



Hoe Mill Bridge — What’s taking so long?

The original work (which began in August 2019) was intended to repair and carry out preventative maintenance (called scour protection) to the river banks abutting the bridge structure. This was required as there had been some erosion which could undermine the bridge supports. This work turned out to be more extensive than expected, but at the same time a full survey of the bridge was carried out. This revealed that the entire bridge was actually in a dangerous condition. It is supported by 12 square concrete pillars and damage to all 48 faces was evident. This was most likely caused by the excessive weights that the bridge has been carrying. Built in 1925, it simply wasn’t expected to bear these loads and it is now suffering as a result.

The damage is of sufficient scale to warrant emergency repair works. However there is currently no budget for full scale structural reconstruction, therefore the immediate work will be on a temporary basis until a more long term

solution can be found. Repairs to the cast concrete pillars were done straight away, but it was imperative to dramatically reduce loads on the structure. The plan is to create a width restriction in the centre of the bridge with traffic light control to alternate traffic across the bridge. There will also be physical measures to prevent parking along both sides of the bridge.

Apparently the distance is too long for a voluntary priority and there are likely to be lights at each end of the two bridges. There isn’t sufficient vision of oncoming traffic arriving at the bridge to rely on a voluntary scheme. As these measures are temporary, they can be enacted with a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order which doesn’t require consultation.

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Editor's Note



Welcome to issue 26 of our newsletter, and an especial welcome to those who are new to this little gem. I hope you have dried out after all the rain, and I am delighted to tell you that due to the flooding at the end of Ulting Lane which went onto the

B1019 and the fields of The Orchards and Fords Farm, the Highways Agency have finally decided to 'rod' the pipe that runs from the ditch on the Ulting Lane side under the road to the fields. This used to be done on a regular basis but over the last few years has been sadly neglected, so at least the floods prompted something, but not until the road surface was damaged and the flooding went up as far as No. 1 Ulting Lane – something I haven't seen for many years, and I've lived here since 1957 (yes, I am that old!) Sadly I omitted to take a photo of the flooding – did anyone else take one?

Parish Council Meetings

As I say in every newsletter, and I repeat here, do come along to Parish Council meetings so that you can learn all that your Parish Council is doing for you. The meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month.

As always, tea and coffee will be served from 7.10 onwards so that if you have any questions or queries before the meeting these can be addressed in a friendly and private manner before the official business of the meeting begins. It has been good to see more people coming along, so do join them and find out what's going on – you won't know if you don't engage!

The Cowshed Club



Sadly, due to pressure of work, the organisers of the Cowshed Club feel that they can no longer carry on organising the wonderful events that we have enjoyed over the past four years and are looking for someone (or a committee of people) to take on

the running of this excellent little venture. If you would like to take this on (or form a committee to do so) please contact Mary Ashby (cj@ashby.co.uk) or Jeanette Gribble (maeldunejoinery@outlook.com). It would be a great shame if this wonderful gathering had to end as it gives a chance for ladies to meet up and make new friends.

There will be one more meeting when we can all meet up to decide what to do in the future, so please do give this some thought and step forward to help if you think you can. If enough of us take a share it would be much less of a burden.

And the Parish Bouquet goes to...



The Parish Bouquet this issue has been nominated by Louise Sankey of Luard's, Ulting Lane, Langford, saying that James and Debra Meadows from No. 8 Ulting Lane, and their nephew Billy Adshead from Hatfield Peverel, should receive this for their tireless work in

collecting litter from the village. Although they have only been in the village a short time they have fully embraced a love of Langford and its countryside from the moment they arrived. Debra said: "The weekly

clean ups began in December 2018, starting with the river walk (sometimes all the way to Maldon, and up to Hoe Mill Lock), the length of Ulting Lane, then starting to include Hatfield Road and the track up to Beeleigh Falls. When we bought the kayak, James and Billy started to go out on the river and clean up there too. Billy is 9 years old now and, thankfully, has a passion for wildlife and nature so he really enjoys doing his part to help protect where we live, even though he lives in Hatfield Peverel - he loves Langford. Billy has his cleaning tools, including a variety of rubbish pickers, and James has one especially adapted for getting things at a distance."

So thank you so much, James, Debra and Billy for your care of our countryside – this is well deserved.

Do you know someone who merits the Parish Bouquet? Please let me have your nominations for the next issue of our newsletter, and let us thank those who make our lives a little better.



And another sort of 'litter'...

More and more dog excrement is appearing along the verges in Ulting Lane these days. Can we put out a plea to all dog walkers who use our lanes to pick up after your dog(s). I understand that those on long walks do not want to carry their dog's poo for miles, but your Parish Council is seeking to have a 'dog bin' installed by the Waterworks entrance in the Lane so that 'poo bags' can be disposed of easily and hygienically. So **please** do be considerate and pick up after your dogs and leave the lane as a pleasant place to walk for all residents.



Did you know...There used to be a Dr. Barnardo's home in Langford?

When Thomas John Barnardo was born in Dublin in 1845 no one could have predicted that he would become one of the most famous men in Victorian Britain. At the age of 16, after converting to Protestant evangelicalism he decided to become a medical missionary in China and so set out for London to train as a doctor.

The London in which he arrived in 1866 was a city struggling to cope with the effects of the Industrial Revolution. The population had dramatically increased and much of this increase was concentrated in the East End, where overcrowding, bad housing, unemployment, poverty and disease were rife. A few months after Barnardo came to London an outbreak of cholera swept through the East End killing more than 3,000 people and leaving families destitute. Thousands of children slept on the streets and many others were forced to beg after being maimed in factories. In 1867, Barnardo set up a ragged school in the East End, where poor children could get a basic education. One evening a boy at the Mission, Jim Jarvis, took him around the East End showing him children sleeping on roofs and in gutters. The encounter so affected him he decided to devote himself to helping destitute children. In 1870, supported by Lord Shaftesbury, Barnardo opened his first home for boys in Stepney Causeway. He regularly went out at night into the slum district to find destitute boys. One evening, an 11-year old boy, John Somers (nicknamed 'Carrots') was turned away because the shelter was full. He was found dead two days later from malnutrition and exposure and from then on the home bore the sign "No Destitute Child Ever Refused Admission".

Victorians saw poverty as shameful as a result of laziness or vice. However Thomas Barnardo accepted all children and stressed that every child deserved the best possible start in life, whatever their background. Although he had begun studying medicine at the London Hospital he never qualified, but used the title 'Doctor'. When he died in 1905 at Leonard's Lodge, his home in Surbiton, the charity he had founded was running 96 children's homes.

The Langford connection came in September 1939 when, with the outbreak of the Second World war, the girls' school in Langford Grove was closed and the Dr. Barnardo's organisation took it over. The parish magazine of October 1939 reported: "Langford Grove, used to the schoolgirl's stride across its threshold for the past 15 years, will, for the duration of the war, resound to the patter of younger feet. Dr. Barnardo's have taken over The Grove for evacuation purposes. They have moved 30 delicate toddlers under five and

14 babies under a year old from the danger zone at Barkingside to this quiet country mansion. Accompanying the younger children are 27 older girls, who are completing their training for domestic service by helping with the housework and the care of the children. The Barnardo party, in charge of nurses and other helpers, were brought to The Grove in two London Transport buses.



"It was a sad sight to see them leave their Village Home, but their new quarters are rich in compensations. The children are all benefiting by the country air and the older girls are greatly appreciating the beauty of nature around them. All are happy in their new environment, one older girl, unconscious of the horrors of modern warfare, was heard to say she hoped the war would never cease, she was so happy in her new home!" But barely a year later, in June 1940, the parish magazine noted:

"[The] Dr. Barnardos Home that had been stationed at Langford Grove had to leave on account of war conditions. They are greatly missed, always so ready and willing to help in any way that was of advantage to Church and parish, not forgetting their choir of girls. The Rector [Rev. Ernest Creed] received a letter from the Governors thanking him and the parish generally for the welcome extended to them during their stay in Langford."

The children were moved to 'Five Corners', a large house in Wickham Bishops (pictured below), and remained there until 1945 when they were transferred to the Collier House home at Stanway.



It is not clear why the children were moved to new premises, but presumably Langford Grove, being a much larger building, was deemed more suitable for the Army than Five Corners. Whatever the reason, Langford Grove was commandeered by the Ministry of Defence for the duration of the war, and this proved to be a disastrous decision as the Army's occupation heralded the first phase of the death of this wonderful building.

Hoe Mill Bridge Works (Contd/...)

This will last for 18 months after which time it is intended that the long term plan will have been agreed.



The road width will allow cars, light vans and 4x4's through, but it will be too narrow for HGV's and large farm equipment.

The works permit has been extended by six months, but it had been hoped that the initial work would be finished by Christmas, but extra problems and bad weather made that impossible. The engineer expressed his regret that the timeline had to be extended, but stressed that the bridge isn't fit for purpose and is a danger for traffic unless this work is done. Similar issues have been found at Paper Mill Bridge and Black Bridge as all were built in the 1920's and are past their intended life!

Historically agricultural vehicles had a dispensation to ignore the 3.5 ton limit, but the order now has no exceptions and therefore it would appear that farmers have been as guilty as the lorries since 2010 when it was set. New signs advising width limits etc. will be installed to reduce the risk of heavy vehicles arriving at the bridge unable to cross.

On the plus side, this will reduce heavy traffic along the road to Ulting. Clearly this will not be good news to the businesses either side of the bridge, but the extended closure is essential for safety reasons.



In December 2019 upstream works began on site and continue. Riverbed material is being moved upstream where it will be spread to the desired level. The photo at the top of the column shows the floating platform

and equipment used to lay the materials in the riverbed.

After the removal of a large dead tree, additional material was also required to fill the embankment at the south west corner of the structure. The embankment has been stabilised and partially filled, but the work has been slowed by rising water levels due to heavy rainfall.

Gabion baskets (shown below) have been lifted into place and rock rolls have been installed either side of the gabion basket wall. Water levels are changing frequently but the contractor is continuing to work through the unpredictable weather.



Clearly there have been more problems than anticipated in doing this work, but it might have been easier to demolish the bridge and build a new one, or install a Bailey Bridge as developed in 1940-1941 by the British for military use during the Second World War. Hopefully by the next edition of this newsletter the bridge will (finally) be open again

Lock House, Hoe Mill

While we're on the subject of Hoe Mill...a letter in the March 1965 issue of *Essex Countryside* (Vol. 13, No. 98) by Mrs. E.N. Cant, questioned the assertion in an earlier article that the local policeman lived there in 1938. She said: "I have lived at Lock House for the past twenty-seven years. Southend Waterworks bought the property in 1924, after which it was let to the Constable family, Mr. Constable being the great-grandson of John Constable, the great landscape artist. They lived there until they passed on about sixteen years ago." So, clearly the wrong constable!

Your computer has a problem...

Oh no it hasn't – it's a scam! As a result of the Essex Community Messages sent out regarding scams, it has become apparent a number of people have been contacted by scammers recently by telephone stating that they have a virus or problems with their computers. The caller goes on to warn the customer that their computer will become unusable if the problem is not fixed and offers to guide them through steps to fix the problem. Instead of helping them though, he directs them to download a programme that asks them to pay a fee.

Similarly, scammers are contacting residents pretending to be from Microsoft or Windows or a company working on their behalf. They say something like "we have reason to believe there's a problem with your computer". They will then ask you to log into a website that will give the caller total control over your computer. This will allow them to obtain all sorts of personal details without your consent. Our advice is

- * Never pay anyone to fix your computer remotely.
- * Never give your bank details to someone you don't know or allow them access to your computer.

- * View the Telephone Preference Service on www.tpsonline.org.uk for information on a free service to help reduce nuisance callers.

- * View the Mail Preference Service www.mpsonline.org.uk for information on a free service to help reduce nuisance mail.

Please email or contact Action Fraud with any information if you believe you have been contacted fraudulently. The more information received, the closer they can get to identifying offenders.

www.actionfraud.police.uk

Art Show 2020

The Art Show this year will be held in Langford and Ulting Village Hall over the weekend of Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th April between 10am

and 5pm on both days. This excellent show brings in artists from around the county and is one of the best of its kind, displaying as it does artwork of a consistently high quality, year after year. There is excellent

stewarded parking, and superb refreshments too, so come along and support local artists and buy yourself a future masterpiece, or just be amazed at the incredible talent that we have in our district. Anyone who would like to exhibit at this prestigious event should contact the organiser, Caroline Spong, on 01621 855220 or email langfordandultingartshow@gmail.com for an entry form before 1st March. Volunteers to help set up, or assist with the teas or parking would be very much appreciated, and again, please let Caroline know if you would be willing to help in any way.



A New Fence for St. Giles' Church



As you may know, the Parish Council is responsible for the upkeep of the 'closed' churchyards in the two parishes (these are churchyards that are now closed to further burials). The churchyard at St. Giles' was closed in 1930 and the fence has done remarkably well to have survived as long as it has. In accordance with the Parish Council's obligations, estimates were sought from three sources and Danbury Fencing won the contract. The new fence is a like-for-like replacement of the old one as required by Church law and, I'm sure you will agree, is not only beautiful, but a great asset to the village.

Ulting Post Office

I've been trawling through a lot of old magazines recently, and according to the *Essex Countryside* of October 1963 [Vol. 11. No. 81] there used to be a Post Office in Ulting. In an article by W. Bowen-Davies he notes: "There was a Post Office up to the time of the retirement of Miss Bowles the Postmistress, who operated the affairs of the Postmaster General through a little white service hatch between the small entrance lobby and the pink-walled furnished parlour in which she kept her stamps and postal orders.

"I can remember as a child seeing the hatch raised and Miss Bowles's smiling face on the other side, and beyond her one could catch a glimpse of stuffed birds in glass cases, and long pheasant tail feathers stuck in colourful china jars on the mantelpiece. The mahogany table in the centre of the room and the chest of drawers against the opposite wall were kept polished and as clean as a new pin. She must have kept the stamps and the postal orders in the chest of drawers, because she always went across the room in this direction when you asked her for one or the other. No doubt had she lived in this present age she might have been attacked by an ambitious teddy boy. Fortunately there were none of these gentlemen around in those days, not in peaceful Ulting itself.

"Miss Bowles took over from her father, who received a special decoration from the G.P.O. for length of service. He was thought to be the oldest postman in the country, and was certainly the oldest inhabitant of Ulting for many years."

A little piece of railway history...



A couple of years ago, two railway enthusiasts found a small concrete building, almost entirely hidden by vegetation, on the former railway line in Langford. On further investigation it transpired that what they had found, about 100 metres east of the remains of Langford & Ulting Station, was a British Railways standard concrete Fogman's

Hut. They brought this little gem to the attention of the curator of Mangapps' Railway Museum in Burnham on Crouch.

The Museum Curator said: "...in terms of railway architecture, it's no St. Pancras Station! However, it is an interesting link to a common element of railway operation which has disappeared from the modern railway, an example of an item of which few, if any, are preserved and, of course, part of our local railway heritage.

"Huts of this type were introduced in about 1950 and replaced earlier wooden structures. They were used widely on British Railways to accommodate 'Fogmen'. In the days of oil-lit semaphore signals and before the introduction of automatic warning systems, signals could become invisible to train drivers in fog or falling snow. It would then be necessary to call-out Fogmen - actually off-duty track workers - to attend signals and warn approaching trains of the signal indication, by showing an additional light and, most importantly, by placing explosive detonators on the rails, to give an audible warning.

"This hut was adjacent to the Maldon 'Down Distant' signal, the first indication to a driver that he was approaching the terminus. The Maldon branch line closed entirely in 1966, a victim of the Beeching cuts and after over thirty years of disuse, the former track was purchased by Essex County Council and turned into a public footpath, the 'Blackwater Rail Trail'."

The hut had suffered some superficial damage as a result of almost fifty years of disuse and vandalism, but Mangapps' Museum felt that it justified being rescued. They contacted Essex County Council, who kindly donated the hut to Mangapps Railway. However, it took almost three years to work out how to remove the structure without causing further damage and overcome complicated problems of access.

At last, early one morning, a team of Mangapps volunteers, with the Railway's truck and trailer and a telescopic forklift loaned by Sonic Rail Services Ltd, arrived at Langford and the hut was quickly and safely recovered. Almost half a century after it was last passed by a train, it's now back on a working railway. So do go along to the museum (CM0 8QG) and see it.

And how on earth did this happen?

Driving into Maldon on the morning of Robert Burns' birthday (25th January for those not of Scottish heritage), I was alarmed to see, at the brow of the railway bridge in Langford, a red car balanced precariously in the trees. In the past we have often seen cars that have run off the road, but usually they have gone through the barriers on the other side of the bridge as their drivers have ignored warnings about the road turning rather sharply to the right once over the brow. This car, however, looked as if it had reversed into the trees - not an easy manoeuvre I should imagine, and no doubt a very distressing experience at the time.



As there was a sticker on the driver's window, it was evident that the police had already been informed, so no action needed to be taken on my part. Fortunately it was removed the afternoon after this photograph was taken, so avoiding drivers causing another accident trying to work out how this one had happened in the first place!

Little Lost Cat

For some weeks now this little cat has been haunting the residents of Ulting Lane. Does anyone know who it belongs to? He (or she) has no collar or name tag and has only three legs, the front left one having been professionally amputated at some stage in the past; the rear paws have a white sock. It is a very friendly little thing, and always very hungry. If no-one comes forward as its owner, I will try and get it to a vet to see if there is a chip, but it won't go into a carry box at the moment, and I don't want to frighten it. I am sure there is someone out there who is missing this lovely little creature, and if it is yours, or you know who owns it, do contact me on 01621 855447 and I will be happy to reunite you. Having had my own cat go missing for some time I know how traumatic this is, but if no-one claims him I will be happy to take it in myself. I have a cat of my own and two dogs, but he/she will be very welcome.



News from St. Giles' Church, Langford



I had never seen a fieldfare before this winter. My children and I were out by Oak Tree Meadow and saw a pair in some hedges stuffing their faces on berries. My son had his binoculars on him

and together the three of us watched these birds from afar. It was wonderful to notice the subtle differences between the fieldfare and what we first thought was a thrush - the growing realisation that we were seeing something for the very first time.

This weekend is the RSPB birdwatch and as long-time members of the RSPB we get our garden ready to receive whatever birds will pass by. The fat balls will be made and put up – a messy business, but undeniably fun! The seed holders have been mended (or retired) and the pond has been given a good going over.

The deal is that you spend an hour counting the highest number of birds that you see at any one time. Pigeons will feature quite highly – one of our neighbours races them. But, being near a Site of Special Scientific Interest means we'll get cormorants and herons and lapwings overflying our garden too. This year we have been particularly blessed by seeing, up close, a skein of Brent Geese in flight: the sound of their feathers as they beat their wings is quite something to hear.

There is something of a spiritual discipline about this hour we spend together each year watching and seeking. The Poet, Ann Lewin, says it better than I can.

Prayer

Prayer is like watching for the Kingfisher.
All you can do is be where he is likely to appear
And wait.
Mostly, nothing much happens.
There is space, silence and expectancy.
No visible sign, only the knowledge
that he's been there before
And may come again.
Seeing or not seeing ceases to matter.
You have to be prepared.
But sometimes, when you've almost given up,
There is a flash of brightness.

Winter is, oddly, the best time to see a Kingfisher because there is such a shortage of foliage. In the very same way, it is often in times of great difficulty that prayer takes on an especial poignancy. To hear the still, small voice of calm – is something to seek out tenaciously. Once heard, like the feathered beat of a skein of geese, it is never forgotten. May God bless you thus this year.

Revd. Asa Humphreys



News from All Saints Church, Ulting

As 2019 drew to a close Christmas at All Saints was, as always, a special time of the year. The traditional Carols by Candlelight Service proved so popular that the congregation was one of the largest in the



church's history. The Christmas Story was told through Bible readings and modern poems together with Christmas songs from the Hadfelda Singers and a good selection of traditional carols. The lighted candles around the church provided the perfect atmosphere for the occasion. Afterwards the marquee in the church grounds was buzzing as everyone made the most of the wonderful refreshments. It is still a mystery to me how they managed to produce plates of fish and chips, hot sausage rolls, pasties and cakes after the service. My thanks to all the readers and singers who took part, all those who decorated the church and those who provided refreshments and especially to everyone who came along and made the occasion so memorable.

2020 brings a new era to All Saints as the church now has a new under-pew heating system which can be operated from each individual pew. Please ask if you need assistance to turn the heating for your pew on or off. Not only has the heating been updated, but thanks to a generous anonymous donation, the inside of the church is being redecorated. It is badly needed but it was a project that had been abandoned until the receipt of the donation which goes part of the way to covering the cost.

As we leave the winter months behind and the early signs of spring begin to appear it is worth remembering that pancakes and Shrove Tuesday mark the day before Lent begins. There will be an evening service at All Saints on Ash Wednesday (26 February) at 7.30 p.m. when members of the congregation can, if they wish, have the sign of the cross traced on their forehead in ashes as an expression of repentance and to identify with Christ. The ashes are made after burning the palm crosses given out on Palm Sunday last year. Even though you may not have attended this service before or may not wish to receive the tracing of ashes, you will be very welcome to come along. Easter week will begin with a service for Palm Sunday (5 April) at 9 a.m. The events of Good Friday will be observed during a service on 10 April at 2.00 p.m. and Easter Sunday with Holy Communion on 12 April at 9 a.m. I am in church every Wednesday for Morning Office at 9 a.m. and if you would like to join me I should be very pleased to see you.

With loving prayers and blessings.
Revd. Derek



Clubs, Societies and Voluntary Bodies

Parish Council

<https://e-voice.org.uk/langford-ulting/>

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Village Hall Committee

John Tomlins (Chairman: 01245 380359)

Vicky Anfilogoff (Secretary: 012621 333110)

Mary Stoddart (Bookings: 07519 360788)

langfordultingvh@gmail.com;

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Members: Mary Ashby, Sarah Buckley, Peter

MDowns, Sally Marks, Merle Pipe, Caroline

Spong

Bowls Club – Monday eve & Wednesday
afternoon Contact Bob Ryall (01621 858365)

Quilting Group – 1st & 3rd Friday (1-4 p.m.)
Contact Suzanne Benbow (01621 868610)

Line Dancing – Friday evenings

Contact Rosie Grimwade (Tel: 07802 322868)

Friends of St. Giles' Church – Chairman –
Irene Allen

(Tel: 01621 855447) ireneallen815@gmail.com

Local History Recorder – Mrs. Irene Allen
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Museum of Power, Hatfield Road, Langford
(Tel: 01621 843183)

enquiries@museumofpower.org.uk

www.museumofpower.org.uk

Maldon Golf Club, Beeleigh, Langford,
Maldon, CM9 4SS

(Tel: 01621 853212)

www.maldon-golf.co.uk

Heavenly Supplies Community Shop

St. Giles' Church, Maldon Road, Langford

(Tel: 01621 855447)

ireneallen815@gmail.com

Hatha Yoga Classes Mondays 4-5.15pm &
5.45-7pm. Contact Sue Lyman 07764682779
www.SueLymanYoga

Glenn Mayes, Toastmaster & Independent Celebrant

4 Brockley Cottages, Ulting, CM9 6QX

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C.J. Ashby Forestry Ltd, Willow Barn, Witham Road,
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Maypole Clinic: Maypole Clinic [Osteopath] Unit 3, The Barns,
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If you would like to contribute an article or other content for future issues of the Newsletter, contact the Editor: Irene Allen