

December 98

The *LINK*



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THIS CHRISTMAS



Christmas Eve	
3 pm	Crib Service
11.30 pm	First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day	
9.30 am	Parish Communion



ST JOHN'S C of E

Christmas Eve	
3 pm	Children's Service
11.15 pm	Carols, Mass
Christmas Day	
10.30 am	Mass

ST THERESA'S RC

Christmas Day	
10.30 am	Christmas Service

UNITED REFORMED

Sunday before Christmas	
9.30 am	Meeting for United Worship

SOCIETY of FRIENDS & METHODIST



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**Copy to reach 58 Chapel Hill by
7th December for publication on 3rd January
(please note early date)
14th January for publication on 31st January)**



**CHURCHES
TOGETHER
in STANSTED**

Some time ago we spent a quiet day at Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, reflecting on creation. During that day, and since, my thoughts have quite frequently returned to reflect on this theme.

We sometimes wish that we still had the simple faith of the Celtic Church, seeing God in all His creation and being able to use every day activities to praise Him. God's creation is all around us if we take time off from our busy worldly lives to reflect on the beauty of the world around us. The seasons unfold each year, spring with its new life, summer with all its glory of colour, the autumn as the earth prepares to rest and winter as the skeletons of trees reflect against the skyline and are beautiful and the earth slumbers.

In the liturgical year we will be in Advent, time to reflect on our lives as we prepare to commemorate the birth of Jesus and the start of renewed Christian life.

We close with a Celtic prayer:-

There is no plant in the ground
but tells of your beauty, O Christ
There is no creature on earth
There is no life in the sea
But proclaims your goodness.
There is no bird on the wing
There is no star in the sky
There is nothing beneath the sun
But is full of your blessing
Lighten my understanding
of your presence of all around, O Christ
Kindle my will to be caring for Creation.

Joan and Francis Mercer

**CHURCHES TOGETHER IN STANSTED
PRESENT:**

A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

A concert of congregational carols,
Christmas music, readings and poetry will be
held in St Mary's Church, Stansted on
Saturday 19th December at 4 pm.
Admission will be free.

Car parking at St Mary's is limited,
additional car parking will be available at
the Mountfitchet High School

United Reformed

Chapel Hill

Minister: Rev'd Lydia Rapkin
23a St John's Close
Saffron Walden
Tel 01799 523296

Contact: Mrs Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill
Tel 812593

An African woman being chivvied about the time she spent reading her Bible when there were so many other books she might be reading replied to her friends "Other books I read, this book reads me".

I thought of her words this month because December 6th is celebrated as Bible Sunday. Jesus said in John 6 verses 63-64 'The words which I have spoken to you are both spirit and life'.

Sadly, many people are unaware of the truth of these words of our Lord. For many, the Bible is looked upon as a museum piece. It might be the world's best seller, but a best seller tidily left on the bookshelf. A book of dead words to so many. It is taught very little in our schools; the stories in it are largely unknown today. However, there are those of us who as Christians would agree, I'm sure, with the African woman that 'this book reads us'.

The Christmas story is probably one of the best known parts of the Bible. The beautiful account by Luke of the birth of our Lord will be recounted in church and school at numerous Carol Services. Verses will be printed on Christmas cards, small children will be delighting parents and grandparents as they re-enact for another year the age old story. But then the celebration of Christmas will be over and the story forgotten for another year.

But for those who wish to learn more, the Bible story continues.

Jesus the babe of Bethlehem becomes teacher and healer, travelling the Galilean Hills, meeting with men and women in their everyday lives, calling men to follow Him, changing their lives for ever.

Christmas looks forward to the Easter story with its pain and rejection, but over and above all, to the triumph of the one who in his death and resurrection brought joy to the world, drawing men and women to himself, reconciling them with God and sending them forth to show the love of God in their lives.

The Bible comes alive or it becomes personal to each one of us, indeed a book for life.

May peace and joy be yours this Christmas.

Rev Lydia Rapkin

Society of Friends

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Preachers for December

6th	11.00	Mr D Coulton
13th	10.30	Group Gift Service with Rev Lydia Rapkin and Mrs Connie Bonner followed by coffee and mince pies
20th	11.00	Carol and Lessons Mrs Janet Townsend
25th	10.30	Christmas Morning Worship Rev Lydia Rapkin
27th	11.00	Mrs Connie Bonner

Clerk: Mrs Anthea Lee
24 Lea Close
Bishop's Stortford
Tel 656707

Meeting: Sunday 11 am

Other People

This year our Christmas Gift appeal money will go to Winged Fellowship Trust who provide respite care and holidays for the disabled, both young and old. The Trust runs five purpose built centres including one at Chigwell, Essex, and every year provides more than 7000 respite care breaks. Each centre is fully adapted to allow people with severe physical disabilities the opportunity to take a holiday and in turn their family and carers can enjoy a period of rest as well. At our Gift Service on December 13th as well as money we will be collecting hats, gloves and socks for Whitechapel Mission and sweets for the Huw Johnson Club.

Jean-Paul Sartre said the Hell is other people. Who among us has not sometimes found this to be so? Even in the happiest of families, clashes occur. In fact, Christmas is a notorious flash point **because** families come together. When marriages break down, each spouse perceives the other to be a form of Hell. In the work place, the most difficult aspect of management is often dealing with other people.

If you are worried about last minute Christmas presents don't forget the Stansted tea towel £2.75, Stansted notelets £1.50 and Stansted pens 50p. All light and easy to post and available from Janet Townsend, 58 Chapel Hill.

Quakers have a useful way of looking at these problems. We are unlike other religious groups in that we have no creed as such. However, we do have a fundamental belief that there is something of God in everyone, and that is the good part. Quakerism teaches us, in time of conflict, to look for the part of the other person which is God. We are not perfect beings, and are not always able to do this. Nevertheless, it is the best route to peaceful conflict resolution, and it is surely more positive to see other people as Godly, rather than as Hell!

Jane Mitchell



Methodist

Roman Catholic

Meets in Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Minister: Rev'd John Graham
2 South Road, Bishop's Stortford
Tel 654475

Secretary: Mrs Catherine Dean
49 Recreation Ground, Stansted
Tel 813579

Services and Preachers for December

Sunday at 9.30 a.m.

6th	Miss Jean Hay
13th	Rev. Ronald Rawlings: Holy Communion
20th	Joint Christmas Service with Friends
27th	Rev. Harry Wood

Our Church Christmas Party is on 19th December at the Day Centre at 7 p.m.

St Theresa's Church, Millside

Priest: Rev'd Joe White
The Presbytery, 12 Millside, Stansted
Tel 814349

Masses:	Saturday	Stansted	6.00 pm
	Sunday	Stansted	10.30 am
		Henham	9.00 am
Holy Days	Stansted	8.00 pm	
	Henham	7.00 pm	
Weekdays	Stansted	9.30 am	
	(Tues-Sat)		

Confessions on Saturday after 9.30 mass

Baptisms

11th October	Cameron Brickell
25th October	Megan Warnett

Church of England

St John the Evangelist, St John's Road

Rector: Rev'd Andrew Spurr
The Rectory, St John's Road
Stansted
Tel 812203
email andrew.spurr@zetnet.co.uk

Benefice Office:- Tel. 815243



When I was a child, I once made myself a camp by flattening down a circle of stems and grass in a field of buttercups. These buttercups were dense and over waist-high. Inside the camp was suffused with light the colour of ripe lemons and attended by myriad dancing flies. Inside, time ceased to exist: looking, enjoying and being there in the moment were all that mattered. For my parents, however, the time I had spent away had taken on an ominous quality. They were frantic with worry. I had been away far longer than I had realised. Time had not mattered to me.

The memory of the field of buttercups is still precious to me. As an adult I am aware that time may never again have the same quality. If I were to make a camp and sit in a field of buttercups now I would be aware of the many things left undone and the many things still to do. Somewhere inside my head a clock would be ticking. Yet I know how important it is that we should give ourselves time to enjoy the simple things in life; to pause and reflect and be still. When we are not used to doing this the "empty space" can seem difficult and perhaps even a little frightening. Once we become familiar with having such space however we may realise how precious it can be. Today, time has perhaps become the world's rarest resource. The sadder side to this is that we not only have less time for ourselves, we have less time for our relationships with others. The pressure for greater productivity in all areas of our lives has resulted in less time for building and sustaining relationships. Consequently people are left feeling de-valued and overlooked and rates of divorce and family breakdown continue to increase. In the effort to out-run time, relationships can be major casualties.

As Christmas approaches, time can become even more pressured as we prepare to be festive. It can be a painful time too for those who remember losses or breakdowns of relationships. At Christmas, I try to take time to visit the manger and the stable in my imagination. For me, they are symbols that stand outside of time. They are imminent and not something of the past. The message of the crib and the stable is that God comes to us in our entire human

muddle. He comes as a vulnerable baby who will be susceptible to all the joys and pain of being human and who will grow to maturity in the inevitable shadow of His own death. God enters time and is subject to it. He experiences pain and in doing so, experiences what it is to be human. I think there can be no doubt that a God who would do this is a God of love.

This Christmas I would pray that you and I will make time and space to meet with the God of love, to enjoy the relationships that are important to us and with those who care for us, and to rediscover joy in small and simple things.

Ragni Whitlock

Services in December are

Sundays
8 am Holy Communion
9.30 am Parish Communion
6.30 pm Evening Service
Wednesdays
10 am Holy Communion
7.30 pm Prayers



Christmas-tide services are:

13th December, Sunday, 11 am Christingle
24th December, Thursday, 3 pm Crib Service
11.30 pm First Communion of Christmas
Christmas Day 9.30 am Parish Communion



Join us
for a

CHRISTINGLE
CELEBRATION

at

St John's Church

on

Sunday December 13th

at

3pm

ST. JOHN'S CHRISTMAS MARKET

The Christmas Market held on November 14th was a happy event both socially and financially. The sum raised was in excess of £1200. The raffle was well supported; the first prize drawn by the Revd. Andrew Spurr was a Christmas hamper and was won by John Watson. A big thanks is due to Francine Cope and everyone who worked at or supported the Market, as well as to those who bought tickets and/or contributed prizes for the highly successful raffle.

Stephanie May

Heritage and Religion

The radio alarm woke us on the Sunday with the weather forecaster wishing us a nice day but advising the desirability of taking an umbrella to church in case of mid-morning sprinkles. We could only be in one country, the USA, where a relatively higher percentage of people attend the Christian churches than elsewhere in the western world. But why should this be in a country where materialism counts for so much?

Although some 30 years ago I was a fairly regular visitor to the New York area, Eirwen and I were here this time as mere tourists to observe and enjoy ourselves. We were in downtown Chicago in our elder son's apartment on the 20th floor. We were but a couple of blocks west of the Magnificent Mile, the main city centre shopping area which is like London's West End and Knightsbridge in one long street of mainly shopping malls.

Much of central Chicago is less than 100 years old, having been rebuilt after the disastrous fire in the 1870's. Originally the centre of the meat and railroad industries, Chicago owes its prosperity today to its centre of trading for the mid-west farming belt and its ease of access to the rest of the US and to Canada. With many fine buildings, some in traditional style, the city occupies a superb position on the south west corner of Lake Michigan; this makes it a good tourist centre where museums and places of interest abound.

In the city centre there is little crime and we walked around without any problems of security. However, in the suburbs, we were told, it can be different. There are distinctive ethnic groupings here and to some extent the spirit of Al Capone still rules.

Today, the Amtrak train from Chicago to Milwaukee is called the Hiawatha Service. Originally this area was Indian territory. Once out of the conurbation you could be in the mid-west of a century or so ago with isolated wooden houses scattered across the plain.

On our second Sunday we went to Shepeswanna in Indiana, effectively a trading post where a group of Amish (originally a very strict 18th century Protestant Mennonite sect from Europe) trade in furniture and farm produce with the modern world. There are about 50,000 Amish in the whole of the US. They shun the 20th century advantages of electricity and the motor car in favour of the simple 18th century farming and craft methods. The Amish ride around in horse drawn buggies and enclosed carriages for their womenfolk and children. They dress severely in black and rigid discipline is enforced by excommunication of wrongdoers. This all seems very strange to us 20th century observers but they have a point. They have a heritage of their very own and they are determined to preserve it by living in and by it.

So what of the rest of the millions of people in this land who attend church on a regular basis. Obviously, many are sincere and devout Christians. However, we have to

remember that the original pioneer spirit of 'every man for himself' certainly prevails today. The average US citizen lives for today and the dream of what further material riches tomorrow may bring. There is no heritage from the past as we would recognise it.

This approach to life may seem odd to us here in Stansted where we can trace our local heritage back to at least the Norman Conquest. In the US, it is very different; little goes back more than 250 years. By contrast with the UK, virtually all US citizens today come from immigrant families from various parts of the world. The US is striving for a corporate heritage. The Amish have done it by living in the past and ignoring the present. For the rest, this is unacceptable in the richest country in the world; so they seek solace in religion, sincere or otherwise, as a means of identifying a pseudo past which enables them to maintain their goal of the American Dream.

Tony Butcher

CAROL SINGING

The Village Carol Singing will follow its traditional pattern again this year. The dates and venues are set out on the Village Events page, so please bear them in mind and join us if you can. Carol sheets are provided and we all have the opportunity to end the evenings at some kind host's house for warming refreshments.

The collection this year will be given to Helpline. This is a local organisation which aims to assist people requiring taking to hospital; sitting in with the housebound and helping with genuine domestic emergencies. There are upwards of ten telephone listeners on a rota basis and a number of volunteer drivers. Helpline has been going for some 12 years and has recently updated its telephone system. This has led to an increase in calls, thus confirming its value to the community. Its principle expense is telephone charges but administrative costs also have to be met. This enhanced activity has led to its slender resources being depleted, which we hope your generosity will remedy.

Do join us in the singing; it really is enjoyable.

Peter Kirk Farewell Service

A service of thanksgiving for the work of the Peter Kirk School will take place in St. John's Church on Saturday 5th December at 3:00pm. The service will be conducted by Revd's Andrew Spurr and Bob Wallace, and all are invited to participate in an event which will mark the closing of a chapter of the life of Stansted. Refreshments will follow the service.

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR GRANDMA

Grandma was coming to stay for Christmas. For weeks the Bouncer family, who lived under the old railway station, had been preparing for her visit. Mrs. Bouncer always made lovely things to eat for Christmas and the twins had been helping her.

Mr. Bouncer and the boys had been making decorations out of pieces of coloured and silver paper they had found. Human children were sometimes naughty and threw down their sweet papers instead of putting them in a rubbish bin, but the Bouncers collected them up and made some pretty decorations from them.



They all thought hard about what presents to give Grandma. Mrs. Bouncer made some sweets and the twins made a pretty handkerchief with flowers embroidered on it. Mr. Bouncer made a stool so she could sit with her feet up. Billy made a piece of wood smooth and shiny for a teapot stand. Baby was too little to make anything but tried hard to say "Gran-gran".



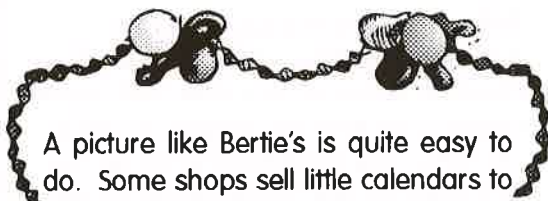
Bertie felt he was no good at making anything and did not know what to do. He wandered outside his home feeling sad that he had not got a present for Grandma. He bounced up onto the station platform which now had weeds growing on it and bushes overshadowing it. Then a ray of late afternoon sun shone through the clouds and Bertie could see by its light that there was a hole at the bottom of the wooden boarding near the old ticket office

He poked at the rotten wood and made the hole big enough to crawl in to. He found himself in a cupboard and the light shining in was just enough to see some rolls of paper. He pulled one through the hole and spread it out on the platform. It was a poster advertising places the trains used to go to and there was a lovely picture of some countryside.

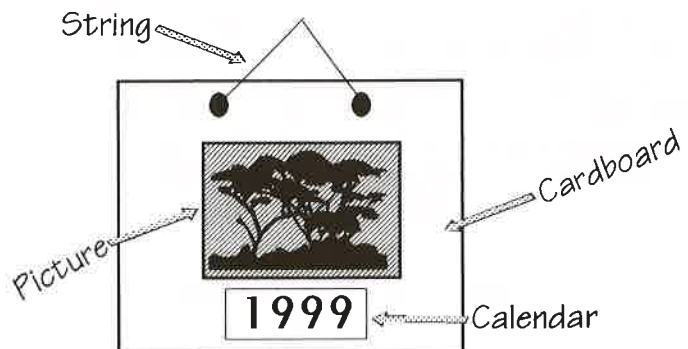
Bertie took the poster home, carefully cut out the picture and stuck it on a piece of cardboard. Dad helped him make two holes in the top and gave him a piece of string to put through them and there was a present for Grandma. On Christmas Day Grandma was delighted with her presents. "When I get home," she said, "I will sit with my feet on the stool, with my teapot on the new stand alongside me, eating sweets and using my new handkerchief while looking at the lovely picture hanging on the wall. I will think about you all and what a happy Christmas I have had."



SOMETHING FOR YOU TO DO




A picture like Bertie's is quite easy to do. Some shops sell little calendars to stick on the bottom which would make a nice present. Do ask first if you can have the picture - do not cut it out of a book!



HOMEMADE CAKES

10.00 am

Sat 5th December
outside the
United Reformed Church
 Chapel Hill
(in church if wet)



STANSTED MILLERS

Christmas Stall

outside 'Savages'
Lower Street

9.30 am to 12 noon
Saturday 5th December
New Items - Ideal Xmas Gifts

Bentfield School

CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Games ~ stalls ~ etc

and

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Everyone welcome

2 pm

Saturday 5th December



VILLAGE EVENTS

December

2	Wed	Gardening Club	Day Centre 8 pm
3	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
5	Sat	Windmill Goods Sale Cake Stall Christmas Fayre	Lower Street 9.30 am Outside UR Church 10 am - noon Bentfield School 2 pm
6	Sun	Cantate Youth Choir	St John's Church 3 pm
7	Mon		
to			
10	Thu	Skip at Crafton Green	
8	Tue	Tools for Self Reliance AGM	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
10	Thu	Evening WI Hugh Johnson Concert	St John's Hall 7.30 pm Peter Kirk School 7.30 pm
14	Mon	Shalom Christmas Party	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
17	Thu	W I Carols	United Reformed Church 8 pm
19	Sat	CTS Celebration of Christmas	St Mary's Church 4 pm
21	Mon		
to			
24	Thu	Carol Singing round the village (see below)	

January

6	Wed	Gardening Club	Day Centre 8 pm
7	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
14	Thu	Evening WI	St John's Hall 7.30 pm



THE VILLAGE MUSIC CLUB

CANTATE YOUTH CHOIR

performs Christmas Music

3 pm Sunday 6th December

St John's Church

Tickets from Stansted Carpets 812019

Sonia Levy 815282 and at the door

All tickets £7



Concert

of carols, sketches
& songs

7.30 pm

Thurs 10th December

Peter Kirk School

Refreshments ~ Raffle



A Celebration of Christmas

Congregational Carols
Christmas Music
Readings and Poetry



4 pm

Sat 19 December

St Mary's Church

(parking at the Church and in
Mountfitchet School)

Everyone Welcome



Stansted Evening WI

warmly invite you to
an evening of

Readings & Carols

to celebrate Christmas

8 pm

Thursday 17th December

United Reformed Church
followed by refreshments

All proceeds to the Church

Everyone welcome

Hope to see you there!



Carol Singing

You are warmly invited to join
in singing round the village

Meet at 7.30 pm

Mon 21 outside St John's Church

Tue 22 corner Church Rd/Mountfitchet

Wed 23 corner Cambridge Rd/Croasdaile

Thu 24 corner Chapel Hill/Sunnyside

Followed by refreshments

All are welcome

Hope to see you there!

Recorder, flute & clarinet players
also welcome

Please tel 814059 to arrange music



The National Childbirth Trust
Education for Parenthood

If you are new in the area and have young children then the NCT may be the answer to finding friends (little and large!). Come along to one of the coffee mornings below or call our membership secretary on 850287.

We have just got back the professional photos of our children, just in time to send to proud grandparents for Christmas. Our photographer always takes great shots and at only £15 a set we have no problem filling a while morning with sittings. We are gearing up for Christmas now: the Children's Party is organised at St John's Hall (7th December) and the Santa Express train ride at Audley End is firmly on our calendars (21st December). The children will be able to deliver their last minute requests to Santa (Yo-Yo's this year - move over Teletubbies!) while parents have sherry and mince pies.

December

- Wed 2nd:
Toddlers Ride on Toys Henham Church Hall (850354)
- Fri 4th:
Pre-School 1.30-3.30 Penelope, Elsenham (814219)
- Mon 7th:
Under 1s & Expectant Mums Anna, Stansted
- Wed 9th:
Toddlers Penelope, Elsenham (814219)
- Fri 11th:
Christmas Stories and Songs 1.30-3.30 Jane, Henham (850735)
- Mon 14th:
Under 1s ... Caroline, Elsenham (647157)
- Wed 16th:
Toddlers Wendy, Stansted (813387)
- Fri 18th:
Pre-school 1.30-3.30 Danuta, Stansted (816263)
- Mon 21st:
Santa Express
- Wed 23rd:
Toddlers Brigitte, Stansted (813133)

All Monday and Wednesday coffee mornings are 10.00 - 11.30 am. Friday coffee afternoons are 1.30 - 3.30 pm. Refreshments 50p per family.

Wendy Train



UTTLESFORD CARERS

There will be no support group meeting in December at the Meeting House.

Stansted Tennis Club



Christmas will soon be upon us and this year the Tennis Club are celebrating with a night at Michael Mann's Chinese Restaurant in Bishop's Stortford on Friday 11th December. If you have not already booked your place then please do so now by contacting Richard Mott on 466348.

The close of the summer season for the Essex Small Clubs League was extended to the end of October due to the really atrocious weather conditions. So many matches have had to be cancelled. Even so it has been a successful season for the five leagues in which we participate. The winter season is now under way and we are always on the look out for any new members who would be interested in playing in matches.

Sunday morning club sessions continue throughout the winter months (weather permitting). ALL WELCOME!

Chris Hollis is continuing his junior coaching sessions on Saturday mornings. The class for 10-13 year olds takes place from 9.00 - 9.45 am. This is followed by the class for 7-10 year olds from 9.45 - 10.30 am. If you are interested or would like further information please contact Chris on 466973.

If you would like to join the tennis club please contact our Membership Secretary, Kate Rutter, on 813053. If you have any other queries please contact either Janet Hollis (Chairman) on 812073 or Richard Mott (Secretary) on 466348.

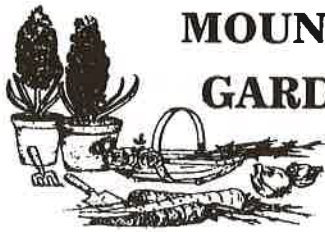


Recipe of the Month

Chicken in White Wine

- 1oz / 28gm butter
- 1 onion, peeled and chopped
- 1lb / 450gm **cooked** chicken, in largish pieces
- 2 x 7½oz / 210gm tins grilling mushrooms, drained
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 10oz / 285gm tin condensed mushroom soup
- 3 tablespoons single cream
- ¼ pint / 142ml dry white wine
- Grated nutmeg

- (a) heat butter in large pan
- (b) gently soften onion in butter for 10 mins
- (c) add chicken, mushrooms and pepper
- (d) pour in soup, cream and wine
- (e) stir well and blend, using a wooden spoon
- (f) add nutmeg



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

At our monthly meeting on November 4th at the Day Centre, the speaker was Mr J Hull taking on the subject of 'Garden Planning and Management'. In his talk he gave us advice on how to plan your garden to good effect and at the same time, work with many labour saving ideas. Mrs Lily Suckling won the monthly competition for a sprig of heather.

The chairman, Mr David Williams, advised us to get our seed orders in as soon as possible. We will be sending an order to Suttons and Unwins where members can expect to get a discount of 30%.

Our next meeting will be on December 2nd when the speaker will be Mr Peter Blackburn-Maze and, after which, we will hold our Christmas Party.

THE SAMPLER

Go bring me a thread gossamery white,
Bring in the baubles, the tall orphaned candles
Whimpering light.
Let the red holly boughs
Entwine the rafters,
The shy Christmas tree and mistletoe's laughter,
Open the windows, the sweet carolling air
Bid enter the room wood scented,
Now barren and bare.
Stands of gold the fire light reflected
I weave in the pattern
Of days, silver memoried.
Crisp crunch of candy and choristers eating,
Swift flow of wine and song of goodwill,
Go bring me a thread gossamer fine
Of life's span told in the evenings
With weft of lights golden, warp of red wine.

Norah Turner



Royal British Legion Women's Section

Opening our AGM our President, Mrs Margaret Gabb, said that once again our branch has had a very successful year. She welcomed two new members and thanked the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and all the Committee for their work which, she emphasised, does not get any easier as we all get older. She thought that the highlight of the year was the Golden Award to Mrs Vera Levey for her fifty years as our Treasurer.

Our Chairman, whose forced absence compelled her to send a written report, thanked our President, all officers and committee and all our members for their hard work, co-operation and support for all events during the past year. She singled out other members for special thanks and referred to the recent celebration of Mrs Edie Snow's fifty years as a member. Mrs Hollis said that she felt very privileged to be Chairman.

The Secretary detailed the events over the past year including two successful coffee mornings; and the Treasurer reported that 1997/98 had been a good year for fund-raising and that we had a healthy bank balance.

Officers and committee returned to serve for another year are:

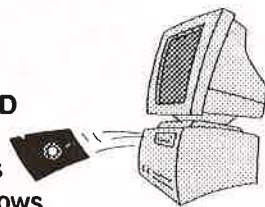
President - Mrs Gabb
Chairman - Mrs Hollis
Secretary - Mrs Whall
Treasurer - Mrs Levey
Committee - Mesdames Blyth, Clower, Patmore, Rowley and Thistle.

We have no meeting in December or January so we do not meet again until Thursday 18th February at 7.30 pm in the Day Centre. We wish all our members and friends a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful and healthy 1999.

Pat Clower

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These are in full working order and have served "The Link" book-keeping well, but we have now upgraded to something a bit faster!
Please call Janet on 812593 if interested

Bentfield School

Bentfield school children have been very busy recently. We have held a sponsored skip for software. This was so we can buy some educational software for the computers that we purchased during the summer. The total the children managed to raise was over £500.

The children were asked to fill shoeboxes with toys, games, pencils, soap, toothpaste and anything that they thought another child would like. They wrapped the boxes in Christmas paper and brought them to school. The children collected 66 boxes which is a brilliant total. The boxes will be sent around the world to give a little happiness to children who are a lot less fortunate than our own.

Profile Series No. 7

TOM AND MARION JOHNSON

Tom and Marion are part of the fabric of the Stansted Community and their friendliness is widely experienced and appreciated.

Tom was born and bred in Stansted and, until he was 40, worked in the family firm of electricians (founded in the early 1900s). Marion, from South Wales (and proud of it!) came to Stansted in 1951 after completing her Teacher Training Course at Hockerill College in Bishop's Stortford, following which she was recruited by the Revd. Graham Lennard (later Bishop of London) to the staff of St Mary's School, Stansted, where she taught until her retirement. They were married 44 years ago in St German's, Cardiff, and since coming to Stansted have both always been closely involved with St John's Church. Tom started as a choirboy, then was a server for 50 years and on retirement took over the Hall bookings. Marion ran the Sunday School for nearly 40 years - with one or two breaks - and built it up into a well-attended and enthusiastic group.

When he was 40 Tom's career changed course and he too went to Hockerill College and after that taught in Sheering and at Newport County Primary School. Both Marion and Tom have remained closely in touch with the Hockerill Old Students Committee and, in fact, arrange

accommodation for the old students returning from all over England every other year for a reunion.

They had three children - Anne, Huw and Peter. The death of Huw at the age of 14 from muscular dystrophy was a great tragedy for all the family. After his death Marion and Tom - realising the need of parents of handicapped children for support - formed the Huw Johnson Club. It began with six families, and now - 25 years later - it is a thriving and active group of 25 handicapped young people and their families. They meet every week and each year have a week's holiday together; readers of LINK will know how much this is enjoyed!

Another very important activity that Marion started and organised until three years ago was the Good Friday project - begun 27 years ago when the Sunday School was asked to create a Service on Good Friday during an interregnum. Over the succeeding years this became a regular event involving drama, dance and music. Over 200 children were involved in the preparation activities and the production itself, and adults from all denominations helped. There sometimes as many as 400 people at the Good Friday Service. The theme always reflected aspects of rejection, death and resurrection.

The creation and success of the Huw Johnson Club is a powerful expression of the message of triumph over tragedy. The cheerfulness and enthusiasm of Tom and Marion in all their activities are highly valued in Stansted.

Katherine Hurford



IMPORTANT

Please note that due to Christmas printing deadlines, copy for the January Link must be at 58 Chapel Hill by Monday December 7th at latest.



THE VILLAGE MUSIC CLUB

CANTATE YOUTH CHOIR

As you will see on our Village Events page, the Village Music Club presents the 80-strong Cantate Youth Choir, directed by Michael Kibblewhite, in a programme of familiar favourites and Christmas Music on Sunday 6th December at 3 pm in St John's Church, Stansted. Ticket prices are £7 adult, £3 children, £5 concessions and member's children at £1. In view of the anticipated popularity of this concert, tickets should be purchased in advance from Stansted Carpets, Chapel Hill, Stansted (812109), Nockolds Solicitors, Market Square, Bishop's Stortford or Sonia Levy, 31 Chapel Hill, Stansted (815282). Mulled wine and mince pie refreshments will be available during the interval at a small extra charge.

Erratum

Stansted Hall Cricket Club

In the November issue we incorrectly referred to Mr David Earl as Chairman of the Stansted Stort Valley Rotary Club. Mr Earl is in fact P.R.O. of the SSVRC. We apologise for the error.



Tools for Self Reliance

In spite of a long absence from The Link I am pleased to report that our tool refurbishment activity is alive and kicking. We concentrate on tools for carpentry, such as chisels, planes and saws, but donations of all hand tools (not the gardening kind) and Singer sewing machines are always welcome.

We are still short of volunteers to spend perhaps a morning a week on sharpening tools. This is prior to putting the tools into kits ready for sending out to Tanzania or one of the other six countries that TFSR has links with. If you are interested in what we do then you are invited to attend our annual Christmas review and social which is to be held this year at 7 Blythwood Gardens on Tuesday 8th December at 8 p.m. We re expecting to have at least one of the TFSR HQ staff with us to give an update on national achievements. If you would like to come along, please call me in advance so we know how many mince pies to prepare!

Michael Dyer (814059)



Huw Johnson Club

On November 12th we all made our way to Great Easton at the invitation of Chris, Hannah and Joanne for our annual fireworks display. In spite of a great deal of mud underfoot everyone had a wonderful time. The sparklers were very quickly despatched, as we settled down to watch Brian and Tom let off the fireworks. With all the usual "oohs and aahs" everyone agreed that it was our best firework display ever. A big thank you for Brian and Tom for braving the soggy lawn and doing such a grand job.

Soon we were all inside the lovely warm house, thawing out and enjoying Hannah's lovely cooking. I think some of us ate too many hot dogs!! Three hearty cheers were given for Hannah, Chris and Joanne and the hope that perhaps we will be invited again next year.

We cannot thank our drivers enough for so cheerfully transporting our members to Great Easton. Some even stayed to enjoy the display. Those of us in the mini bus returned by the scenic route to Stansted. Thank you Brian, we thoroughly enjoyed looking at the bright lights of the airport.

We have had a good response about our request for teenagers but there is still room for more. Contact Marion on 812284. We also need another driver who can replace Alastair who has other commitments on a Thursday. Please do offer to help us in this way.

Marion G Johnson



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

A wide variety of old farm buildings exist in Essex, from the famous Cressing Temple Barns to more humble ones. All had their place and function, as Anne Padfield so ably showed us at our November meeting.

Next month we try to get in the festive spirit with suitable refreshments on 3rd December when Tony Rook will be speaking on some aspects of Hertfordshire.

January 7th brings us to Members Evening when we have speakers from our own membership and hope our "interest table" will have a range of Stansted related items for us to view. If you are coming to this meeting, please look for something to put on the interest table - an old photograph or perhaps something you have dug up in your garden.

Both meetings are at 8 pm in the Day Centre.

Peggy Honour (813160)



YOUR 'LINK' COMMITTEE

Photo: Peter Brown

Michael Dyer, Sheila Parry, Derek Honour, Janet Townsend, Katharine Hurford, Eileen Quinn
 Not present: Olive Bunting

THE PETER KIRK SCHOOL



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

The regular Sunday and Bank Holiday openings of the mill take place between Easter and October but all activity does not cease in the winter. School and adult groups still book for guided tours, although it can be chilly at times as no heating is installed.

Because the mill belongs to the village there is no charge for groups from the Stansted schools. However, something always needs doing in an old building so fund raising is ongoing. Therefore, there is a charge for adult and out-of-village visitors. We will try to arrange guided tours at any reasonable time and our team of volunteers will endeavour to tailor the talk to the group's requirements.

We have new display boards on the first floor and hope children will send us their drawings of the mill so that we can put them up.

For details of booking fees and further information please contact Peggy Honour (813160).

The Peter Kirk School was named in memory of local MP, Sir Peter Kirk and opened in January 1980. By 1984 the school achieved a roll of 93 pupils with a new hall completed in 1987. At this time Hargrave House, a residential home for children with severe learning difficulties, was relocated to Chelmsford. In retrospect this was a critical factor in the demise of the school.

The lack of new referrals by the LEA became apparent in 1988 and despite objections from parents, in 1991 pupils with moderate learning difficulties were moved to other schools. From 1992 - 94, the LEA proposed various re-developments which were all rejected by E.C.C. After considerable delay and much indecision the school was proposed for closure, the response of the Governors being to apply for Grant Maintained status. With the change of Government this was rejected and, sadly, closure will take effect at the end of 1998. This is despite one of the best Ofsted reports ever given to a Special School.

Throughout the achievements and disappointments of the short life of the school the people of Stansted have shown great compassion, support and understanding. The community will be the poorer without it. A service of thanksgiving will be held on Saturday December 5th; see p.5 for details.

Paul Embleton

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION



POPPY APPEAL

Stansted & District Branch

Poppy Appeal

At the time of writing this report the collection has not been counted but will be published in the next issue. Thanks must be expressed to all the collectors for their dedicated work, particularly as the weather was not too kind this year. Our gratitude and thanks of course of all who gave so generously to the Appeal.

It has been mentioned to me that all houses were not covered by the "House to House" collection. We do endeavour to cover all houses in the area but even when we make two calls, not everyone is in. It is hoped that you were able to obtain your poppy and contribute to the Appeal through the many collecting points in the shops, public houses and other static boxes distributed around the village. Again our thanks are due to those who help by allowing poppies to be available on their premises.

John L Segar
Hon Poppy appeal Organiser

Remembrance Sunday 8th November

The Parish Council again organised the Parade in Stansted with the laying of 14 wreaths at the Memorial in Chapel Hill prior to the Service in St John's Church the Rev. David Cornick from the United Reformed Church officiating. The church was full to capacity with some members of the congregation standing.

On Wednesday, at the 11th on the 11th of the 11th, more than fifty persons were present at the Memorial to observe the two minutes silence in remembrance. The Rector, the Rev. Andrew Spurr, was in attendance. The Legion Standard was paraded in the capable hands of the Chairman, Mr D L Challis

AGM

Whilst few attended the AGM on 3rd November we were able to form a Committee for the next year. The principal officers elected were:

President	Mrs K E Stevens
Chairman	Mr D L Challis (815183)
Secretary	Mr G R M Stoddart (814015)
Treasurer	Mr J L Segar (813289)

Since the year 1901 we have seen two major conflicts and innumerable minor skirmishes with the inevitable increase of deaths except for 1960 when no serving person was killed.

The Stansted and District Branch of the Royal British Legion now needs you to help in the aftermath of these tragedies. Each death leaves a widow and possibly young children who at least want a sympathetic ear and an offer of help. Our members at present are mainly of the 39/45 era and we are fast reaching our "sell by date". So if you are of the longer "shelf life" group do come and join us.

You can join if you were a National Service man/woman or a Territorial. If neither but you believe that the Legion does a good job in pressing for better pensions and conditions for those worse off than you can also join us.

Should anyone in the District wish to join the Legion or offer their services as collectors for the Poppy Appeal please contact any of the above committee members - their telephone numbers are in the local directory.

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STANSTED JUNIOR CRICKET TEAM 1998

The boys are coached by Keith Ayres (National Coaching Certificate) who hopes to take them on a summer tour to Dorest in 1999. Indoor nets will continue in the new year. Anyone interested, please telephone Keith on 814471.



Photo: K. Ayres

Back Row: Simon Ingold, Jonathan Finbow, Jack Comyn-Noyes, Robert Shaw, James Inston, Greg Collins, Eric Pronk, John Ayres.
 Middle Row: Gregory Marriott, George Warnett, Lee Warwick, James Abbotson, Christopher Bennett, Robin Marriott, Mark Roach, Paul Clark.
 Bottom Row: Matthew McCulloch, David Ayres, Matthew Abbotson, Adam Pursglove, Henry Green.



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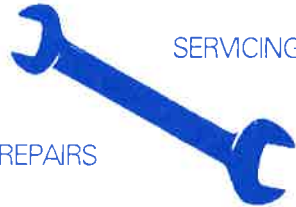
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