomenal amount of work for the Village Hall over the years that he was on the Committee. Not only did he save the Village Hall a very large amount of money by tackling most jobs himself, he was also involved on the fund raising side, arranging the Flower/Produce Show, assisting at Race Nights and Quiz Nights and more recently Bingo Nights. Since Stan's death four people have been doing the jobs which Stan would have done on his own, we are really going to miss him.

The Flower/Produce Show was a great success raising over £200. The Quiz Night

will have been held by the time the Sheering News comes out and Lynda Case has agreed to organise the New Years Party this year, tickets can be obtained by ringing her on 734774.

Beryl Gurteen  
Chairman Village Hall Management Committee

A new system of licensing came into effect on 24 November. The Village Hall has been granted a Premises Licence for music and dancing. It will only be possible to supply alcohol on the premises twelve times a year at a cost of £21 each time.

The Management Committee has decided to operate a no smoking policy on the entire premises at all times.

Ron Ainsworth  
Secretary Village Hall Management Committee

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## What's On December

### Hatfield Forest: Father Christmas Trail

December 4, 10 & 11 10.00-12.00 and  
12.30- 2.00

Booking essential, £6 per child. Free parking.  
Walk Santa's trail and collect stickers on the  
way. Have a drink and a biscuit and visit  
Santa in his Grotto. Every child receives a  
gift. Book early. Gates open 9.45. Grotto  
closed 12.15 - 12.30. Meet at the main  
entrance gate. To book please telephone  
01279 870 678

### The Gallery at Parndon Mill: Present Arts

An exhibition for the Christmas season  
including paintings, prints, sculpture  
ceramics, glass, textiles and jewellery,  
featuring Sheering's very own artist Gordon  
Crossley's landscapes of Hatfield Forest,  
Suffolk and France. Also local artists from  
Sawbridgeworth; Harlow, Great Hallingbury  
and further afield.

Gallery opening hours

Weekdays 10-6

Saturdays 10-4

Sundays 2 - 4

For more information Sally Anderson,  
Parndon Mill, Harlow. Tel: 01279 426042

info@parndonmill.co.uk

Directions Parndon Mill lies on the edge of  
the water meadows to the North of Harlow.  
Access is off Elizabeth Way, down Parndon  
Mill Lane

## February Love Letters



A Post-Valentine's Day Treat?

Saturday 18 February in St Mary's  
Church, Sheering at 7.30. A  
performance of *Love Letters*,  
arranged by Friends of St Mary's

Sheering:

Serendipity Productions present A R Gurney's  
touching two handed play, which tells the  
story of the relationship conducted mostly  
through letters between Andy and Melissa,  
"two uptight old WASPs", childhood friends  
and lifelong sweethearts.

Tickets £10, to include nibbles and a glass  
of wine, from Irene Harriss 734334

**Ongar Music Club** 01277 362353 & 899337  
Sunday 4 December at 3.00 Young Music  
Makers 1

Including the eighth competition to find the  
Ongar and Epping Rotary Young Musician.

### Bill Rammell MP



#### Advice Surgeries

Every 1st Friday of the month  
5 - 7 pm

Every 3rd Saturday of the month  
10 am - Noon

Harlow Council Advice Centre  
East Gate, Town Centre  
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Please bring copies  
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Write to  
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London SW1A 0AA

Ring his Westminster Office  
and leave a message  
020 7219 1205

Fax 020 7219 2804  
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Open to instrumentalists and singers from the Ongar and Epping areas aged 18 or under.

Contestants will be expected to play for 10 minutes, and there are three prizes of £50, £35 and £15. The winner goes forward to the District Rotary Final in October, and has free entry to the Club's competition in July. Details and entry forms from Catherine Jennings (01277 821078).

Friday 16th December at 8.00 Hatstand Opera's new Opera-Cabaret "Love, Lust and a Damn Good Chardonnay" £10

Friday 27th January at 8.00 Keyboard Konnections £10

Friday 17th February at 8.00 Villa-Lobos and His World £10

Friday 17th March at 8.00 Meet the Bassoon £10

Sunday 26 March at 3.00 Young Music Makers 2 (see 4th December)

**Local Events** [www.harlow.gov.uk](http://www.harlow.gov.uk) (events); [www.harlow.co.uk](http://www.harlow.co.uk); [www.playhouseharlow.com](http://www.playhouseharlow.com) 01279 431945; [www.hidden-treasures.co.uk](http://www.hidden-treasures.co.uk); [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/thingstodo](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/thingstodo)

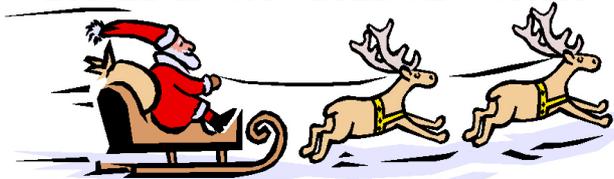
## Permanent Exhibitions and Places to Visit

**The Gibberd Gallery** Civic Centre, The Water Gardens, Harlow. Weekdays 9.00 - 5.00. Sat 9.00 - 12 noon Closed on Bank Holidays. Admission Free

**Henry Moore Foundation:** April to September: Guided tours by appointment only on weekdays. Visitors are shown around the gardens, studios and galleries at 2.30. Sundays by appointment only small groups of visitors may walk unaccompanied in the gardens, studios and galleries from 11.00 - 5.00, last admission at 4.00. £7 per person, concessions £3, students and under 18s free. 01279 843333

**The Gibberd Garden** was planned as a series of rooms, each with its own character. The glades, pools and alleys provide a setting for some fifty sculptures, large ceramic pots, architectural salvage, a gazebo and even a children's moated castle with a drawbridge. April to September Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons 2.00 - 6.00, Marsh Lane (on the right as you leave Sheering for Harlow before the Churchgate roundabout).

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### A few words from your new District Councillor



Firstly, many thanks to the residents who put the Wimbledon semis on hold and went out and voted for me on June 23rd 2005.

Not surprisingly a great deal has happened since then and it has been an interesting few months with a good amount of progress to date. I've had a lot of support from the Parish Council who meet in Upper Sheering each month and work very hard on your behalf. Thanks in particular to Mr John Harrington for his sound advice and Mrs Donna Harris the Clerk to the Parish.

I have initiated a monthly drive around the village with a member from the Epping Forest Highway Division and we work through a list of "things to do". Of course I'd like to wave a magic wand and achieve instantaneous results but life's just not like that. However the tasks are being delegated to the correct department and I am confident that each problem is being dealt with and will be undertaken within a sensible time frame. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any repair or maintenance issues - I'd be grateful for your assistance in keeping the village up to scratch.

As you know there have been changes in the rubbish collection and a major push to encourage more recycling. I have been very impressed with the number of residents who are recycling and it's great to be part of a community who seems keen to embrace the pressing need to be more aware and in tune with the environment. The UK produces around 30 million tonnes of household waste, (50,000 tonnes of waste is produced by the residents of Epping Forest).

As you may be aware there will be the introduction of Wheelie Bins - predicted for the early part of next year. I believe that the Borough of Chigwell and Lambourne are already using them with reasonable success. The implementation of any new system is bound to meet with some confusion - for example the change in the day which most of the residents managed was not something the contractors managed particularly well. However things do seem to be on track now and the system in place makes sense (ie collecting green waste, blue waste and household waste on the same day) - Please let me know if you are still have problems with rubbish collection and/or any recycling issues.

During a meeting with the Parish Council in August I was amazed by an eruption of sound - in short - mopeds at speed in and out of the village car park. It was relentless and left most of us speechless, in the main because there was nothing we could do about it. I've been made aware that Lower Sheering is experiencing similar problems and I'm really keen that it does not impair people's ability to enjoy the proposed new play equipment which is currently being discussed with Epping Forest. The Parish Council have arranged a meeting in November with the police to discuss their plans for future policing in the village - and whilst on that topic I came across a new initiative which may be the way forward.

The first ASBO (Anti Social Behaviour Order) Leaflet showing specific details of an offender is being distributed in Loughton. It is expected that this fairly radical approach will help to curb the growth in youth crime - I will monitor its progress and report back.

I will be pleased to discuss any issues raised in this article and I'm always available to talk - please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Kind Regards

Cllr Heather Harding 01279 421755

## New Year's Eve Party Saturday 31st December



8.00 - 1.00



Bring your own  
food and drink

£3.50 adults

£2.50 children

Phone Lynda 734774

Admission strictly by ticket only

In aid of Village Hall funds



## What is an Anti Social Behaviour Order or ASBO?

An ASBO can be granted against an individual (over the age of 10) who has been found to be behaving in an anti social manner and it is necessary to protect others from further anti social behaviour from that person. The term 'anti social behaviour' includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life. Generally, the following are classed as anti-social behaviour:

- graffiti - which can on its own make even the tidiest urban spaces look squalid
- abusive and intimidating language, too often directed at minorities
- excessive noise, particularly late at night
- fouling the street with litter
- drunken behaviour in the streets, and the mess it creates
- dealing drugs, with all the problems to which it gives rise

Epping Forest Crimes Disorder Reduction Partnership is committed to tackling and reducing anti-social behaviour within the district. If all other reasonable attempts to change an individual's behaviour are ignored and we have the evidence to do so we will apply to the courts to obtain an ASBO.

### Your safety comes first

When you call us on "the numbers below, we promise to act fast on what you tell us about people who behave in an antisocial way. We are ready with the support you need to help us bring offenders to court.

Call us with confidence - in confidence

Let's refuse to accept crime and anti-social behaviour in the Epping Forest district.

Contact

Essex Police (Switchboard) 01279 641212

Loughton Police Station Community Policing Team 01279 625491

Epping Forest District Council (Switchboard) 01992 564000

EFDC Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator 01992 564341

Emergencies only 999

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## The Inheritance Tax Trap Don't get caught out

Many people pay large amounts of Inheritance Tax unnecessarily

If only they had received expert advice, their tax bills could have been reduced or completely avoided. The death tax rate on a person's estate above the Nil Rate Band is at present 40%. There are many exemptions and reliefs available, some of which may apply to you.

With careful planning it is possible to reduce your tax liability significantly and ensure that your beneficiaries inherit the result of your lifetime's work and not the Inland Revenue.

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## RECYCLING

### Green Waste Sacks

Green waste sacks are now free and can be obtained from Sheering Post Office and from Sheila Caves 28 Sheering Lower Road 725578 or Valerie Monk 8 Sheering Mill Lane 832502

### Compost at Home

Epping Forest District Council has teamed up with WRAP (the Waste & Resources Action Programme) to provide composting bins - along with a free guide to composting and a useful sticker highlighting what can and can't go in.

The scheme will play its part in the nation-wide drive covering 6.5 million households across England and Scotland to promote the recycling of kitchen and garden waste and reduce the amount of rubbish sent to landfill.

This scheme provides residents with composting bins starting at the special price of £3, delivered direct to people's doors. People eager to start home composting straight away should call 0845 077 0759 to order their bin."

Around a third of the rubbish we produce can be composted at home. Residents will be surprised to discover that it's not just fruit and vegetable peelings and prunings that can go in the compost bin - cardboard, eggshells and teabags make for great compost too.

A Home Composting Advisor will be working closely with the Essex Councils. Local residents can call 0845 600 0323 for advice and information on home composting, or visit [www.recyclenow.com/compost](http://www.recyclenow.com/compost)

### Running out of space

In our district we throw away more than 50,000 tonnes of domestic rubbish every year. That's roughly half a tonne for every man, woman and child. Up to now, most of that rubbish has been dumped in huge landfill sites but we are rapidly running out of space. As nearby landfill sites have been used up, our refuse has to be transported further and further away. Landfill is becoming uneconomical and will become increasingly unviable in the long run. No one wants new landfill near them. The harm and pollution it causes to the environment is unsustainable. Incineration is also unpopular. We need to find new solutions.

### The alternative - Recycling

Refuse disposal is a national problem. Councils the length and breadth of the country have found recycling is by far the most popular alternative to landfill or incineration.

Many residents in Epping Forest already recycle. You may have a blue box for kerbside collection, put your garden rubbish out in biodegradable sacks for composting, or use the recycling banks located around the district. Compared to many other councils, our recycling record is good - but it is not good enough!

### We are going to recycle more

Weekly black bag collection of your refuse will start to be phased out from October 2005. Gradually we will be delivering new wheelie bins to almost all households across the district. The wheelie bins will be large enough to take the equivalent of several black sacks, but you will only be using them for your non-recyclable rubbish. The rest of your rubbish will need to be separated out into your blue box, a new green box and biodegradable sacks for recycling.

The new system with kerbside collection will make recycling at home much easier. Among the materials you will be recycling are glass, cans, paper, textiles and garden refuse. We hope to add plastic bottles to the list soon. In this way much of the domestic waste generated in the district will be recycled. In time it will need to increase even more.

### Alternate Weekly Collection

When the wheeled bin collections start in your area, the arrangements will change to an alternate weekly cycle:

Week 1 non-recyclable (residual) waste;  
Week 2 all recyclable waste; and so on.

### So my rubbish will stay in the wheelie bin for up to two weeks?

Yes - that is why we are introducing wheelie bins as the best method of holding non-recyclable waste until it is collected. Your bin should have plenty of space and you will of course be separating out much of the rubbish for recycling that you currently put in your

## RECYCLING and WASTE

### Household Waste

Every Thursday

### Blue Box and Green Waste

Thursdays

December 1st, 15th and 29th

January 12th and 26th

February 19th and 23rd

No other dates have been advised at the time of going to press.

Please recycle:

- all paper and card waste
- shoes & clothes in a tied plastic bag
- all food and drink cans

Please put recyclables at the boundary of your property nearest the roadside by 7 am on the day of collection. Make sure they are visible from the road to ensure that collection takes place.

Contact: South Herts recycling team on 0208 508 4242



black sacks. We could empty your wheelie bin every week but the experience of other councils shows that this would not only substantially increase the cost of the service and your Council Tax, but also reduce the incentive to separate waste and recycle.

Standard 180 litre wheelie bins will be delivered to each household. If you need a larger one because of special circumstances such as a large family, or you live alone and would prefer a smaller bin, you will be able to apply (subject to justified need) for a different size. However, everyone will get the standard size bin to begin with and the decision as to the size of bin you ultimately receive will be that of the Council depending on circumstances.

#### **Will it smell or get dirty?**

We can't keep your bin clean for you but we can suggest a few tips to keep it fresh:

Most major supermarket carrier bags are now made out of biodegradable materials. The supermarkets introduced these bags after research showed many customers re-use the bags in their kitchen bins. Once the bag is full, people tie the handles into a knot and pop the bag in their wheelie bin. You can also double wrap anything particularly smelly. By this method, the refuse never actually comes into contact with the bin which stays clean and fresh.

Wheelie bins also have close fitting lids that contain any smells that might still arise. Unlike black sacks they are also secure against flies, cats, foxes, rodents and other animals. If your bin does need to be washed from time to time, you can do this simply by laying it on its side and rinsing with soapy water, or if you prefer there are companies that will clean the bin for you. Bin deodorisers are also available.

#### **Wheelie bins are too heavy!**

Many people find pushing a wheelie bin easier than carrying sacks of rubbish. Residents who may have difficulties and can't move their bins can apply for their rubbish to be collected from within the boundary of their property just as their black bags were collected.

#### **I don't have room for a wheelie bin**

Not everyone will receive wheelie bins under the new arrangements. For example, people living in flats or terraced houses without the necessary storage capacity or access may have other arrangements but for most of us wheelie bins are the way of the future.

---

#### **Freecycle**

The Freecycle Network™ is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It's a grassroots movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns. Each local group is run by a local volunteer moderator. The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's trash can truly be another's treasure!

When you want to find a new home for something -- whether it's a chair, a fax machine, piano, or an old door -- you simply send an e-mail offering it to members of your Freecycle group.

Or, maybe you're looking to acquire something yourself. Simply respond to a member's offer, and you just might get it. After that, it's up to the giver to decide who receives the gift and to set up a pickup time for passing on the treasure.

One main rule: Everything posted must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages.

Non-profit organizations also benefit from The Freecycle Network. Post the item or items you want to give away and a local organization can help you get it to someone in need.

Think globally, recycle locally. The Freecycle Network is open to all communities and to all individuals who want to participate. Freecycle groups are run by local volunteer moderators from across the globe who facilitate each local group - grassroots at its best!

[www.freecycle.org.uk](http://www.freecycle.org.uk)

<http://groups.yahoo.com/groups/Harlow>

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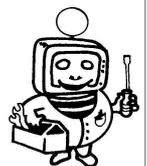
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## Bats and Ice Cream at St Mary's Church

By late afternoon on 13 August we were beginning to fear that the Bats and Ice Cream event would be a flop. Bats don't like flying in heavy rain, and it was RAINING. By the time Ken Greenway and Roger and Sylvia Jiggins from the Essex Bat Group arrived at the Church Room to set out their exhibits (including several varieties of dead bats and their droppings - PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH - as if we would!), it was raining even harder. And it was still raining at 7.30 when the ticket holders were pouring (flooding?) into the Church Room. But thankfully, by the time introductions were over, and we had sung Happy Birthday to one of the attendees, it was fair - if a tad damp underfoot - and Sylvia was able to lead the first group around outside to look at places that bats might use for roosting. Meanwhile Roger took a group inside the church to look at places bats can, and judging by droppings seen during the summer definitely do, roost. A third group stayed in the Church Room eating ice cream while Ken talked about the exhibits and enthused us by answering all manner of questions about bats. We swapped round twice, so everyone had a turn at listening to bats on the bat detectors around the church and in the garden of Pondfield Cottage (thanks Alan and Brenda), a chance for ice cream in the Church Room (yummy -thanks Irene), and an opportunity to peer up at crevices in the rafters and beams in the church (thanks to St Mary's PCC).



There are sixteen species of bat in the UK, and it turns out there are at least three in or around Sheering church - Pipistrelles (two types - Bandit Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle), Brown long-eared, and Natterer's. One of the groups also heard a Serotine (one of the higher-flying, big bats) a little distance away.

**Did you know** (most of us didn't until that evening...)? Bats roost in different places in the winter (cool and damp) and in the summer (warm and dry). A single pipistrelle bat may eat as many as 3000 insects in a single night. Bats use echolocation (emitting calls too high for humans to hear without a

bat detector), which gives them a clear "sound picture" of their surroundings. Brown long-eared bats have such good hearing that they can tell when a ladybird walks across a leaf. Bats aren't blind, but they see in black-and-white - not colour - because they are nocturnal. Bat flight is much more agile than bird flight because bats can control and manoeuvre their "wings" in the same complex way that we humans control our arms - they don't just flap. Bats take about five years to reach sexual maturity. Female bats give birth to just one baby each summer. Domestic cats and owls are the main predators of bats. All UK bats and their roosts are protected by law. For more information, click on [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk).

Elsie Baker, on behalf of Friends of St Mary's Sheering

Next event : Love Letters Saturday 18th February. See What's On - page 14

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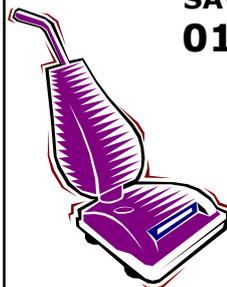
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**CLOSED ALL DAY THURSDAY  
HALF DAY SATURDAY  
VISA ACCESS SWITCH ACCEPTED**

## New Website for Sheering and Lower Sheering www.sheering.org.uk

Some time ago the Parish Council were offered a free website. Linda Ainsworth kindly offered to administer this and for a time it was up and running. Unfortunately it was extremely cumbersome to use and time-consuming to administer and it didn't look too good either!

In recent weeks, Kevin Scott of ScottDigital in Sheering, has very kindly been working with Linda to produce our very own website for the village. The website is currently in its infancy so Kevin and Linda would welcome any suggestions or comments while it is being developed.

It has been set up to provide up-to-date, on-line information for residents of Sheering and Lower Sheering and to supplement *Sheering News*. It also has many useful links to local organisations, local businesses and Local Government.

Local organisations are invited to submit information, articles and photographs for inclusion on the site and existing websites can be linked. The more people who contribute, the more interesting and useful the site can be!

Brief details of *Sheering News* advertisers will be included on the Local Businesses page including links and email addresses.

Individuals are welcome to submit letters, articles or photos which you would like published.

To do so please email them to [sheeringnews@sheering.co.uk](mailto:sheeringnews@sheering.co.uk), post to Linda Ainsworth The Willows The Street Sheering CM22 7LX or go to the contacts page by clicking on the menu at the top of the home page.

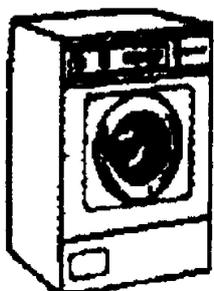
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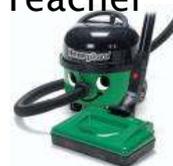
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## Autumn Missed - A Few Seasonal Thoughts

Autumns aren't what they were. The calendar tells us that the season still starts during the third week of September and ends a few days before Christmas, but Nature never sticks to the rules, and now, more than ever (presumably due to global warming) the guidelines are even hazier.

Not only Nature, but shops ignore the rules. For them, autumn begins when they decree it shall begin. I've seen 'Back to school placards in shop windows in the middle of July, before the schools have broken up and before the children have packed their buckets and spades, and by early August (rather like hearing the first cuckoo in spring in the old days) the first Christmas card has appeared.

You either love autumn or you hate it. Personally, I'm a lover, though it's with mixed feelings that one recognises the early signs of summer's end. As early as mid-August there's that "something in the air", morning and evening, a crisp, challenging, sharpening of the senses, half unwelcome, half thrilling with some dormant childish excitement, a bit of folk memory, stirring the blood.

Even in the country, we don't notice the seasons so much now. Few of us live close to the earth as our forefathers did, when a good harvest or a bad could mean the difference between life and death. The sights and sounds and smells of the countryside are no longer part of our lives - or, rather, we note them absent-mindedly as we work our way through our stressful days. We note that the leaves need sweeping, and that it's raining as we dash for our cars, we put crusts out on our bird tables but our double-glazing insulates us from birdsong, and the smell from the tarmac'd motorway obliterates the seasonal smells (good and less good) which were familiar to our forebears.

When we had to be self-supporting, autumn was the crown of the year. Now, harvest is over in a matter of days. Even bad weather doesn't prolong it by much, and the bulk of the work is carried out by a workforce of one. There was a time when it stretched from mid-July to mid-September, with country children being allowed time off school to help in the fields, and all other work was put on hold, the whole village or hamlet turning but to lend a hand. No one suggests that these were the good old days (read Thomas Hardy) but it certainly fostered a cheerful 'togetherness', culminating in the well-earned fun and games of the Harvest Home in lamplit barns, and Harvest Thanksgiving in lavishly-decorated country churches, smelling deliciously of apples, chrysanthemums and paraffin, where rosy faces

glowed as the organ thundered its invitation to "thankful people to come." (The sunburned faces nowadays are more usually the result of exotic foreign holidays than toil in the cornfields).

The spirit of grateful rejoicing is still there, I don't doubt, but the row of canned beans and sliced peaches at the altar steps doesn't have quite the same ambience as the pumpkins, apples and marrows of my childhood.

As the days grow short, a calm descends on the bare fields. Now, with harvest safely gathered in (early August these days) what next? 'Back to School' in shop windows and the first Christmas cards. By the time we reach (hopefully) the gentle Indian Summer which is autumn's bonus, with the leaves beginning to smoulder and the horizons fade into the seasonal mist beloved of Keats, the first flakes of 'snow' may be seen in the shopping malls. Long before the last yellow leaf has drifted down, the taped musack in the shops has started on 'Mary's Boy Child', and the TV advertisements are encouraging the young to pester for the latest (and most expensive) electronic toy.

Speak to the modern child about autumn, and it appears that the most significant part for them seems to be Hallowe'en. Exciting - yes. One wouldn't want to spoil a bit of harmless fun, but I question, now, whether it really is that. As a child I remember bobbing for apples, and listening to spooky stories by candlelight, A far cry from the present vaguely unpleasant 'trick or treat' imported from America, where presumably the rituals were retained in the folk memory of the immigrants from the dark European north. (Interestingly, Hallowe'en seems to be taking over from Bonfire Night as the major autumnal 'thrill; I can't remember when I was last accosted for a penny for the guy).

I'd like our children, and their children's children, to see and treasure the beauty and the 'specialness' of autumn, for it is, when we get down to basics, the most important of seasons. The supermarket shelves would be pretty bare if autumn didn't 'come up with the goods', year after year, as it has done since Man picked the first wild berries from some ancient autumnal hedgerow, tasted them and found them good.

And now, with December at the door, we are designed to rest: from our labours and *d\g* ourselves in against winter's onslaught and enjoy the fruits of our year's labour. Well, that's what we were programmed for, and it's a nice idea, isn't it?

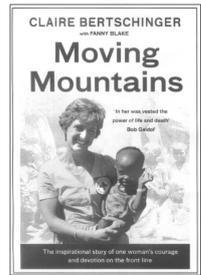
Happy winter!

Anon

## Claire Bertschinger Women of the Year Award

In the last edition of *Sheering News* we wrote about Claire Bertschinger, of Back Lane in Lower Sheering, the nurse whose field work in Ethiopia inspired Bob Geldof to organise Live Aid in 1985. On November 3rd 2005 Ms Irene Khan, secretary general of Amnesty International presented Claire with the Pilkington Women of the Year Window to the World Award at the Women of the Year Lunch in London.

The award salutes a woman whose dedication to her work, often in demanding and difficult circumstances, has opened all our eyes to a world we otherwise would not have known about or even tried to understand. Claire went on to work in many other troubled areas and recently wrote *Moving Mountains* about her experiences. *Moving Mountains* Doubleday 038565801X



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## Sheering School

In September we were delighted to hear that Sheering School has been awarded the Essex and Southend Healthy Schools' Intermediate Award. The project to be a Healthy School addresses various issues, such as safety, nutrition, drug education, Physical Education and Sex and Relationship Education. The concept of Healthy Education, however, goes far beyond these issues. It takes as its starting point the idea that every single event in our lives raises or lowers self-esteem. Taken in this sense, every aspect of life in school can be seen as "health-promoting" or "health-negating." An LEA Healthy School Adviser visited our school in June, as part of a validation process. The adviser toured the school to admire the numerous displays, observed a PSHE Lesson and talked to pupil representatives from the School Council, the Playleader Scheme and the Speaking and Listening Group. She also talked to our older pupils who had taken part in the School Residential Journey to Norfolk earlier in the month. In November four representatives from the school, including two pupils, attended a ceremony at Shire Hall, Chelmsford to celebrate the school's success. This Intermediate Award as a Healthy School endorses our School Mission Statement "Everyone Matters", which we have recently adopted. The Mission Statement recognises that our school is a caring Christian community, in which everyone is valued and has an important contribution to make to school life. Success in school depends on everyone being valued, whether pupils, staff, parents or governors.

Our school also values highly its links with the local community, and so we were pleased that following our Harvest Festival Service in school in October, our Year Six pupils were

able to deliver thirty parcels of Harvest Gifts to Senior Citizens living in Sheering and Lower Sheering. I know that these Harvest Gifts were very much appreciated, because I have received so many telephone calls and letters of thanks, commenting favourably on the behaviour of the older pupils who delivered the parcels. Our Year 6 pupils really enjoy the opportunity of delivering the gifts and talking to local residents.

At the end of October we said farewell to our two cleaners, Vivien Godfrey and Deirdre Archer, both residents of Sheering, who have retired after completing between them over 40 years devoted service to the school. We thank both ladies for their commitment to the school for such a long period of time, and we wish them every happiness in their retirement.

Sadly, like everyone in the village, we are mourning the death of Stan Barker, who served the school as a governor for over fifteen years. Stan committed an enormous amount of time over the years to ensuring that the school premises were maintained to a high standard. Nothing was too much trouble for him. He carried out countless jobs around the school, often without being asked, and in the process saved the school thousands of pounds. His commitment to the village, which he loved, was recognised by Epping Forest District Council awarding Stan "Citizen of the Year Certificates" in 2001 and 2005. But most of all at Sheering School we will remember Stan as a true friend, who was always willing to give his support to the school. Everyone knew Stan and liked him, because of his friendly and helpful nature. We send our sincerest condolences to Barbara and his family at this time.

Philip Hays  
Headteacher

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Call Beth Knight, Crime Reduction Assistant for more Information on the Home Safety Scheme.

Beth Knight  
Crime Reduction Team  
Epping Forest District Council  
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4th Sunday	8.00 am	1662 Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Morning Worship
5th Sunday	10.30 am	Joint Service (St. Mary's or Holy Trinity)

The Rector writes: -

Last month was all about remembering. Remembering Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot on the first weekend with all the usual bangs and whooshes for several days around the 5<sup>th</sup>. We all enjoy the spectacle of the fireworks but may often forget what the historic event behind it is.

Then on the 11<sup>th</sup> at 11.00 a two minute silence in many places around the country when many stopped to remember all those who died for their country in the two World Wars and all who gave up so much for our freedom. Then on Remembrance Sunday itself there was the main opportunity to stop and remember.

Henry Ford once famously said that History is bunk. How wrong he was if by that he meant that we cannot learn and gain from the past. We can and we must or we will simply repeat the old mistakes. Unfortunately, so many have no idea of what did happen and so we are in grave danger for the future.

December is also a month dominated by a great event of history that we all get involved with whether we like it or not. **Christmas**. For many the reason for the festivities is completely hidden behind all the shopping, cards, decorations and syrupy music. Of course, the reason is that Christians want to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. No one

knows when his actual birthday was but for centuries the 25th December has been used for this purpose. Reading the account of how a teenage Jewish girl, Mary, became the mother of Jesus and how the events unfolded for that birth to be at the right place at the right time is central to Carol Services and the Christmas story. So significant was the event that our dating of history changed to highlight it. We live in the year 2005 "Anno Domini" (in the year of the Lord). Whatever else we do this Christmas can I urge us all to remember this story.

Remembering is vital. Especially we must remember that the real message of Christmas is that God loved us so much that Jesus came into the world and was born at Bethlehem.

Yours sincerely

Tim Potter

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➡ **1st March** ⬅

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