

Leave a message on 07843 860 135 or email: secretary@lakemeadows.org.uk

Chairman's message

A Very Happy Christmas to you all! We hope that everyone has the best time possible, perhaps with family or friends or even just on your own. My thanks to all those who helped this year in various ways, particularly the Hut Helpers, Gardeners and Committee members, and not forgetting the few who occasionally help us with special projects & events.

Survey of Park Users

The report of the Survey of Park Users that we undertook in the summer is now available on our website. www.lakemeadows.org.uk

Photography Competition 2024

The photographs are now all in and judging is taking place. The winners will be announced in the New Year and a display of the finalists' photos will be held at the Billericay Library in February.

Christmas Traditions



Come and join us near the Bowls Pavilion, for mulled wine and mince pies, followed by carol singing on Saturday December 14th at 3.30pm for 4pm start. Do bring torches and some cash for the collection buckets.

It's thought that **singing carols** for the birth of Christ date back to the 4th and 5th centuries, whilst the first **Christmas market** originated in Germany at Dresden's *Striezelmarkt*, first held in 1434.

The mince pie represents the crib in which baby Jesus lay, with the pastry lid representing the cover over him. The 3 snips are for the three kings and the mincemeat is for the gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Gardeners

Our merry band of gardeners have now cleaned up the tools and packed everything away for the winter season. They are looking forward to a well-earned rest over Christmas, although some of them, we hear, may be doing a bit of moonlighting, helping out an elderly gentleman! They look forward to returning in February and will welcome any new gardeners who would like to join us on Tuesday mornings.



Why do we have tinsel?

Ukrainian Christmas trees are traditionally decorated with a sparkly spider and web. The custom stems from an old folk tale about a poor widow, who lived in a small hut with her children. One summer day, a pinecone fell on the earthen floor of the hut and took root. The widow's children cared for the tree and were excited at the prospect of having a Christmas tree by winter. The tree grew steadily but when Christmas Eve arrived, they could not afford to decorate it. The children sadly went to bed and fell asleep.



Early the next morning, they woke up and to their amazement, saw the tree covered with a glittering, sparkling web. When they opened the windows, the first rays of sunlight touched the web and turned it into gold and silver. The widow and her children were overjoyed. From then on, they never lived in poverty again and ever since, finding a spider or a spider's web on a Christmas tree is considered a sign of luck.

The British **Christmas tradition of sending cards** dates back to 1843, when a gentleman named Sir Henry Cole didn't have time to send personal messages, so hired an artist called John Calcott Horsley to design him a card, which he could send to lots of people.

Christmas Wordsearch

E	P	I	P	H	A	N	Y	A	D	G	N	I	X	O	B	E
S	U	A	L	C	N	S	N	O	I	T	A	R	O	C	E	D
M	A	G	I	W	I	A	X	R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	K
U	C	X	G	O	B	N	I	V	Y	E	K	R	U	T	R	H
Z	H	Y	H	P	O	T	H	G	I	N	D	I	M	Q	I	O
H	R	A	T	F	R	A	N	K	I	N	C	E	N	S	E	L
T	I	N	S	E	L	Z	Y	U	L	E	T	I	D	E	S	L
A	S	T	N	E	S	E	R	P	Y	R	A	M	T	S	R	Y
E	T	H	G	I	L	E	L	D	N	A	C	Y	N	L	E	J
R	M	E	R	R	Y	L	G	E	V	E	D	R	E	O	T	K
W	A	K	Y	T	I	V	I	T	A	N	L	R	V	R	N	C
U	S	D	R	A	C	E	F	L	E	O	O	H	D	A	I	A
S	L	E	I	G	H	S	T	D	L	O	G	S	A	C	W	S

Advent

Berries

Boxing Day

Cards

Candlelight

Carols

Christmas

Claus

Decorations

Elves

Epiphany

Frankincense

Gift

Gold

Holly

Ivy

Lights

Logs

Magi

Mary

Merry

Midnight

Myrrh

Nativity

Presents

Reindeer

Robin

Sack

Santa

Sleighs

Tinsel

Turkey

Winter

Wreath

Yuletide

News from the park

Projects seem to have been few this year but that does not mean that we have not been thinking about being active.

One, or perhaps two, new picnic benches are planned to be put near the skateboard park, thanks to donations from BDRA and also a London-based company. We are considering adding a table tennis table next year and we are still hoping that the chess & draughts table will get used more next Spring and Summer.

Last month, we helped Chelmsford Beekeepers plant a Tulip Tree in celebration of 150 years since the founding of the British Beekeepers' Association. An unusual tree, whose unusual flowers in June and July, produce the nectar, which the bees love. It is an unusual and attractive large tree, which has received the RHS Award of Garden Merit. Its distinctive unusual foliage is bright green, turning clear yellow in autumn. Honeybees, bumblebees and many other species depend on trees for food.

Christmas Crackers

Q. Why did Santa go to the podiatrist?

A. He had mistletoes.

Q. How do you scare a snowman?

A. You get a hairdryer!

Q. What is the best Christmas present ever?

A. A broken drum - you can't beat it!

Q. How did Mary and Joseph know that Jesus weighed 4.2 kg?

A. They had a weigh in the manger.



Café at Lake Meadows



The café, we hear, is being taken over by new management, who are looking to transform it into a vibrant café & restaurant. Ali Erdogan, who currently owns a restaurant in Hornchurch, is taking charge and is overseeing the renovation of the building, with the aim for it to be open early in the New Year.

He hopes to keep the business open throughout the year, transforming it into a new restaurant and community space. Ali says "We want to reach out to families and community groups; it will be a nice place open on a regular basis, so people can come over for hot or cold drinks, proper meals and food, and they can sit down and enjoy themselves".

We look forward to hopefully working with Ali.

Lost Tree

We were devastated to hear of the loss of one of the magnificent pair of liquidambar or sweet gum trees just above the Garden of the Child.

The trees originate from eastern USA and were originally introduced to the UK in the seventeenth century. It's one of the best trees for autumn leaf colour.

As temperatures fall in autumn, the large, lobed, maple-like leaves turn from green to glowing shades of orange, red, yellow, or purple.



And finally

It's not how much we give, but how much love we put into giving. *Mother Theresa*

Copies of this newsletter for our postal members have been printed by the Co-op Funeralcare Billericay, whom we should like to thank for their generosity & continued support.