

Our mission

ESSEX is blessed with dozens of beautiful villages, thriving communities and hamlets. In our Village of the Week feature, in conjunction with the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Essex, we aim to capture the heart of those communities – both for residents and for readers who want to know Essex better. This will eventually form a snapshot of Essex in the 21st century. Past features can be seen at www.thisistotalessex.co.uk/villageoftheweek If you know your community would love us to come to where you live and put your village in the spotlight, please email us at: newsdesk@essexchronicle.co.uk

Photo: Chris Rushton



TIGHT KNIT: Members of the community of Messing-cum-Inworth outside the Messing church of All Saints.

Why we love it here...

MERYL RICHARDSON is front-of-house manager at the village's only pub, the Old Crown, which is run by her daughter and son-in-law.



Pub manager, Meryl Richardson

She said: "The village is a lovely peaceful place – we get a mixture of locals and visitors. "We do a lot of food now, all freshly cooked and using local produce so we get people coming for a meal.

"But we still get the older villagers who have lived here all their lives in for a pint in the evening."

KIRSTY ROWSELL is head teacher at the village primary school. She said: "The school has a real family feel, it is only a small school so everyone knows each other and we all care for each other.

"Most of the children come in from outside the village, and their parents have chosen to send them here because



Head teacher, Kirsty Rowsell

of the type of school it is." **JOHN WESTON** is a progression worker at Red House, a training unit for adults with learning difficulties.

The members work in the gardens, greenhouse, cafe and pottery workshops producing goods which go on sale for visitors to buy. Mr Weston said: "The aim is to train



TEAMWORK: (l-r) Paul Rudd, John Weston and David Birchfield.

the members so they can eventually go into employment or voluntary work.

"We have been quite successful and managed to get placements for quite a few people."

Red House was a private home and then a children's home before being taken over by Essex County Council for its present use.

Where it is...



Your Chronicle contact...



Call Matthew Ward with any stories on: **01245 603336**

Best kept village is awarded top prize

Matthew Ward and Alison Potter
matthew.ward@essexchronicle.co.uk

"Many people have lived there for a long time"

THE village of Messing certainly does not live up to its name, and in 2008 it proved this by being awarded the title of best kept village and best green village in its class.

Messing is a small and picturesque place, surrounded by arable farmland and mixed woodland.

The rolling fields and small streams give the appearance of a gently folded landscape, which adds to the tranquil atmosphere of the village.

Although small, the village supports plenty of activities and groups which meet regularly.

As well as holding its own Christmas party, there is the annual Carols by Candlelight to be held today (Thursday) on the village green.

The village hall is a central hub for activities in Messing, and it regularly hosts coffee mornings, dance classes, dog training and parish council meetings.

All Saints Church is also a focus of community life.

It is presided over by Rev Chris Garland, who is also the Rector of Inworth, Copford and Easthorpe. He runs the Benefice Youth Group,

which caters for young people aged nine to 16 in the four parishes of the benefice. There, young people can play table tennis, snooker, badminton, and magnetic darts, as well as football and softball.

Mr Garland thoroughly enjoys his role in the parish, saying: "It is a privilege to come into contact with the residents in their every-day lives.

"Messing is a close community, with many people who have lived there for a long time and some who have just moved to the village to start a family, and they all play a key part in the village."

The Friends of Messing Church is an active group in the area, and members often put on social events for churchgoers and people in the village.

Perhaps the most popular place in the village is the Old Crown pub, which famously contains framed letters from George Bush Sr, whose ancestors hailed from Messing.

Photo: Chris Rushton



Photo: Chris Rushton



TRADITIONAL: The Old Crown is Messing's only pub and serves freshly cooked food using local produce.

Photo: Chris Rushton



LEFT: The Old Post Office in Messing.

ABOVE: This building used to be the old workhouse before being used as the village school and village hall and bears a blue plaque to mark this (inset).

HERITAGE SITE: On old pump and well feature outside All Saints Church in Messing village.

History

ONE OF Messing's most famous descendent may soon be due to step down as president of the United States, but the village has made its mark on the heady world of American politics.

A book on the village's history is said to sit in the library of the White House, since it was sent by its author, Roger Carter, to George Bush senior during his presidency.

The Bush dynasty, often considered the most influential family in American history, descends from Reynold Bush, who lived in Messing during the 17th century before setting off for the New World aboard The Lion.

The connection is marked by an American flag displayed in the village church, sent as a gift from the Bush family who are known to take an interest in their Essex roots.

In its more distant past, the village is thought to have taken its name from either Maesa's Inga – the settlement of a person called Maesa – or Mething – meaning "place of slaughter".

The sinister-sounding name is thought to have come from the site of Boudicca's defeat at the hands of the Roman legions which may have been close by.

Parts of the church date back to the 13th century, although the tower was added during the 19th century.

One of its notable features is the 14th century dug-out chest, which was used to keep the church valuables safe from the ravages of the civil war period.

Photo: Chris Rushton

