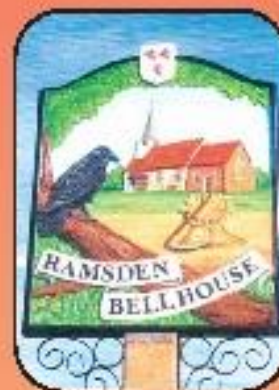


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**Village Magazine
Summer 2016**

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A Word from the Editor

What a strange winter we have had. I hope the unseasonable temperatures are reflected in our fuel bills! My first daffodil of the season bloomed on December 17th, and was brightening the garden on Christmas Day, (see photo). This prompted a very wet and muddy tramp round my garden, where I discovered many out of season flowers, both wild and cultivated were flowering. Even the birds were confused in December, some even mating - whatever happens to the resulting eggs - I wonder? And of course with the amount of rain, and unseasonable warmth the lawns just grew and grew.

But other things have been occupying the minds of many residents of Ramsden Bellhouse. The proposed building of new houses in our village has raised a great deal of feelings. I do not wish to comment here except to say that it has brought people together with their neighbours which is perhaps one positive thing to come out of what is to many a worrying situation.

The roadside rubbish situation seems to have reared its ugly head again in some areas of the Village. The verges around and past the church seem to be the worst. I have seen fast food wrappers etc thrown from cars in this location, so it is difficult to control, but it does spoil the appearance of an apparently affluent village. Perhaps we should watch out for rubbish thrown onto our verges.

Another previous grumble has also resurfaced. It has been brought to my notice that all day bonfires have been causing annoyance. Now that we all have green bins, I would not have thought this necessary. You can get extra bins at a reasonable price from the council. There has always been an unwritten law, accepted generally here that bonfires were only lit after 4pm with due regard to ones neighbours. This seems reasonable.

I understand that the Badminton section of the Village Hall is in crisis. This section has a long history of service to the Village, and I cannot feel that there is nobody here, who would enjoy a friendly game on a Friday evening. Think about it, and then go along and try it - or contact the number in the Village Directory at the back of this Magazine.

Finally it only remains for me to thank all those involved with the production and delivery of this magazine and the advertisers. If using the adverts please say where you saw their advert. Copy for the next issue by September 20th either to me or preferably to bryan.diggory@sky.com.

Isabel Johnson

Chairmans Report

The winter still appears to be with us in spite of the sun being out for some of the days. In my garden I have three distinct groups of Daffodils, the first flowered the end of last year and have now died back, the next are now coming to the end of their flowering as they did not come out over a month later. The third group are just coming out. Even the plants are confused.

The refurbished Kitchen is proving an attraction all round with the better access and hot water boilers for tea. The store room floor is due for a recovering soon, I am just awaiting quotes for this work.

The main problem for the future is the refurbishment of the Old Hall floor, it has suffered water ingress damage on the south side escape door, this has now been sealed but the damage has been done. The repair will require extensive work at a convenient time when the resources are available, until then routine inspections indicate it should last out.

The defibrillator has now been fitted outside on the north wall and is now available for use. Should you unfortunately require its use then dial 999 and follow the instructions. Training has been carried out and most sections have some trained members. PLEASE NOTE it is not essential to have had the training as when you phone up 999 they will tell you what to do.

Our next event is St Georges day breakfast which will be over by the time this Mag is out, I hope you enjoyed it. The next main event is our outdoor music event Sat 25th June 16. This will be similar to last year and with a bit of luck with the weather will be just as good.

C. Jeffree, Ramsden Bellhouse Village Hall Chairman
ramsdenbellhouse.info



If you have a story to tell contact the Editor

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Services:

1st Sunday: Evening Prayer, 6.30pm

2nd Sunday: Holy Communion, 9.30am

3rd Sunday: Holy Communion, 6.30pm

4th Sunday: Family Service, 10.30am

5th Sunday: Benefice Holy Communion rotating between St. Mary's, St. Margaret's, Downham, and St. Peter's, South Hanington, usually at 10.00am.

St. Mary's Church will be open for visitors every Saturday from 10am to 4pm from April to October, provided a steward is able to be present. If you were able to fulfil this role occasionally (10am to 1pm or 1pm to 4pm) please give Beryl a call on 01245 601298. On the second Saturday of May, June, July and August there will be a Coffee Morning in the Church, proceeds going towards the cost of flowers for the Flower Festival over the August Bank Holiday weekend.

Joint activities with our friends at the Baptist Church are continuing. On Palm Sunday when we have in the past met at the Baptist Church and processed to St. Mary's for the service, this year we met at St. Mary's and walked to the Baptist Church and held the service there. On 10th July St. Mary's members will join with the Baptists at their Church, and on 9th October they will come to St. Mary's, both of these services being at 10.30am. Every Monday morning, members of both churches meet for coffee at the Emmanuel Hall at the Baptist Church any time between 10.30 and Noon, with a guest speaker on alternate weeks. This meeting is open to anybody – male or female – whether Church members or not.

The first of this year's social and fund raising events, our annual Quiz Night on 15th April, will no doubt have taken place before you read this. Other forthcoming events are:-

Saturday 21st May -- Concert by the Southend Vox Choir in the Church at 7.30pm. Those who came to their previous concert will surely want to hear them again. Cheese and wine will be served in the interval.

Tickets will be available from Audrey on 01268 710757.

Saturday 18th June – Strawberry Cream Tea in the Village Hall from 2 to 4pm.

August Bank Holiday weekend – Flower Festival.

Saturday 27th August – Church open 2 to 4pm, light refreshments available. Concert by the Sid Bolan Big Band in the evening in the Church grounds (If wet, this will take place in the Village Hall.)

Sunday 28th and Monday 29th – Church open from 11am to 4pm with stalls outside and Ploughman's lunches and other refreshments on sale. There will be a Songs of Praise on Sunday at 4pm, in the open air weather permitting.

Saturday 1st October – Coffee Morning in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care. 10am to Noon at the Church.

Saturday 22nd October – a new venture – Barn Dance in the Village Hall.

Friday 11th November – Charity Beetle Drive in the Village Hall. This will be St. Mary's contribution towards the Village Charity Effort on behalf of Brainwave.

Alan Pegrum

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Croatia - A Beautiful Country

When our eldest granddaughter told us that she was getting married in September 2015 we were very happy but also very surprised when she added that it would take place in Croatia. One of her best friends lives in Bosnia and being chosen for one of her bridesmaids she did not realise that she would not be allowed into this country because Bosnia is not part of the EU. Hence she chose Croatia as the bordering country and who are in the EU and incidentally also use their own currency, being the kuna.

The guest list was kept to a maximum of 40 people and every single detail was arranged in Croatia so that they knew exactly how much the whole affair would cost, and I must add it was much cheaper than if it had been held in this country, not to mention the spectacular scenery and 32 degrees of heat. Most of the guests of course travelled by air but Tony and I decided to make a holiday of it and go by road. Everyone thought that we were mad of course. Only just over 1400 miles (not much when you say it quick) and we would see so many more countries en route. As time passed, we started to plan our route and decided we would book three hotels, equalling the journey to between 330 and 350 miles per day (a doddle on the Continent).

We had two drivers to share the load and three extra octogenarians who wanted to come 'just for the ride'. Mad, yes, everyone said so. The day eventually dawned when it was time to go. Our first night was spent in Nancy, France with a hotel we had used before. Easy journey - tunnel crossing at 6am and we were in Nancy by 4pm in the afternoon. Our second hotel was booked for just north of Milan - a beautiful journey with spectacular scenery over the St. Gotthard Pass into Switzerland, then south to Milan, passing through many tunnels and more beautiful scenery.

The third day, from Milan to Rijeka in Croatia, was mostly on heavy motorway, but we did notice that each time we stopped en route the temperature got hotter and hotter. We passed the turnoff to Venice and the last name place in Italy was Trieste, which then took us into Slovenia for about 50 miles (a beautiful country) and then into Croatia and Rijeka, where we found our hotel right on the coast overlooking the Adriatic. All the hotel staff spoke English and could not have been more helpful. The hotel was top class and our bedrooms were practically over the Adriatic, and at a very reasonable price.

On the 4th day we left around 7.30 am as we wanted to reach



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Dubrovnik, our final destination, by 4pm because the wedding party were having a wine tasting and everyone wanted to be there. The 370 miles it took us was truly amazing, very mountainous but very green, with the Adriatic on our right, and 2 miles of Bosnia part of the coastline, very odd. Would you believe it, we arrived at our hotel at 3.30pm - just in time. All this was done with the aid of two satnavs' - the destination in one and the other for fuel and refreshment stops. We also followed the map as well.

Croatia is a very beautiful country, everything is much cheaper than here, and the weather unfortunately a little too hot for us. Apparently, one week later would have been perfect, at around 26 degrees. The wedding took place in a top class hotel using three terraces overlooking the Adriatic, the top one being for the ceremony, the second for refreshments and photos and the third, overlooking the sea, for the wonderful wedding breakfast and dancing until midnight - fantastic.

We spent a further couple of days relaxing in our wonderful hotel (too hot to go far) and the journey home was just as easy and everyone agreed that it would be lovely to do it all again, but maybe at a slower pace.

Celia & Tony Rogers



Fun Whist

As we lurch into a rather chilly spring and our brains slowly start to energise after a long winter, we begin to think of our social calendars! Consider joining us for Fun Whist in the Village Hall. Titled 'Fun Whist' as we try to keep everything as light hearted as we can. It's a chance to meet other villagers and, if you have never been tempted into our Village Hall come along and get involved. Don't let scary talk of potential building or upset in the Village be your only reason for stepping inside our lovely, local, Hall amenity!

Never played Whist (or not for years)? No problem. We can guide you through the basics and the half-time tea/coffee and biscuits gives a breather to assess your progress.

Just turn up, 2nd Saturday in the month, 7-15, and we would be delighted to see you. Details are also on the Village Website.

Angela Hodivala



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www.ramsdenbellhouse.info Take a look at the Ramsden Bellhouse website and find out what is going on at the Village Hall as well as around the village.

It has details of the various activities and clubs held in the Village Hall, local businesses, a history of the Village, the Church. You can view the Village Magazine online, going back to 2010.

There is also a link to the Parish Council website, Ramsden Pre-School, the Baptist Church as well as the National Archives and UK Census Returns websites.

The website is regularly updated and gives a most comprehensive guide to what is happening in Ramsden Bellhouse.

If you would like to receive village newsletters and details of up and coming events you can register your name and email address, and you will be added to our mailing list and receive advance notice of village activities and local news.

Email: mailing@ramsdenbellhouse.info with your name and the email address you wish to register, placing Register in the Subject line.

Barbara Stanton

Dog Training

Firstly many congratulations to Fiona and Ludo a border collie who won their class at Crufts this year, a great achievement - Well Done!

As many of you will know, our Secretary Rita has been ill for some time now, she has been in and out of hospital - very ill, but I am pleased to say she is now feeling much better although not cured. We all wish you a speedy recovery Rita and hope to see you at the club in the near future.



Unfortunately, as is often the case, none of us appreciated, until Rita was ill, just how much work she did for the Club, however, I would like to thank the members of the committee for rallying round and helping to prepare for our show and taking Rita's class etc.

Our obedience show is on the 3rd. September at Crouch Valley show ground.

Finally, the show season is about to start so good luck to everyone who is competing this year.

Valerie Dean, Vice Chairman

Baptist Church

Since retiring Church Secretary Roger Newton wrote our last article we have had our Day of Prayer on Saturday 3rd of October, which was well attended during the day, and concluded at 4.00 pm with a short time of worship. The feeling was that it had been an inspirational and uplifting day, when we prayed for our church's future, and for our local community. The following day Sunday 4th October we had our Harvest Service, the church was beautifully decorated by church members Elizabeth and Judy, and the produce from this service was donated to St Luke's Hospice, who expressed their appreciation for all the gifts of food.

On Saturday the 14th November we held a Men's Breakfast outreach event, which was well attended. The guest speaker was Danny Mansfield, who gave a moving account of his life.

While Christmas seems a distant thought now; we at RBBC celebrated Christmas with two special services. The first was a "Toys and Tins Service2", held on 13th December; which was well attended, with an abundance of items being donated, including toiletries, toys, tinned food, books and games. These donations were given to The Resource Centre in Basildon to be distributed to needy families and to those who found themselves homeless. The "Carols by Candlelight" Service held on 20th December was a great success and well attended, including by many visitors to our church.

Now with the coming of spring and summer, we held a "Musical Tea" on Saturday 19th March. As the title suggests the accent was very much musical. Guest speakers were Shirley and Bill Park. On Saturday 16th July we are again holding one of our famous "Tea at the Ritz"; an afternoon tea with excellent waiter service, and an ambiance which reflects the famous name. Tickets are usually in heavy demand; look out for the posters advertising this at the village shop and village hall.

Please note our now regular Monday morning Coffee break which is held every Monday morning between 10:30 am and 12:00. Coffee, tea, and toast are served, there is an opportunity for chat, and there are guest speakers on alternative weeks. The subjects covered by the speakers have so far included experiences of being in the navy, the army, working in a laundry, working in the hospice movement, and running a group which facilitates children being able to see an absent parent.

We are also planning to start a Saturday morning drop in breakfast, serving croissants etc, this will commence on 7th May. We are hoping to

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hold these on the first Saturday of each month, look out for posters in the village shop and village hall.

RBBC has funded a home for Sandile in South Africa through the Christian Charity Reach Out to a Child of South Africa. His parents died of Aids, he has no siblings, has major learning difficulties, and his communication skills are extremely poor, so he has difficulty forming relationships. The time has come when he can no longer live at the children's home. At RBBC we set about raising the £3,500 required to ensure that he could have a home within his community. We had many generous donations, and in January 2016 we reached our target. Read more about him in our church magazine, which is available free in the village shop or at RBBC.

Our Sunday services are held at 10.30 am each week. Please come along and give us a try. You will be very welcome.

Val Rook, Church Secretary



Lemon Yoghurt Cake

100ml/4floz natural yoghurt	Grated zest of 1 lemon
200g/7oz castor sugar	250g/9oz self raising flour
100g/3 ½ oz butter - melted	100g/3 ½ oz lemon curd
2 medium free range eggs	Icing sugar to dust

Method

Pre heat oven to 180c/350f/gas 4. Lightly oil and base line an 18cm/7inch cake tin with baking paper.

In a large bowl whisk together the yoghurt, sugar, melted butter, eggs and lemon zest then quickly but thoroughly beat in the sifted flour.

Pour the cake mixture into the prepared cake tin and cook in centre of oven for about 1 hour or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean.

Leave the cake to cool in the tin for 10 minutes, then transfer to a cake rack to cool completely.

When cold cut the cake in half to make 2 equal discs, then sandwich them back together using the lemon curd.

Dust the top with icing sugar or drizzle over icing made with icing sugar mixed with lemon juice.

Can be served with Greek yoghurt or crème fraiche if wished.

Cake will freeze but is best decorated after defrosting.

Joan Wright

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Personal Page

Congratulations to

Audrey Pegrum MBE on her 80th birthday on November 25th.

Eric Lewsey on his 90th birthday on March 26th.

Apologies to

Jacqui and Terry Manning. They should have been congratulated on their *Golden Wedding* in the last magazine - *NQT* their Diamond! They are far too young for that!

In Memory of

Sibyl Culver who died on 22nd January aged 89. She had lived most of her childhood in "The Gables" Church Road, Ramsden Bellhouse, but lately lived in Ramsden Heath. She was a lifelong member of Ramsden Bellhouse Baptist Church, and worked tirelessly on their behalf. She was my oldest friend, we started school together at 5 years old. Our sympathies go to her family. *Editor*

Babs Neville who died on February 14th aged 98. She attended St Mary's Church most of her life, where she taught in the Sunday School, sang in the choir, and was always ready to help. Our sympathies go to her family.

Mary Clark I was sorry to hear from her son Mark that his mother has died. She lived for many years in "September Cottage" Church Road.

Winnie Bell

Joan Kelly who died on 6th February. She lived for many years in "The Glen" Ramsden Park Road. She worked tirelessly for the Village Hall on numerous committees, and organised fetes, Christmas Bazaars and many other activities. But she was mostly known for her Annual Art Shows every August Bank Holiday. Our sympathies go out to her family.

The Late Mary Shain A short service to dedicate a tree and a plaque to her memory was held in St Mary's Church and on March 24th. It was well attended by those who remembered her as a Post lady.

Parish Council

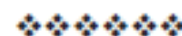
Saving Lives

Following the training of over 80 volunteers from many of the clubs that meet at the Village Hall, together with residents from Ramsden Bellhouse and surrounding villages, the defibrillator has now been positioned in its case on the wall of the Village Hall facing the shop.

If in the case of an emergency it should be necessary to access the defibrillator, the unlock code will be provided to you by the ambulance services when a 999 call is made to the Emergency Services.

Crime

As many of you will be aware there has been a number of vehicles that have been broken into throughout the village with items being stolen. At the time of writing there are reports that further thefts have taken place. As most of the thefts have taken place in the early hours, please ensure all valuables are removed from your vehicles.



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Planning

Following a planning meeting on 25th February in the Village Hall which was attended by over 150 residents, Basildon Council presented details of The Local Plan and how it related to Ramsden Bellhouse. The Local Plan proposal was for 45 homes to be added to the village being located in sites in Ramsden Park Road and Orchard Avenue.

The concern from the majority of those attending was that any mini estate anywhere in the village would potentially encourage some land owners to put forward further sites and pave the way for mini estates to be created throughout the village in the future.

Following a vote from those residents that attended the meeting, on whether they would prefer mini estates or rather use infill throughout the village, the show of hands was for the latter. The Parish Council in conjunction with representatives from the Street Action Groups will investigate if the proposed option is achievable, whilst continuing the conversation with Basildon Council as to the concerns voiced on the 'planned over development' in some parts of the village, mindful that the final date for submissions is the 24th March.

Residents attending were reminded that each of them needed to communicate their thoughts and views with regard to the Local Plan to Basildon in writing as per the details and instructions contained within Basildon Diary publication which was supplied to each household.

For those residents that had not been able to attend the meeting, it was agreed that they would be made aware of the result of the vote that majority attending had made and that the information regarding the closing date would be provided to each household, in order that they can respond and make their own judgement as to their preferred way forward.

Given the date of this publication is after the closing date, any further information and updates will be communicated via e mail to those residents that have registered their e mail address with the Parish Council and on RBPC Notice Board and web site.

If you have not registered yet, please send an e mail to Karen Plumridge Clerk, ramsdnbpcclerk@btinternet providing her with your name, house and street name.

For details of the next Parish Council meeting please see date details posted on the RBPC Notice Board.

Richard Wellborne.
Chairman Ramsden Bellhouse Parish Council

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Poem - What is a Mum?

A Mum is someone who is always there
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She's someone you can turn to
Who you know will understand.
She always brings such happiness
In a kind and loving way,
And all the thoughtful things she does
Mean more than words can say.
A Mum is that special someone
On whom you can depend
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She's that very special someone
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Jane Walsh

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WEDDING FLOWERS

Social Secretary's Report

Christmas Bazaar:

The Christmas Bazaar took place at the end of November with the arrival of a very merry Father Christmas and Mummy Christmas spreading their good cheer to everyone around. We had lots of children visiting the Grotto, disappointingly only one little girl presented herself for the fancy dress competition despite extensive advertising. Perhaps next year? There were plenty of fun and craft stalls in both halls, lots to buy including cakes and plants. Try and bring the children to the next Bazaar, the date to be advised.

AGM

The A.G.M. was well attended, existing committee members and public members agreed to serve for another year. We have recruited two new members to our Management Committee, I am sure they will enjoy their involvement. A cheque for £3266.00 was presented to St Lukes Hospice, the charity voted on last year. This year the charity is Brainwave and we look forward to seeing them at the events going on in the year.

History of Ramsden.

Unfortunately The History of Ramsden didn't take place this February owing to Isabel not being in the best of health, but she has said it could take place later in the year. We hope so as it is an event not to be missed.

The St George's Day breakfast will have taken place by the time this magazine is delivered. Last year we served 250 people in three hours, quite a tall order,

So this year we plan to extend it by an hour to 1.p.m. Hope you were able to make it.

Party on the Green 25th June.

The party was a great success last June with 237 people attending, so popular in fact people have been asking for the date of the next one. Tickets are only available in advance so book early in order not to be disappointed. To order tickets by phone or e.mail £20.00. for adults and £10.00 for children, 6 years and under go free, please contact Abby Short on 01268 711675 abbyamoroza@aol.com or Ann Wellborne 01268 710250 annwellborne@btopenworld.com Doors open at 2.30 p.m. and the first act 'The Dukes' appear at 4.p.m. Looking forward to a fun afternoon and evening.

Ann Wellborne, Social Secretary.
Ramsden Bellhouse Village Hall.



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Village Events throughout the year



Remembrance Sunday



Remembrance Sunday



Christmas Daffodil



Scout visit to Laser Kombat



Christmas Bazaar



Christmas Bazaar



Village Hall AGM



Clive presents Cheque to St Lukes Hospice



Christmas Bazaar



Christmas Bazaar



Friends gather to remember Mary Shain



Plaque in St Mary's Churchyard

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Teddies for Tragedies Essex Branch

Over the winter months teddies have gone to Zambia and Kosovo with many knitted blankets, jumpers, cardigans, hats etc. and also a very large quantity of margarine boxes filled with toiletries which I am told people clamour for. We also sent out to Br. Titus in Zambia some sewing machines for the sewing group that has been set up and bibles and bible notes for the many Sunday Schools and the teachers.



As I write this report I am reminded by the TV that it is 20 years since the terrible shooting at Dunblane school. You may remember that there was an outpouring of sympathy from around the world and many many soft toys were sent to the school, so many that some were given to hospitals in the area. I believe I sent just 20 of our teddies and I was thrilled to receive a letter from the Head of the school that every teddy had been given to a child in the school. Our motto rang very true:-

MADE WITH LOVE SENT WITH LOVE TO BE LOVED

Our grand total of teddies distributed to 55 different countries is now over 292,000.

Before Christmas we were able to send 106 shoeboxes filled with gifts

Grahame Farley

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for children and adults at Christmas who, but for the boxes would not have anything. Blythswood Care were very appreciative and along with many others they were distributed in Eastern Europe. A big thank you to those who filled a box or gave me items to include. In the Autumn I shall be starting to get things together for the shoeboxes for next Christmas.

In the last issue of this magazine I mentioned that our piano was going out to a small school in Dushitri, Kosovo. I am very pleased to tell you that it arrived safely and is already much loved by the children.

Wishing you all a lovely summer. God bless.

Audrey Pegrum MBE, Essex Branch Organiser



Bowls Club

We continue to have very enjoyable rollups at our sessions, Monday nights, Wednesday mornings and Friday afternoons. On Monday and Wednesdays we are put into teams, according to the numbers drawn out.

Fridays we play pairs with our regular partners.

On Monday nights points are scored and Chris Lewell won the trophy again this year. The pairs competition on Friday was won by the pair with the best combined score, Roy Richards & Peter Debenham.

It now seems a long while ago, but we had a lovely Christmas lunch with fun bowls afterwards. Thanks to Barry & Jane for organizing the lunch, Eileen the table Quiz and Kay the fun bowls. The lovely flower displays were done by Isabel.

Our cake stall at the Christmas Bazaar was again very popular, thanks to Isabel for arranging the cake making and to all those members who contributed in any way. The raffle for the hampers so beautifully arranged by Rusi & Angela was also popular. Thanks to those members who manned the stalls on the day.

We are nearing the end of our league season and with one game to play the Rooks are in 2nd place in Division 2, promotion is in their hands!!

The Ravens are in 3rd place in division 6 with one game to play. They are safe from relegation, but it is still possible they might get promotion. The Robins in Division 7 are in 6th place with 2 games to play. We like to celebrate special events with our members, and as well as the regular cakes brought in for birthdays a special birthday or anniversary is celebrated with a special presentation. Funny how Brian is always first in line for the cakes!!

Along with everyone else we are now looking forward to the summer and friendly matches will be arranged. Hopefully our newer members will put their names down to play and then maybe play league matches next season.

Kay Debenham



Line Dancing

Our members are still enjoying our line dancing club every Monday at 2.p.m. (except Bank Holidays). Our great teachers Lyn and Jean still only charge £2.00, which is great value for an hours dancing and great company. Still room for more members so why not give us a try!

Ann Wellborne



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Edible Hedges

In spring, the hedgerows at home look glorious and well worth the tough spadework of digging in hedging plants over the past few winters. The blackthorn and the hawthorn produce sprays of creamy white flowers - and then by June the branches are entwined with honeysuckle and wild roses. Sheltering under the fresh green leaves are primroses, wild violets and later foxgloves. By autumn, the colours of the hedgerows will change again and, by watching this change, I can follow the course of the seasons.

The hedges are certainly beautiful, but they do have a practical purpose, too, because they're edible. These hedges are planted to provide me with food and drink throughout the year. In May, I'll pick the young beech leaves to make a lovely liquor called beech leaf noyau (where the beech leaves are mixed with gin and brandy). This will be ready to drink a few weeks later, just in time for watching Wimbledon. In early summer, I'll gather elderflowers to make elderflower fritters and elderflower wine (the best country wine of all) and bubbly elderflower champagne. In autumn, I'll collect elderberries for wine and sloes for sloe gin (this treat, bottled in late September, will be ready for Christmas). I'll also pick blackberries for blackberry gin, blackberry vinegar (a salad dressing), bramble jelly and best of all I'll eat the berries fresh in a dessert. Autumn, too, sees the branches heavy with hips and haws for a delicious hedgerow jelly.

I'll gather some of the plants growing under the hedgerows, too, such as wild garlic and Jack-by-the-Hedge for salads, and maybe this year (although I've never fancied trying nettles in anything), I might attempt some nettle beer. It's come highly recommended!

It's not only me who'll benefit from a hedgerow harvest; as the local wildlife benefits as well. The hedges will supply caterpillars, other insects and berries for so many songbirds here. They'll also provide nest sites and shelter for them, and shelter for mammals such as dormice and hedgehogs (it's no surprise that when the hedges declined on farmland the hedgehogs did too - the clue is in their name, after all). In the UK, our hedgerows are the principle habitat for around 50 existing species of conservation concern and provide vital wildlife corridors for them.

The hedges will also feed different insects including crucial pollinators. Among these are my honeybees. There's something for them in hedges from the hazel catkins in early spring through the season of blossoms to ivy in the autumn.

As well as planting new hedges, I've been looking after the old hedgerows here, too. Many old hedgerows are the last markers of the

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ancient woodland that once covered this area, and as such they're known as assart hedges or a 'woodland ghost'. Practically, I need both the old and new hedges here to help soak up water (and help prevent flooding), act as windbreaks, absorb sound and pollution and purify the air around my home.

I really can't do without them.

Wendy Swift



Horticultural

Our first meeting in September after the summer break was not very well attended, which was a shame, as it was an excellent talk by a very charming lady.

The October meeting, due to unforeseen circumstances we did not have a speaker, but after an early tea, members talked about how they started to garden. Daffodil bulbs were handed out to members to grow for the mini show next year.

Our AGM in November as always ended with the buffet after a meeting discussing how to take the society forward.

At the village Christmas Fair we raised £146.50 as our contribution to the village hall. Well done to the 4 people on plants and Isabel on the raffle.

The January meeting was well attended. We had a talk on alpiners for beginners. A very informative talk with good slides. Both beginners and alpine growers learnt something new.

Doreen Potter entertained us in February with a light hearted and fun talk about her time in a Billericay flower shop.

The next meeting was the daffodil mini show. Look on the notice board for the winner's names. The two main show dates are 11th June and 10th September.

If you are interested in gardening, join us for one of the meetings held on the third Monday of the month at 8pm. As a member you can use the trading hut for supplies. It will be open Sunday morning from March to October. Happy gardening.



Marion Shillum

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N.P.Q.H. & Mrs H. Craig B.Ed. (Hons). N.P.Q.H.

News from Downham

Downham is proud to be a Church school, celebrating the values and the festivals of the Christian faith. This term the children have had many opportunities to reflect explore this through a number of events. The whole school family- from our youngest to our eldest children, staff, parents, members of the community and governors celebrated the story of Easter at the Cathedral in Chelmsford. The children led the worship through song, drama, dance and readings. The children loved the opportunity to all be together and share in the Cathedral. It was a wonderful evening culminating with the whole school singing and waving their palm crosses.

The children welcomed Bishop Stephen to school and he led the school assembly. The bishop toured the school and answered some challenging questions from the children. These questions ranged from how he became to bishop to one of youngest children asking him about the growth mind-set of the Church. The bishop also presented each class with a holding cross for their class reflection areas. He also presented each class with a bible for their reading areas. These bibles had been bought by Ramsden Baptist Church.

The school also had a prayer space day. This is where the children in key stage two had an opportunity to consider the Christian value of forgiveness. The children completed different activities and also an opportunity to reflect on this value. This event was led by Billericay schools Ministry who also support Downham with assemblies and lunchtime clubs.

We are creating a school prayer book with contributions from every child. These will be shared in classes and in assemblies.

The children and staff of Downham Primary School

Bygone Years

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ESTATES IN ELEVEN COUNTIES.

You may have seen this before at the History of Ramsden or in an earlier edition of this Magazine. However in the light of the proposed building development of our Village, it may have some interest. It is roughly dated about 1910. They must have been well built for some of them can still be seen today as part of the long lost character of Ramsden Bellhouse.

Isabel Johnson

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Scouts Report

Since returning from the summer holidays last September the scouts have been kept busy with a variety of activities. Many of these are linked to achieving activity badges and Challenge badges, which are wide ranging in scope. Activities and topics towards the latter have included the importance of sleep & diet, environmental issues, accidents & incidents at camp, fitness and making a sedan chair using poles & rope. Some of the activities are of a domestic nature such as making a bed, sewing on a button and ironing!

More recently the scouts have been working towards the Personal Challenge Badge. For this they have to choose a challenge and have one set by a scout leader. The challenges can range from keeping their bedrooms tidy, cooking/baking or doing their homework on time.

An Australia Day themed evening included a quiz, food (kangaroo and crocodile) and aboriginal crafts. Basketball and football/cricket (kickit) have featured as competitive patrol challenges. We have four patrols: Foxes, Lions, Tigers and Wolves. Pancake night is always great fun cooking the pancakes from scratch and then eating them.

The second Wednesday of the month is an overnight with visits to Chelmsford swimming pool for badge work and lots of jumping from the diving boards. Just before Christmas a visit to Laser Kombat in Basildon was a very enjoyable frenetic evening. A trip to Runwell scout HQ gave us the opportunity to use their 3D Maze caving system, which is in the roof! Most recently the scouts went to Base Jump the trampoline centre in Rayleigh.

An overnight stay at Skreens Park Scout Campsite in February saw the scouts working on the Teamwork Challenge that involved memory games, the great egg drop and sheep dog trials where one scout is the shepherd and others, who are blindfolded, are the sheep who then negotiate a course by whistle. The following day involved a hike, climbing wall and air rifle shooting.

The Scouts meet on Wednesday evenings during term time at Ramsden Bellhouse Village Hall from 7.30 to 9.30 and the age range is from 10½ to 14½. New scouts are always welcome and for further information please call Chris on 01277 652337 or 07592 073302.

Chris Maker, Scout Leader

cubs



If you want to have fun, learn new skills and meet other young people your age then 1st Ramsden and Downham Cubs and Scouts could be just the thing you're looking for.



We meet on Wednesday evenings at Ramsden Bellhouse Village Hall, we run lots of activities including sports, cooking, crafts, first aid, bicycle maintenance to name a few.



We have many Outnights such as swimming, karting, fire lighting and backs wood cooking, laser tag, cinema, bowling and lots more.

We hold lots of fun days and camps, we take part in activities including canoeing, archery, rifle shooting, climbing, hiking.....



Cubs 7 ½ up to 10 ½ years and Scouts 10 ½ up to 14 ½ years

If you would like to come along or would like further details please call:

Chris Maker, Scout Leader 01277 652337, 07592 073302

Lin Prince, Akela for Cubs 01268 710143, 07763 188673

Or email Jean Maker on jean@jeanmaker.wanadoo.co.uk

come and join in the fun!



Cubs Report

Last term the Cubs worked on the naturalist badge, they had to check the hedgerow at the hall three times over a three month period to see how it changes. They had a walk round Crowsheath woods looking at leaves and mini beasts. They made bug houses to put in their gardens and learnt the Country code.

Work started on the Skills Challenge badge by sewing on a button, making cakes, ironing their scarves and laying a table. A member of the Barleylands team visited to talk about healthy eating and they also learnt the rules and played basketball.

Just before Christmas the Cubs made snow globes and we had a games night at the end of term.

During last term we had three Cubs achieve the Chief Scout Silver award, the highest award in the Cub section.

This year is a special year for the Cub section it is a hundred years ago that Robert Baden Powell created the Wolf Cubs. We started the year wearing a special commemorative scarf and badge on our uniforms these we will wear for the whole of 2016. Many events are taking place this year to celebrate Cubs 100 years. The Cub section was based on the book Jungle book written all that time ago by Rudyard Kipling a friend of Baden Powell's. The Cubs have made Jungle book characters and will tell the story of Jungle book at our AGM in May. They have also learnt about the history of Cubs and did a code breaking evening on the subject.

Akela



Jim writes

Decisions, Decisions! I'm sure you will agree that we are living at a time when in our nation and our world there are many big decisions to be made. Later this year our friends in the USA will be making a decision as to who they want to become their next President and if the evidence of the race for nominations is anything to go by the outcome could be quite disturbing and even dangerous for our world. In our own country and continent there are vital decisions to be made about the tragic issue of the thousands of refugees and migrants fleeing war and conflicts in the middle East. What kind of decisions do we make as Christians when we are called to compassion and welcoming the stranger and the outcast? In a few weeks time we will all be faced with one of the biggest decisions

of our generation when we will be asked to decide whether our country should stay in the European Union or vote to leave. I don't know about you but I find it so difficult to decide as there are valid arguments for and against, although my basic Christian instinct is to prefer being together than to be isolated and beat the nationalistic drum. As an exiled Scot I was so relieved when my fellow Scots voted to stay in the United Kingdom at the recent referendum and the major fall in oil prices and the impact it would have had on an independent Scotland has reinforced my relief. Anyway, enough of this political ranting, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said recently, "There is no "Christian" view as to whether we stay in or vote to leave, we must all come to our own conclusions".

Decisions, decisions! When you think about it so much of life is about making decisions. From the trivial - like what will I wear today and what will we have for dinner - to decisions about career, marriage, family and the kind of decisions I wrote about above. Some decisions don't matter, some can change our lives, some we live to regret. There is one decisions I made many years ago about which I have absolutely no regrets. It took place in a little church hall at midnight on New Year's Eve. I was a





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teenager and was dragged along to church by my parents as a condition of me being allowed to go to a party starting after midnight and going on until well into the "wee small hours." (That's what New Year is like in Scotland - if anyone wanted to invade Scotland they should do it at New Year because no-one would notice!). Anyway, no-one preached at that midnight meeting, people just shared what their faith meant to them and I realised that these people had something I lacked, even in my teenage years - a deep joy, a sense of real peace and a clear purpose for living. So I decided, just as the bells rang for the New Year to commit my life to Jesus and become his follower. In other words I decided to become a Christian. I still went to the party and had a great time, but I knew something was different, I had begun a new journey, and life could never be the same again. Now, 54 years later I am still on that journey and am still convinced that that decision made on that cold New Years Eve at midnight is the best and most important decision I have ever made.

Decisions, decisions! Important decisions for us all this year. I pray we will all make the right ones and I also pray that many others will make the same decision I made all these years ago because it definitely is the right one!

Jim Hamilton





Dancing

Hello once again from the Dance Section. As the magazine goes to print we are busy arranging our annual charity Barn Dance which will be held at the Village Hall on Saturday 21st May from 8 to 11pm. Tickets are just £8 so why not come along and join us for the fun. When the magazine is published we will have held our Easter 'Bunny' Dance and will be looking forward to our Summer Ball, together with all the other activities we will be planning up to Christmas (sorry to mention that word so early in the year).

Barry Gardiner






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	NS	SO	NS
South Woodham, Asda	08:00	09:00	11:00
South Woodham, Rail Station	08:05	09:05	11:05
Woodham Rd, Opp. Butterfly Farm	08:09	09:09	11:09
Retendon, Turnpike Corner	08:14	09:14	11:14
Runwell, Church	08:18	09:18	11:18
Wickford, Opp. The Swan P H	08:21	09:21	11:21
Brock Hill, Downham Road	08:25	09:25	11:25
Ramsden Heath, White Horse	08:33	09:33	11:33
Ramsden Bellhouse, Glebe Rd	08:37	09:37	11:37
Crays Hill, Shepherd & Dog	08:42	09:42	11:42
Noak Bridge, South Wash Road	08:47	09:47	11:47
Miles Gray Road, Opposite B&Q	08:50	09:50	11:50
Basildon, Bus Station Stand R	08:55	09:55	11:55
Basildon Hospital	09:00	—	17:00

	NS	SO	NS
Basildon Hospital	—	—	17:00
Basildon, Bus Station Stand R	10:00	12:00	14:00
Miles Gray Road, B&Q	10:05	12:05	14:05
Noak Bridge, South Wash Road	10:08	12:08	14:08
Crays Hill, Opposite Shepherd & Dog	10:13	12:13	14:13
Ramsden Bellhouse, Glebe Rd	10:18	12:18	14:18
Ramsden Heath, White Horse	10:22	12:22	14:22
Brock Hill, Downham Road	10:30	12:30	14:30
Wickford, The Swan Pub	10:34	12:34	14:34
Runwell, Quart Pot	10:37	12:37	14:37
Retendon, Turnpike Corner	10:41	12:41	14:41
Woodham Rd, Butterfly Farm	10:46	12:46	14:46
South Woodham, Opp. Rail Station	10:50	12:50	14:50
South Woodham, Asda	10:55	12:55	14:55

Key: NS - This journey does not operate on a Saturday.

SO - This journey operates on Saturdays only.

Note: This service no longer serves Wickford Rail Station and Guernsey Gardens (towards Basildon) & Festival Leisure Park in both directions.

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Village Events

MAY

Saturday 14th	Coffee Morning	10am - midday	St Mary's Church
Saturday 14th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall
Saturday 21st	Crunch	9am - midday	Village Hall
Saturday 21st	Southend Vox Choir	7.30pm	St Mary's Church
	Details 710757		

JUNE

Saturday 11th	Coffee Morning	10am - midday	St Mary's Church
Saturday 11th	Horticultural Summer Show	2.30pm	Village Hall
Saturday 11th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall
Saturday 18th	Strawberry Tea 710757	2.00pm - 4.00pm	Village Hall
Saturday 25th	Party in the Park	4.00pm - 11.00pm	Village Hall
	711675 / 710250		

JULY

Saturday 2nd	Crunch	9am - midday	Village Hall
Saturday 9th	Coffee Morning	10am - midday	St Mary's Church
Saturday 9th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall

AUGUST

Saturday 13th	Coffee Morning	9am - midday	St Mary's Church
Saturday 13th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall
Saturday 20th	Crunch	9am - midday	Village Hall
Saturday 27th	Big Band Concert 710757		St Mary's Church
Saturday 27th	Flower Festival	2.00pm - 5.00pm	St Mary's Church
Sunday 28th	Flower Festival	11.00am - 5.00pm	St Mary's Church
Monday 29th	Flower Festival	11.00am - 4.00pm	St Mary's Church

SEPTEMBER

Saturday 10th	Horticultural Autumn Show	2.30pm	Village Hall
Saturday 10th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall

OCTOBER

Saturday 1st	MacMillan Coffee Morning	10.00am - midday	St Mary's Church
Saturday 8th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall
Saturday 22nd	Barn Dance details 710757		Village Hall
Saturday 29th	Crunch	9am - midday	Village Hall

NOVEMBER

Friday 11th	Beetle Drive 710757	7.00pm	Village Hall
Saturday 12th	Whist Drive	7.15pm	Village Hall

Village Directory

Village Hall	Chairman	- Clive Jeffree	710559
	Booking Secretary	- Vivienne Fisher	07772 630513
			01268 531441
	Secretary	- Abby Short	01268 711675
	Treasurer	- Derek Swan	710478
Magazine	Social Secretary	- Ann Wellborne	710250
	Editor	- Isabel Johnson	710428
	Advertising	- Isabel Johnson	710428
Badminton	Fridays 8pm - 11pm	- Karen Pearce	01268 711227
Dog Training	Monday (except 3rd in month)		
	7.15pm - 10pm	- Rita Barber	01702 231189
St Mary's Church	Church Wardens	- Beryl Clements	01245 601298
Horticultural	3rd Monday in the month except July, August and December	- Rusi Hodivala	710619
Ladies Medau	Thursday 8pm	- Veronica Greenwood	01702 559914
Cubs	Wed 5.45pm - 7.15pm	- Lin Prince	01268 710143
Scouts	Wed 7.30pm - 9.30pm	- Chris Maker	01277 652337
Baptist Church	Bowls		
	Mon 7.30pm		
	Wed 10am		
	Fri 1.30pm	- Angela Hodivala	01268 710619
Dancing Club	Every Sunday 7.30pm - 10.30pm		
	General Dancing	- Barry Gardiner	07702 233898
Whist Drive	Roy Richards (see Village Events)		710669
Line Dancing	Every Monday 2.00pm - 3.00pm	Ken Dobson	710771
Bellhouse Preschool	Mon to Fri 9.30am	-	07881 448686
Website	www.ramsdenbellhouse.info		
Ramsden Parish Council	Karen Plumridge Clerk		01245 400628



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