

April 2001

The *LINK*



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Mountfitchet*

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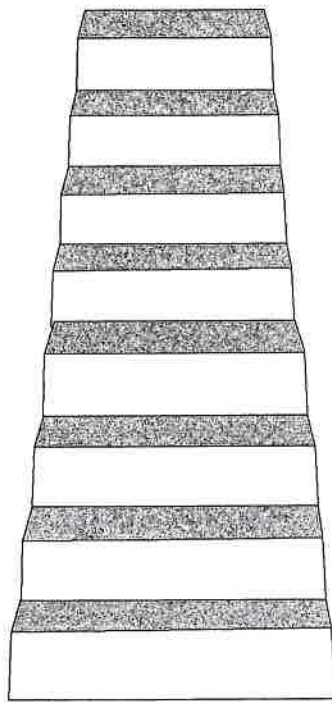
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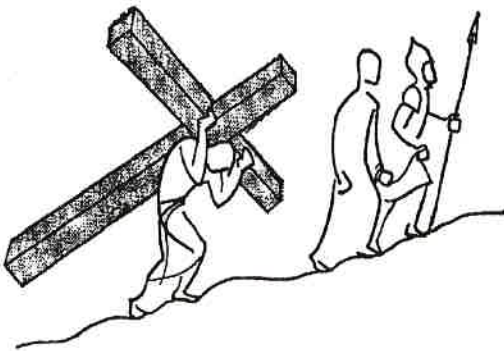


*Make your
journey of witness
on*

*Good Friday
at 6 pm from
Lower Street to
St Theresa's Church*



*The Hope of Easter
comes from
the price of
Calvary*



The Link (price £3.50 per year) is published monthly by Churches Together in Stansted
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editor.thelink@stansted.net
by 12th April for publication on 28th April
by 10th May for publication on 26th May**

METHODIST

Meets in Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Minister Rev'd John Graham
2 South Road
Bishop's Stortford
Tel 01279 654475

Secretary Mrs Catherine Dean
49 Recreation Ground
Stansted
Tel 01279 813579

Email Methodists@Stansted.net

Services and Preachers for April

1st Joan Kennett
8th Rev. John Graham - Holy Communion
15th Bernard Engel
22nd Betty Kime
29th Rev. Harry Wood

There is no Friday fellowship meeting in April

HAPPY EASTER

This is a sincere greeting which will be said by most of us at the appropriate time this month.

For the disciples of Jesus they didn't realise it was coming. Yes, Jesus had spoken to them on a number of occasions explaining what was going to happen, but they couldn't take it into their thinking. Then, on the first day of the week after Good Friday 'They remembered His words'. They saw and believed.

We have our own periods of being in the 'desert'. We have our continual 'testing'. We have our dark moments and times of bleak despair. We have times when the whole of 'our' world collapses around us, or if it hasn't it feels as though it has.

At those times it is not easy to understand the promise of Easter - it seems so remote and unreal. I guess the disciples had that same feeling on Good Friday, as well as the fear for their own lives. But we live this side of Easter with the promise that JESUS IS ALIVE and will always be with us. Difficult at times to comprehend, more difficult to feel, but it is the very heart of The Christian Faith.

Hang on to the fact the Jesus is alive for you. You will not always feel the joy of Easter Day, but you will finally and eternally have cause for rejoicing.

So I wish you, along with St Paul 'All joy in the Lord' and A HAPPY EASTER.

THE LORD IS RISEN. HE IS RISEN INDEED.

With love,

John Graham

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Clerk Mrs Anthea Lee
24 Lea Close
Bishop's Stortford
Tel 01279 656707

Meeting 11 am

Shalom Group Retreat

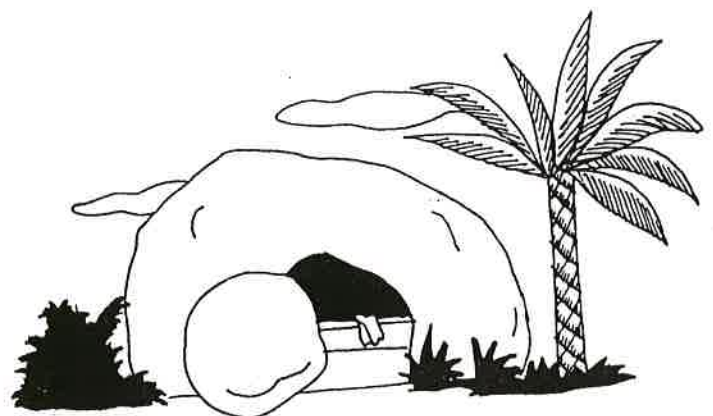
As the only Quaker regularly attending the Shalom group, I felt somewhat responsible for the weekend at Hengrave Hall in Suffolk at the end of February, which Elizabeth Brown, Clerk of the Quaker Retreat Group, had been invited to lead. I was encouraged by the positive attitude of the group, both before and during the weekend.

Elizabeth took as her theme "Walking and Abiding in the Light" and shared with the group the meaning of 'light' as portrayed by George Fox, founder of Quakerism, and by more recent theologians. We saw that light comes out of the darkness which we all experience at times, and can grow and flower to encompass our whole lives.

Elizabeth helped us to understand something of how to meditate, with led meditations and 'worship sharing' both in small groups and within the whole group. These encouraged us to explore particular themes - the main concerns of our lives and our relationships - within a listening framework. In another, rather different, session we were asked to be creative on the theme of 'light' if we felt able; this led to some expressive responses in music, drawing, poetry and prose, as well as to quiet reading and thought. The beautiful sunset, in the cold, clear air outside encouraged our efforts.

We enjoyed, as before, the warm and tranquil atmosphere of Hengrave Hall, with its ecumenical community and mix of helpers from many countries. It helped us to relax and appreciate our led weekend, and to return to Stansted refreshed and renewed.

Margaret Whitelaw



ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Theresa's, Stansted with St Anthony's

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
12 Millside
Stansted
Tel 01279 814349

Masses Saturday 6.00 pm
Sunday 9 am and 10.30 am

Holy Days of Obligation
8 am and 8 pm

Tuesday 9.30 am
- Saturday

Confessions

Saturday 10 am
and by appointment

Baptisms

By appointment

The Multi-Faith Society

At a recent BRES (Brentwood Religious Education Service) lecture, we were privileged to hear Bishop Michael Fitzgerald speak on "Living in a Multi-Faith Society". Bishop Michael is Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue based in Rome.

First of all, he outlined the development, in this country and elsewhere, of a pluralistic religious society and then based his theme on Faith, Hope and Charity. Since the 1960s, apart from long-standing Jewish communities, there has developed communities of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc, which has spread to each country in Europe.

Faith - Bishop Michael quoted from 1 Timothy as he spoke of God's will for the salvation of all. Acceptance of this has direct consequences as to restrict salvation to Christians would exclude whole groups of people, such as those born from the beginning of creation to the time of Jesus.

In the encyclical, "Gaudium et Spes" (22) in illustrating that Jesus Christ united himself with each member of the human race, it states "Nor does this hold only for those who believe in Christ: it holds for all men of good will in whose hearts grace works ..."

In our society today, Bishop Michael said we need to know about other faiths with accurate and respectful information, especially in those areas where a pluralistic religious society does not exist. In the recent document, "Dominus Jesus", it says that consideration must be given to historical, religious figures of other faiths, and how grace comes to those people. These challenges do not weaken our own faith but deepens it as we come to reflect more about our own beliefs.

Hope - To have respect for human rights as we are engaged in common pilgrimage. We will then be able to face together the problems of the world.

In Rome in October 1999, the Pope opened an Inter-Religion Assembly, one of its aims being to encourage inter-faith activity. Many experiences were shared including that of a common journey, emphasised by a visit to Assisi. The result of discussions was a plea to get to know each other by listening, by engaging in tasks where relations of harmony and peace can be built up, by working together for human dignity and justice, by promoting a spirit of dialogue, and not to use religion to instigate violence. To have a common rejection of fanaticism and antagonism.

Bishop Michael then illustrated how words had been translated into action, eg. in Northern Ghana, where there is a Christian/Muslim Association; in Sarajevo; in Japan, where a Buddhist initiative has been set up to improve the lot of children worldwide.

Love (Charity) - All religions meet in many places; work, school, university. How should we react to this? Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan must serve as our guide. Love of God means love of neighbour, which is all peoples without exclusion. In inter-religious relations, it means to give and to receive, to share joys and sorrows. To send a message to a Muslim at the end of Ramadan, or a Hindu at Diwali or a Buddhist at their festival. To also receive from them their good wishes. Even to pray together. Bishop Michael spoke of an occasion in Birmingham when an Imam and an Anglican priest prayed together for the priest's sick father. It was an encounter in the Spirit. This could be our experience of living out with Christ the promise to overcome barriers and prejudices in our multi-faith society.

Bishop Michael finished with the quotation from 1 Corinthians "There are three things that last: Faith, Hope and Love; and the greatest of these is Love".

Rita Morson



SHALOM

April Meetings

2nd. April - An Agape at the home of Marion and Michael Dyer, 7 Bythwood Gardens.

23rd. April - Prayer and praise - venue to be announced.



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

The Parishes of Stansted Mountfitchet with Birchanger and Farnham

St John's, Stansted



Where the Church lets you down

I had a conversation recently with an elderly friend of a friend who wanted me to 'come over and explain why there were all these changes in the Church of England.'

It was an interesting conversation, in the course of which I asked her how she had learned her faith. She said at Sunday school and by learning The Catechism at confirmation. 'You knew where you were then,' she said. 'Now we just have change for change's sake.'

'Change for change's sake' is one of those phrases which sounds good, until you ask what it means. I asked her if this meant that there was a room full of vicars in Church House, Westminster who say, 'right, we're bored with this, let's change it all'. She admitted the absurdity of the image.

By the end of our conversation I felt that the Church had let her down, not in changing liturgy, but in giving her the impression that there was only *one* thing to learn, and when that had been done, that was it.

There are a lot of people out there who be-

lieve that; they call themselves traditionalists. I don't know why they do: tradition is the history of change.

The church would have been better to say that a relationship with God is a *process*, a movement of growth, discovery and knowing oneself to be discovered and known by God. If she hadn't been to a Bible Study group for fifty years, if she hadn't been taught about process, then something like a change in the words we use to worship, which comes out of growth and discovery, would be incomprehensible to her.

The worst words in the whole of Christian worship are from the hymn 'Abide with me'; they say 'Change and decay in all around I see, O thou who changest not, abide with me.'

The Church needs to take responsibility in a way that it has not done in the past, to lead people not into a cul-de-sac or full stop but into a journey which will continue, even beyond death, and one which may take each of us into territories of the Spirit which even the Church has not yet mapped. AS

All enquiries

are welcome at The Church Office located in the Upper Room, St. John's Church Hall, Stansted CM24 8JP

Monday	Open from
Wednesday	9:00am-12:00noon
Friday	

(01279) 815243

<church.office@stansted.net>

Administrator

Mrs Elizabeth Jennings

Church Hall Bookings

Secretary

Mrs Joy Lambe

(01279) 817937

<joy@stansted.net>

Rector

Revd Andrew Spurr

The Rectory

5 St. John's Road

Stansted Mountfitchet

Essex, CM24 8JP

phone/fax (01279) 812203

<rector@stansted.net>

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Revd Rhys Martin

43 Gilbey Crescent

Stansted Mountfitchet

Essex, CM24 8DT

phone (01279) 817513

<curate@stansted.net>

Honorary Assistant Priest

Canon Derek Jackson

88 Stansted Road

Bishop's Stortford

Herts, CM23 2DZ

phone (01279) 652664

Director of Music

Mrs Glynis Morris

Wakeley

Leetes Lane

Eversden

Cambs, CB3 7HH

phone/fax (01223) 263640

<church.music@stansted.net>

St. John's Diary

Sundays	8:00am Holy Communion
	9:30am Parish Communion
	6:30pm Evening Prayer <i>said</i>
	11:00am Open Door Service <i>on the third Sunday of the month</i>
Wednesdays	10:00am Holy Communion <i>followed by coffee</i>
	7:30pm Intercessions and Night Prayer

Tiny Tots is a Mother and Toddler group which meets fortnightly at 2:00pm in church. Co-ordinators are Tina South 814371 and Yvonne Hardy <fintytots@stansted.net>

Laser Group is a 12-16 youth group which meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings at 8:00pm for activities in the church hall. The evening concludes with candlelit Night Prayer in the chapel in church. Contact Mrs Katy Dockerill 812997. <lazer@stansted.net>

Holy Week and Easter at St John's

Palm Sunday	9:20am	Parish Communion
Monday in Holy Week	7:30pm	Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Tuesday in Holy Week	7:30pm	Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Wednesday in Holy Week	7:30pm	Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Maundy Thursday	8:00pm	Holy Communion
	9:00-11:00pm	Meditation
Good Friday	All Day	Good Friday Holiday Project
	12:00-3:00	Three hours meditation at St Mary's, Birchanger
Holy Saturday	6:00pm	Churches Together Walk of Witness
	8:30pm	Night Prayer at St Mary's, Birchanger
Easter Day	8:00pm	First Communion of Easter
	8:00am	Holy Communion
	9:30am	Parish Communion
	11:00 am	Open Door Service

From the Registers

Burials and Cremations

2nd February	Stansted	Ben Turner, aged 82 years
19th February	Parndon Wood	Clive Nash, aged 69 years
22nd February	Stansted	Maude Poole, aged 95 years

St John's Christmas Market Craft Stall

Yes, Christmas is still a long way off, but the ladies who make items for the craft stall, work all year round.

Have you any of the following items you could donate:

- Wooden coat hangers
- Good quality knitting yarn
- Remnants of dressmaking or furnishing material

Perhaps you have started knitting something and then lost interest, give it to us and we can make good use of it for the stall.

If you have any of the above items they can either be left at the back of St John's Church (a box will be there) or take to Ann Conroy at 31 Park Road.

Ministers

Rev'd David Simpson
28 Linton Close
Saffron Walden
Tel 01799 526618

Contact

Mrs Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill
Tel 01279 812593

Services for April

1st	10-30 am	Rev M. Cressey
8th	10-30 am	Rev D. Simpson - Communion
12th	7-30 pm	Maundy Thursday Communion
15th	10.30 am	Rev J. Tollington Followed by Coffee & Hot Cross Buns
22nd	10-30 am	Rev D. Simpson
29th	10-30 am	Mr R. Friday

Other Activities

22nd	11-15 am	Pilots - for Children from age 6 to 11
26th	8-00 pm	Social Night
28th	10-00 am	Bric-a-Brac, Cakes and Coffee

Progress !

At last the Contractors have moved in to the Church. It seems an age since we began to talk about altering our Church Building to meet the needs of the Community in the 21st century, and we began fund raising.

Now with the work underway, fund raising takes on a new urgency. Weather permitting we hope to have a Bric-a Brac and a Cake stall outside the Church on 28th April, with Coffee in the Lecture Hall.


Other events planned.

- June 2nd Tea at "Pennington View", Elsenham.
- June 23rd Mystery Car Drive and Supper.
- July 14th Strawberry Tea.

We still have "Stansted" Tea towels, Mugs and Notelets for sale, as well as a booklet Compiled by Peter Trundle on the Transition of Stansted Airport, from a Military base to a Civil Airport. For more details on the booklet ring Peter on 01279 813433.

All other Enquiries to Janet on 01279 812593

Good Friday Project



This year we go back to Rome in the year AD46. We join Ben the Baker and his family who are leaders of an underground Christian movement in Imperial Rome. More information can be found by following the

Resources link on:
www.stansted.net/churches/anglican/

We are looking for volunteers, from across the benefice and beyond, who can help us begin to draw the project together. If you would like to help, or know of people who would, please call Mrs Lyn Inston on 816226 or email her on:
storykeepers@stansted.net

**WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT
PLEASE CALL US NOW !**

Christian Aid

We believe in life before death

Christian Aid Week 13th to 20th May

Spare a few hours to change lives!

Volunteers to deliver and collect envelopes are urgently needed. Please contact Catherine Dean on 813579 if you can help. The more people – the less work.

Christian Aid Market

Saturday 19 May 10.30a.m. to noon at the Friends Meeting House. See next month's Link for special events.

Garth Hewitt to play at St John's

In advance of this year's **Christian Aid Week** (13th-19th May), St John's Church will be hosting Garth for an evening of songs and stories from around the world.

Garth is South-Eastern Co-ordinator for Christian Aid and is directly involved with Palestinian Christians, including the Bishop in Jerusalem: Bishop Rian Abu-el Assal who visited St John's four years ago.

He is widely travelled and has a great deal of experience of the places and people who benefit from our giving to Christian Aid. All are welcome to attend, there will be a retiring collection. The concert will be at **7.30 pm on Friday, 27th April** in the church. See Catherine Dean or Andrew Spurr for details or email <garthhewitt@stansted.net>



R.A.P. (Regular Aid for the Poor)

It gives me great pleasure to announce that we have been able to send off to our three charities a further £200 to each of them.

We have been able to do this because we received a very generous donation from the URC. from their Christmas collections. However, without your continuing generous support of our envelope scheme we would not be able to continue to support these charities who between them do such good work. Thank you once again.

Dave Morson, Chairman of R.A.P.



CHURCHES
TOGETHER
in STANSTED

Lent Course – the final session "Faith Fuelling Action" will be held on Friday, 6th April at 8 pm in the URC Lecture Hall.

Agape- this will be on Sunday, 1st April at 6.30 pm at the URC Lecture Hall. There will be a bring and share supper.

CTS Executive meeting – Tuesday, 17th April at 8 pm in the URC Lecture Hall.

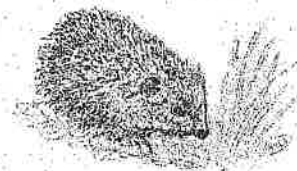


Nature Notes

Recent reports indicate that hedgehogs are drowning in large numbers as they are already committed to hibernation and are at the mercy of rising waters (April is the time they would normally come out of hibernation). The irony is that in July hedgehogs were thriving because of wet weather which was providing lots of food like earthworms. One local radio gardening programme mentioned that great numbers of earthworms were being washed away with the top soil.

Another species that has suffered from high water levels is the otter. They have been seen along a tributary leading off the River Stort, the Stansted Brook (near the Forest Hill turn off near the bridge and steps) and may have come from Debden Waters nearby. This animal has made a significant return after staring extinction in the face during the late 1970s. On the other hand large numbers have been killed on the roads this year. This is largely because when waters are so high the spaces under bridges are filled to the brim and animals which would normally swim underneath are forced to go over the top. Incidentally, mussels are a staple diet of otters.

On a higher drier note - in years gone by, a young lad fell into the stream at Gall End (near the Youth Centre) and was washed away under the main High Street only to be hooked out down Water Lane. Everyone was so relieved that they celebrated in the nearby Kings Arms pub and 'drowned their sorrows'!



Maureen Davies

**Bentfield CP School
CHILDREN'S FASHION
SHOW**

6.30 pm Mon 2nd April

Tickets £2 on the door

Refreshments

Purchases by cash, cheque or Visa

From Flamingoes to Fireflies

*Stansted Friends warmly
invite you to Elizabeth
Starling's illustrated talk
about her recent trip to Bolivia
on behalf of the Quakers*

**7 for 7.30 pm Tues 3rd April
Quaker Meeting House
Everyone welcome**

Bolivian handwork for sale



**Stansted Evening WI
JUMBLE SALE**

2 pm Sat 7th April

St John's Hall

**Teas ~ Raffle ~ Cake Stall
Entrance FREE**

Tel 812725/814433 for jumble collection

No electrical goods

VILLAGE EVENTS

April

1	Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
2	Mon	Children's Fashion Show Shalom Agape	Bentfield School 6.30 pm 7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
3	Tue	Talk on Bolivia	Quaker Meeting House 7 for 7.30 pm
4	Wed	RBL Coffee Morning Mountfitchet Seniors Garden Club	Day Centre 10.30 am Day Centre 2 - 4 pm Day Centre 8 pm
5	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
7	Sat	W I Jumble Sale Garden Club Spring Show	St John's Hall 2 pm Day Centre 2.30 pm
8	Sun	Carnival Car Boot Sale	Lower Street Car Park 10 am - 2 pm
12	Thu	Carers' Support Group WI	Quaker Meeting House 2 - 4 pm St John's Hall 7.45 pm
14	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughmans	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
15	Sun & 16 Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
16	Mon - 20 Fri	Amenity Skip	Lower St Car Park 7.30 am - 3 pm
18	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Outing	
19	Thu	RBL (Women)	Day Centre 7.30 pm
21	Sat	Garden Club Annual Dinner	
22	Sun	Green Waste Skip	Lower St Car Park 1 - 4 pm
23	Mon	Shalom Group	Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
27	Fri	Garth Hewitt Concert	St John's Church 7.30 pm
28	Sat	Jnr Football Club Outing Cake & Bric-à-brac Stall HEAL Quiz	Meet 8 am Outside URC Church 10 am - noon Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm

May

2	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Garden Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm Day Centre 8 pm
3	Thu	Local History Society	Venue tbc 8 pm
5	Sat	Scout Group Family Quiz	Scout HQ, Water Lane 6 pm
14	Mon - 18 Fri	Amenity Skip	Lower St Car Park 7.30 am - 3 pm
19	Sat	Green Waste Skip	Lower St Car Park 1 - 4 pm

Stansted Carnival Committee

CAR BOOT SALE

10 am - 2 pm

Sun 8th April

Lower Street Car Park

£5 per car

Refreshments available

**HOMEMADE CAKES
& BRIC-À-BRAC**

10 am Sat 28th April

outside the

United Reformed Church



Chapel Hill



**QUIZ
NIGHT**

7.30 for 8 pm Sat 28th April

Day Centre

Bring your own drinks

£6 (incl fish & chip supper)

Tel 814265



**Stansted Windmill
Open Days
2 - 6 pm**

Sunday 1st April

Sunday 15th April

Monday 16th April

Sunday 6th May

**LA LECHE LEAGUE
(Breastfeeding information
& support group)
COFFEE MORNING**

10 am - 12.30 pm Tues 15th May

Methodist Church, B. Stortford

Raffle ~ Cakes ~ Stalls

ALL WELCOME - TEL 831771

Stansted Carnival Committee



**QUIZ
NIGHT**

7 pm Sat 12th May

Mountfitchet High School

Bar ~ Ploughmans

Tickets £6

Tel 812692 or 815904



STANSTED CARNIVAL

EVENTS 2001

The Carnival Association is working hard again this year to organise fund raising events to support the main event of the year - the Stansted Carnival. If you want to help in some way with any of the events or if you wish to donate money or a raffle prize please contact Simon Clifford on 815904.

On **Sunday 8 April** from 10 am - 2 pm we will be holding a Car Boot Sale in the Lower Street Car Park, Stansted and the price per pitch will be £5. This is a new event for us which we hope will prove popular - it is also a good reason for you to sort out your garage, loft and garden shed - see you there!

On **Saturday 12 May** from 7 pm we shall be holding our very popular Quiz Night at the Mountfitchet High School, Forest Hall Road. This has become a firm favourite and last year there were over 200 participants. Tickets are £6 per person, which includes a cheese or pate Ploughman's Supper. The maximum number per table is 8, tickets can be booked by contacting Tony Mills on 812692 or Simon Clifford on 815904 and can be collected on the door on the night. A licensed bar and waitress service will operate!

Finally on **Saturday 7 July** the Carnival itself. This will be held in the Lower Street Car Park and festivities begin at 12 noon with a Fancy Dress Parade. There is no age limit for this event and the theme is "2001 and beyond". This can mean anything from space and technology to environment and ecology, so get busy with your costumes! Pitch booking forms should by now have been sent to all local organisations, but if you have not received one, please contact Simon Clifford (815904). If you would like to give your time or ideas for the Carnival, they would be much appreciated, so please contact either of the above named people - more hands make for a better Carnival!

Stansted Carnival Committee - Mission Statement

- 1 What is the Carnival Committee?
- 2 What is the role of the Committee?
- 3 What is Carnival Day all about?
- 4 How is the money raised?
- 5 What happens to the money raised?

1 The Carnival Committee is a group of unpaid volunteers from the village. Its members are not connected by religion or politics but come together to give their time to organise one of the few village events in which everyone can participate.

2 The committee's role is to provide a venue and framework for village organisations to raise funds for their own purposes through stalls and sideshows which they run themselves on an annual basis.

This might sound simple but we have to ensure that there is enough diversity in the stalls and sideshows to make the event attractive to the whole community. We also have to ensure that the Local Authority, police, fire service, etc. are happy with the plans.

3 Carnival Day is intended to be fun and the Committee tries hard to ensure that there is something for everyone. The Carnival, in its new venue at the Lower Street Car Park, is intended to be more accessible to the wider community and the over-riding principle is that everyone has fun.

4 As with all events, there are costs incurred in the set up, but the Committee keeps these to a minimum. Fund raising events are organised by the Committee during the year in an attempt to underwrite the majority of the expenditure and a small amount is retained from any profit made on the day as a buffer to enable the Committee to plan for the following year.

Village stall holders are asked to contribute 10% of their profit on the day and outside organisations and commercial enterprises are charged a fixed fee for their pitch and invited to donate further sums at their discretion. As with all outdoor events, the weather is a huge factor and profits cannot be guaranteed, hence the need for some funds to be retained to safeguard the future of the Carnival.

5 After the event the Committee collects the money due and considers any requests it has received for funds. Priority is given to village organisations, primarily the Carnival Trust Fund which was established in the 1970's to distribute money to needy families in the village.



Royal British Legion

Women's Section

After business had been completed at our meeting on 15th February we were entertained by Edna and Alan Wright with some really spectacular slides.

They had visited a number of gardens - among them Easton Lodge with snowdrops, a beautiful lake and a peacock; Bennington Lordship with its carpet of crocuses; Hyde Hall with camellias of all shades and, in summer, roses trailing along scalloped ropes; Wisley with lovely blossom and greenhouses with spectacular orchids. Also Sheffield Park, Ham House, Waddesdon Manor, West Wycombe Park, Ickworth - and many more.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 19th April at 7.30 pm in the Day Centre.

Our Coffee Morning will be on Wednesday 4th April from 10.30 am in the Day Centre - Bric-a-brac, cakes, raffle, tombola. Everyone welcome!

Pat Clower

BENTFIELD CP SCHOOL PTA

Race Night - Saturday 17th March

Bentfield Primary School held the above event which, with the help of local businesses, has turned out to be a huge success. We had an overwhelming response from local businesses and want to thank them all for their support. The race night itself was a sell out with over 90 tickets sold. All the horses to the races were sold throughout the school prior to the night. We had a fantastic turn out which resulted in an excellent evening. Many thanks go to all those who supported the event.

Our race sponsors were - G E Sworder & Sons, Popcorn Web Design, Lino Thomas, Concorde Motors, Honour Landscapes, Stortford Horse Bits, Brettles, Milbourne Packaging, R M Fine Diamond Jewellery and Irvine Ltd.

Advertisement

HARGRAVE HOUSE

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Scimitar Care Hotels, plc, is the new owner of Hargrave House which, after a short period of lying vacant, is now undergoing a complete facelift under its new management.

Hargrave will remain a residence for the elderly, preferring to be known as an hotel rather than a home. The General Manager is Pauline Wood. Originally from South Wales, Pauline has spent many years caring for the elderly.

One wing of the house has been completely remodelled, with the remainder to follow, including the provision of a bar.

The phone number for enquiries is (01279) 817272.

Pauline with Mrs Gladys Cole a long-time member of St Mary's, Great Dunmow, now resident at Hargrave House.



Photograph Rev. Andre

CENSUS DAY 2001 29TH APRIL

Some useful points to note:

About 55% of government spending is controlled by information gained from the census forms.

In 1991 there was an excellent 98% return. However, remember that 2% = 1.8m people. One section of the population that tended not to respond were those over 75.

It is compulsory to fill in the form

Enumerators do not have to supply references for this job.

Enumerators will knock on doors to hand Census forms to householders and will check the name, address and postcode.

Enumerators will call two times and will then post the form through the letter box if they do not get a reply either time.

People can post back the form and no one will call again. In this way you need not open the door if you do not wish to.

Parts of the form may be difficult for some people with sight problems to read as the print is in dark peach on light peach paper.

Enumerators will give assistance in filling in the forms if requested. They will wear an identity card on their lapel.

To prevent the problem of bogus callers the clear message is that no enumerator should be asked to enter into a house.

If an individual is unsure when there is a knock at the door, they should not open the door but should ring the police, who will know which enumerator is working where at any particular time, or they should ring the helpline given clearly on the front of the Census Form.

If in doubt, do not open the door. The form will be posted through the letter box on the second visit and you can ask someone you know and trust to help you fill it in. Remember you can post the completed form.

Fear of Public Speaking?

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Denise Williams

Tel 07770 272130

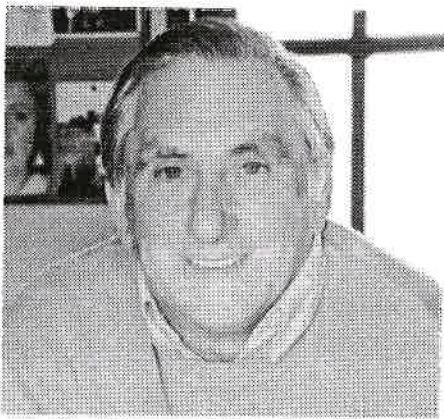
Email:
williams.denise@btinternet.com

STANSTED PROFILE

No. 33

Alan Goldsmith

The last time I met Alan Goldsmith was in the foyer of Birchwood School. We discovered that we had both been booked to take a sixth form class and, thinking on his feet, Alan suggested we did a double act. No sooner had I thought how this would work, than we found he was going to the upper and I had the lower sixth. I still think that would have been a good opportunity for some fun. "I like going into schools and talking to the young people," says Alan, "they need encouragement, they need to dream, to know things are possible, even if you have to pick yourself up off the floor a few times." This sounds like easy advice, but it is rooted deeply in the experience of this self-made millionaire, which is why he is invited to speak to young people and to have a regular slot on cable TV's *The Money Channel*.



Whatever else people say about Alan Goldsmith, he has worked hard to realise schemes that have begun as nothing more than dreams. Peter White of Stansted Carpets remembers him in his Ford Anglia in the sixties, driving from pub to pub in Bishop's Stortford servicing his slot machines. "He made it all himself" says Peter, "no one gave him anything".

Alan was born to the owners of an off-licence in Barrells Down Road in Bishop's Stortford, was schooled in Bishop's Stortford and then his parents sent him to Hadham Hall. "The academic standard was awful", he remembers, "You had a bunch of ordinary schoolchildren suddenly set in this stately home atmosphere." It was an unlikely place to nurture a mind that would later celebrate the ability to be free of a world that the stately home represented. "It was different in those days," he muses, "you weren't encouraged to be anything beyond what your parents were. There was a version of the feudal system operating where you were presented with the options of office, shop or factory. None of us was offered the possibility of becoming doctors, lawyers or scientists, and parents in those days, bless them, had no vision." Alan recalls the late 1950's as a time when the class boundaries were firmly in place. "Girls were not encouraged to work as dress designers or TV producers. Back then, the pinnacle for girls was to work in a bank."

The world into which Alan was growing up was already

decided. "Lawyers, doctors and the church had respect, whether or not they were corrupt. The vicar was often the strong-arm man of the rich, and the ordinary man was regarded as having no talent and so nothing was expected of him, so he didn't aspire to do anything." So what happened in Alan's case? He points to a cultural revolution that was beginning in the late 1950's. The advent of rock and roll opened up new opportunities for the budding entrepreneur. "I was part of that wave. I started to run local pop dances, I managed a local band called The Diamonds which toured the whole area." He opened venues in Bishop's Stortford, Ramsgate, Letchworth, Welwyn Garden City and Hertford, and began to host concerts. "We did them all in those days," he remembers, "Stevie Wonder, Elton John, The Yardbirds, Gene Vincent, Eric Clapton, The Who, The Small Faces and Lulu." Alan bought the Central Hall on Chapel Hill and turned it into a disco and a ballroom. This was not a popular move among the local residents. "I understand all that now, but at the time it was a big investment and had to make money, and I was young."

Lesser known among Alan's ventures was a brief foray into children's literature in the late seventies. *The Dollops* were amiable imaginary dinosaurs, an idea conceived by Alan and his wife Kathy. The series grew to four books and were illustrated by Brian Gough. "I'm sure that's where Noel Edmonds' idea for Mr Blobby came from," he said. "You have to be careful with ideas as there's always someone who'll come along and pinch them."

The most conspicuous of Alan's projects has been the Mountfitchet Castle and Toy Museum. How did all that come about? "Oh, divine providence!" he laughs. "I thought it would be great fun to build a castle like it would have been in 1066, as it was unique in the country." "Oh, and to make money, that's always a driving force." The idea may have come in a flash, but its realisation was longer in coming. The project was painstakingly researched. Our castle was one of eight under Baron Mountfitchet. William the Conqueror was supposed to have stayed there, as well as King John. Mountfitchet Castle was the senior castle in the group as it had its own chapel. "This was a sign of its status, and the church is present again, as a way of controlling the masses." For a long time the castle project was held up by planning objections, This was mainly from a fear of a theme park in the midst of the village, Disney on our doorstep!" he said, "but we went ahead and built it and got planning permission retrospectively." Since it was built it has seen 1.5 million visitors. "I like to see it as a monument to young people, to remind them not to give up."

So will Alan retire? "No, the ideas keep on coming, and that's how I like it." He will continue to talk about shares on cable TV's *Money Programme* and Virgin books are negotiating for him to write an autobiography. Other projects include a TV video game and to continue the summer concerts at Little Easton and run concert tours. "You've got to keep going, being creative, overcoming obstacles. If you give in to bureaucracy it will stifle growth and we will end up being a third world nation."

Andrew Spurr



It is quite a long time since I wrote to tell about our activities at the Stansted Group of HEAL Cancer Charity. Our last big event in the village was the Auction of Promises on 30th September last year. As many of you will have heard, we made a spectacular £3700 which was supplemented by Lloyds TSB with another £500 on a fund-raising profit-matching scheme. That was an excellent and thoroughly gratifying result, making all the hard work worthwhile. Sincere thanks are due to all who donated and bought.

On the day following the Auction, there was a ceremonial handing over of the Cryocare equipment to be used for the Cryotherapy treatment (a freezing technique) for prostate cancer at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Harlow. It was bought by HEAL and a special appeal has been set up through Hertfordshire Free Masonry to recover the £100,000 cost. That equipment gives another opportunity for treatment of prostate cancer to men for whom all other treatments have been tried. On the same note, on 24th January, HEAL also launched a public appeal to fund the ground-breaking Palladium seed Brachytherapy treatment, also for prostate cancer and also at Harlow. Dr Davidson (Consultant Oncologist and HEAL Chairman) and Mr Viridi (Consultant in Urology) are jointly conducting the research projects encompassing both these treatments. HEAL needs to raise about £500,000 to pay for the Palladium seeds over the full four years of the project at around £2500 per patient. We had excellent support from the Mayors and Councillors from eight local authorities and the Chairman of Essex Council Council. Cllr. Jan Richardson, Mayor of Bishop's Stortford, is adopting the appeal as one of her charities during her term of office. It was also a great privilege meeting two of the first patients to have had the brachytherapy treatment. This appeal is the Plant-a-Tree appeal about which I have written before. Briefly, for a £20 donation, a tree can be planted in memory of a loved one or to commemorate an event. The trees will be planted in the Belhus Country Park near South Ockendon. If anybody would like to contribute, please contact me or any HEAL committee member for a leaflet. In due course, you will be able to visit the planted areas which will become the HEAL Cancer Charity Copse.

If you went into Unwins in March, you may have seen a notice and collection box on the counter. Simon New, the manager, had entered a 70km cycle race in South Africa (held 11th March) and was inviting sponsorship, the proceeds to come to this appeal. At the time of writing I do not know the outcome, either of the race or the appeal, but we would like to thank him for supporting us in this very strenuous way!

In February, Colin Horner, our local rose expert and hybridiser, gave us a most interesting illustrated talk on roses. Unfortunately the attendance was lower than we had hoped but those that were there said how much they had enjoyed it. On 28th April we are to hold a Quiz Night (please see the advert for details).

The Garden Open Day last year was such a success that we could not miss repeating the event. It will be on Sunday 15th July, with some new gardens and slightly longer opening hours (2.00 - 6.00 pm). It was a pity that last year we clashed with Elsenham's open garden day and we are aware that we will be doing so once again. Unfortunately, we have little choice in the matter, with it being so close to Carnival Day and with some of our garden owners having holiday commitments later in the month. I really do not think we adversely affected each other's attendance to any great extent and during our all too short summer months, it is inevitable that date conflicts will occur. So please put the date in your diaries and hope for good weather!

As ever, thank you all for your continued support without which we would not be able to continue to help local people with cancer.

Richard Thomas



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

Thirty people were at the Day Centre for the March meeting of the "Mountfitchet Garden Club" to hear Mrs Margaret Willis explain the various styles of Japanese Gardens, and show slides to illustrate her talk. After coffee more details were given regarding the 20th Anniversary Dinner on 21st April 2001, at which Mr Ken Crowther of the BBC Essex "Down to Earth" Programme, will be the Guest Speaker. Members were also encouraged to enter as many classes as they could at the Spring Show on 7th April, to be held this year at the Day Centre. Presentation of the cups will be at 4pm by Ray Clifford, Chairman of the Parish Council, and everyone is welcome to come and view the exhibits and have a cup of tea and a chat.

The next Club Meeting is on 4th April at 8pm, in the Day Centre, when the Speaker will be Mrs Price-Trasler, speaking on Herbaceous Plants and Borders, followed by a short Annual General Meeting.



Consultation! Consultation!

The Government is very keen that local authorities consult the users of their services. In theory, this is fine for local authorities should be responsive and accountable. For consultation to be meaningful though it requires enough background information to be supplied and a perception that the local authority does really want to hear residents' views. An ORC Best Value survey recently carried out for the Council found that only 12% of respondents thought that the Council took notice of their views, whilst 39% felt it did not and nearly half didn't know.

Council Tax Set

For 2001-02 Uttlesford's portion of the council tax at Band D will amount to £94.94. This represents a 3.9% increase from last year. Together with a minority of councillors I voted for a 3% increase. I felt that the Council Tax increase should remain as close as possible to the rate of inflation. I also believed that a 3% increase would be able to balance a sustainable long term budget with the interest of the Council taxpayers.

Although Uttlesford is the council responsible for collecting council tax, only a small part goes directly to it. It precepts on behalf of the County Council, the Police Authority and the Parish Council. At Band D the amounts are respectively £699.46, £71.01 and £44.09.

Don't lose your vote!

With County Council elections due this May, together with a possible general election, readers may be interested to learn of changes to electoral law. At previous elections postal votes were given only to those who could prove an inability or incapacity to vote in person, but as from 16th February anyone whose name is on the electoral register can ask for a postal vote. You can specify a postal vote for a particular election or request an indefinite vote to ensure that you are sent a postal vote every time an election is held. Applications to vote by post must be received six working days before an election. Uttlesford is responsible for electoral registration and the officer in charge is Peter Snow who can be contacted by writing to the Council at Saffron Walden or on 01799 510431.

Mobile speed camera sites

The B1383 road in Newport and Church Road in Stansted have been chosen as mobile speed camera sites. Such sites, within existing 30 or 40 mph speed limits are selected in the light of accident data, speed survey data and the characteristics of the road and surrounding area. It is hoped that the necessary warning signs will be in place by the end of April.

Geoffrey Sell
District Councillor 815925

Many readers will have noted from the Report for January 2001 that the County Council was committed to the study of the County's financial position with a view to producing figures, so the Budget for 2001/02 could be set by the due date, namely 28th February 2001. The figures were discussed at a meeting of the Council on 13th February and the budget set at £1.039bn. This represents an increase of 7.9% on the Budget for the previous year 1999/2000 and in figures means an increase of £51.48 on a Band D dwelling: the new charge being £699.48 per annum.

To many, this increase is not pleasant reading when similar increases were set in the preceding three years. Nevertheless the charge is reasonable, when total charges are taken into account and it is remembered that the government dictates very largely what is to be spent. The County has very little room for manoeuvre because of this and so have had to do the best they can with what they receive. Were the Government to change its mind and re-introduce the Special Support Grant removed in 1997 then the increase would have been in line with current inflation, which is acceptable. As it is they see fit not to do so, hence all suffer!

In addition, it should be noted that the majority of the Budget spending is based on that for Education and Social Services and is each either dictated or demand lead, thus again County are in no position to alter what is handed down. For the average householder this is not a happy picture, but perhaps 2001 may bring changes - we shall see!

Should anyone wish to know more or to discuss this subject further, they should contact the undersigned on 01279 812588.

Richard Wallace
County Councillor
Stansted Division

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STANSTED
JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB
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At last we have some club news to write about. Since our last page, the weather has played an enormous part in wrecking the fixture list. Although the weather has eased up unfortunately 'Foot & Mouth' has stopped our 'Mini Soccer' teams from playing any home games for the foreseeable future. It seems that maybe this season is doomed to go on until the summer months.

The club held a quiz night in January and despite the weather being 3 C below freezing, we still had a good turn out and managed to raise around £350. Many thanks to all those who helped out and of course everybody who came along to the quiz. We are hopefully going to hold a Dad's Match during the summer. This has always been popular with the players and their families as it is their turn to shout at the dads and give them instructions on how to play football. More news on that when we have finalised the details.

The club have now sold out on the annual trip; we have 104 people going to Selhurst Park to watch Crystal Palace play Wolves. This is a great day out for the players; they have their training and then go on to watch the match in the afternoon. The only problem with having the club trip is that not many clubs are prepared to take such a large number of boys/parents on one visit. So our thanks to Crystal Palace for helping us out.

Team news; after Easter the club will be running a new Under 6's team. This continues to show all the children of the village that there is football available and we hope that it proves to be as popular this year as it has been in previous years. The Cyclones and Spitfires are still doing well. Both teams have enjoyed a number of friendly games and the boys look forward to joining the league next season. Meanwhile both Shark teams are playing well in the Harlow league, although there are no league tables at this age (under 8's), I know that they would both be in the right half of their tables. The Spartans, both Blacks and Blue also continue to play well in the Harlow league. Again there are no league tables for this age group but Glyn Warwick has compiled a league for the club's benefit and it shows the Blacks are joint top as I write. The Blues are finding it a bit harder but they have shown some encouraging results.

11-A-Side football, and the Swifts (U11's) are third in their division and have lost only one match all season. They are also going strong in the league cup and hopefully they will make the final. The Scorpions are beginning to pick up some points; they are in the top division in the Under 12's. Any manager will tell you that the top division is always the most competitive, and the Scorpions continue to move up the

table. Finally the Comets (U13's) have also had a mixed bag this season; they started off really well and then hit a bad run of luck. Happily since the Christmas break results are starting to go their way again; a real achievement for David Bright and his boys.

Sadly Santos, Under 14's, have now stopped playing in the league. The team lost a number of boys to other clubs and were struggling to maintain a squad. They withdrew from the league just after Christmas and now carry on with their training only. I would like to thank all the players as well as Mark Webb and Steve Pringle for carrying on; it shows great commitment to both themselves and the club.

I close this page wishing all the boys and their managers all the very best for the remainder of the season. And let's hope this year Stansted Junior Football Club pick up a bit of deserved silverware.

Until next time'
 Good Health

Luke Pearman
 Chairman



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

"John Constable" being the subject of the society February meeting, where the speaker, Mr Lavender presented a most informative and interesting talk. With the aide of slides he was able to give members great insight into many paintings of the Constable Country.

At the March meeting our speaker Mr Neil gave members every encouragement and guidance on various ways and methods that may be followed on "Enjoying Local History". A slide show together with a great collection of exhibits concluded a most enjoyable evening.

"Steam in Farming" is the subject of the Society meeting programmed for April 5th.

Peter Brown





STANSTED AND DISTRICT NATIONAL CHILDBIRTH TRUST

..... GOES ON LINE

The past few months have been business as usual for the Stansted and District NCT with Christmas parties and lots of events to keep our spirits up over the dark winter months. However, we now have something really exciting to celebrate. We are one of a handful of NCT branches to have our own website on the internet. A very dedicated member of the branch has toiled long and hard to develop it. The site gives information about the general activities of the NCT such as ante-natal classes and support for new mothers but more importantly provides specific information about events happening locally.

It is aimed at people interested in knowing more about the NCT, perhaps people who are new to the area or existing residents who have just become parents. It gives a flavour of what we do and contact telephone numbers so they can get involved and come along to one of our events.

The web address is www.stansted-nct.freerve.co.uk. It is also linked to the website for Stansted Mountfitchet. Give it a try or pass the address on to someone you know with babies or young children who might be interested - new faces are always most welcome.

Alongside regular events we also host regular coffee mornings as follows:-

Monday 1.30 - 3.00 pm Tiddlers and Tums for expectant mums and under ones.

Wednesday 10.00 - 11.30 am Toddlers.

Friday 1.30 - 3.00 pm Pre-schoolers.

All parents/carers are most welcome, please come along and meet new people.

Of course we're not all about just doing lots of socialising (even though it might look that way!). The NCT offers information and support in pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthood and it is run by parents for parents. So if you want to find out more about the NCT, our social life, ante-natal classes and/or are interested in joining please speak to Wendy on 813387.

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

Clerk Ruth Clifford
Office Hours
10 am - 1 pm
Monday - Friday



Council Offices
Crafton Green
Tel 813214
Fax 813964

Floral Displays

As we go to print, we are taking orders for hanging baskets around the village. Our usual supporters have already been approached, but if there are any residents who would like to purchase a basket through our scheme, we would be delighted to hear from you. Baskets can be ordered at a cost of £21.20 - this includes the supply of a basket with water reservoir (to cut down on watering) and planted with pink continental-style geraniums.

Numbers will be limited, so it will be first come, first served - to place your order please ring Ruth Clifford on 813214.

St John's Road

By the time this magazine is circulated, we hope that the flooding in St John's Road will be but a distant memory. The contractor is due to undertake work on the gully under the school playing field towards the end of March - only time will tell if it has been successful.

Ruth Clifford
Clerk to the Council

MOBILE PHONE NUMBER CHANGES - A REMINDER

Earlier pagers and mobile phones with numbers not commencing 07... change this month to line up with the new numbering arrangements commencing 07....

In The LINK, there are two advertisers that are displaying their old pager/mobile numbers; the new numbers as follows:-

Aldwych Construction Ltd 07802 548 471
HELPLINE Pager Number 07641 104 093

Tony Butcher

Ugley Village Hall

The Village Hall on Cambridge Road, Ugley is available for hire throughout the year, for children's parties, functions, clubs, classes and social meetings.

For bookings or further information please call Susan Bone on 01279 814052

Stansted Tennis Club



Junior Coaching

From the end of March Chris Hollis will now be running junior coaching classes for 7-15 year olds on Monday and Thursday afternoons as well as Saturday mornings. There are still a few places available, so if you are interested or would like more information, please contact Chris on 01279 319155.

Used Tennis Balls

These are still available at the very reasonable price of £1 for a tube of 4 (very popular with dog owner)! Please contact Janet Hollis on 812073 if you would like to buy some.

Tennis Club Garden

ATTENTION ALL GARDEN LOVERS - Please bring your own bags and help yourself to as much leaf mould (excellent quality) as you like from the huge pile in the corner outside the tennis courts (adjacent to the football pitch).

Winter Doubles Tournament

This finally took place on March 11th having twice previously been cancelled due to atrocious weather conditions. 10 players competed in the round-robin event in the morning trying to amass as many points as possible in order to qualify for the final. In the final Sandra Ayres and Howard Buckley defeated Sarah Hollis and Richard Crosby 6-2. Afterwards a chilli lunch was enjoyed in the clubhouse by players and spectators.

Essex Small Clubs League

Six teams from Stansted Tennis Club have been competing in this league over the winter months. A lot of matches have had to be cancelled due to the bad weather. This has caused quite a backlog of matches to be played in the next few weeks before the Summer League commences.

Hospital Cup Competition

The AGM was held in March and due to lack of support from other clubs, it was decided not to hold the competition this year.

Start of 2001 Season

Please note that the new season officially starts on 1st April 2001 and we warmly welcome all new members.

If you would like to join Stansted Tennis Club, please contact the Membership Secretary, Kate Rutter, on 813053. For any other enquiries, please contact either Janet Hollis (Chairman) on 812073 or Richard Mott (Secretary) on 466348.



Our Fifth Season formally concluded on 10th March with a concert by the young South African pianist, Jonathan Oshry, who replaced the indisposed Damian Girvin.

This year the Village Music Club is holding a **SUMMER SOIREE on SATURDAY, 30th JUNE 2001** at 6pm in St. John's Church with **Music and Supper**.

For our **SIXTH SEASON**, starting in October, we have a programme of concerts in St John's Church, Stansted with outstanding musicians.

13th October 2001 at 8pm - Florian Uhlig, piano, making a welcome return to Stansted

9th December 2001 at 3pm - The Guildhall String Ensemble. An afternoon concert not to be missed.

13th January 2002 at 3pm - Min Park, flute and Zoe Mather, piano. Our annual concert sponsored by The Countess of Munster - Recital Scheme.

9th March 2002 at 8pm - The Sorrel String Quartet. We look forward to welcoming this quartet of international renown.

Further details of all concerts and the Summer Soiree will be sent to our members in May. If you are not a member and would like tickets, ring Sonia Levy on 01279 815282 nearer the time of the event or if you wish to join the Village Music Club for the whole of the 2001/2 season, ring Elizabeth Wagener on 01279 813182.


Celebrations

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Stansted Evening Women's Institute

Our speaker for March was Barry Kaufmann-Wright who is the Police Wildlife Officer for the area. He has had an interest in wildlife since childhood growing up on a mixed farm in the Chilterns. On leaving school, he worked for five years with TV naturalist Gerald Durrell at Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust. This is where he gained valuable knowledge and his interest in wildlife photography began.

Barry's talk, illustrated by slides, some harrowing, showed the cruelty of man to animals. We were also shown some beautiful wildlife pictures. He talked about badger baiting and we were shown pictures of how the baiters had dug out a set and how the animals were injured, which included the dogs sent down the sets. These criminals come as far away as Yorkshire and Scotland. They take the badgers back home for baiting.

We also saw slides of a cruelty case that came to a light a few years ago; the poor horses were in a terrible state, eight had to be shot. The plus side of Barry's work is when they can rescue birds and animals and get them back to health and back into the wild. One such owl was in a sorry state when found, and recovered well; she was called Whisper, but she couldn't be released back into the wild. One Golden Eagle was lucky; he was discovered being shown around an Essex town on a youth's arm. The youth told police "I got him from a bloke in a pub and it was home reared". However on checking the bird's DNA against records, it was identified as coming from a nest in Scotland. It was later returned to Scotland, where it eventually produced some young.

Barry is launching his book 'Wildlife Man' at his next exhibition of photographs at Thaxted Guildhall 4th - 7th May 2001.

A team of members will be going to the URC Quiz Night on 31st March. The fundraising evening with 'The Entertainers', raised £370. The Jumble Sale will be held on 7th April at 2 pm in St John's Hall.

Our next meeting is on 12th April, when the speaker will be Mr W. Tyler talking about the meaning of names. The venue is, as usual, St John's Hall at 7.45 pm.

Kath Johnson



Recipe of the Month Hot Cross Buns

For buns

1lb / 450 gm strong white flour
1 satchet easy-blend yeast
pinch of salt
1 tsp ground mixed spice
2 oz / 50 gm caster sugar
4 oz / 100 gm currants
1 oz / 25 gm chopped mixed peel
1 egg, beaten
8 fl oz / 225 ml milk
2 oz / 50 gm butter, melted

For crosses

4 tbsps plain flour
a little water
beaten egg

For glaze

2 oz / 50 gm sugar
5 fl oz / 150 ml / ¼ pint water

- (a) *mix flour, yeast, salt, spice, sugar, currants and mixed peel in bowl*
- (b) *beat together egg, milk and butter*
- (c) *add to dry ingredients*
- (d) *beat well*
- (e) *turn onto lightly floured board*
- (f) *knead for about 5 minutes until smooth*
- (g) *divide into 12 and roll to make top smooth*
- (h) *prove for about 1 hour on greased baking tray*
- (i) *pre-heat oven to 220°C / 425°F / Gas Mark 7*
- (j) *put flour for crosses in bowl and add water to make firm dough*
- (k) *roll out into long strand and cut into 24 x 2" (50 mm) pieces*
- (l) *brush tops with beaten egg and fix crosses*
- (m) *bake buns for about 15 - 20 minutes*
- (n) *dissolve sugar in water then boil until syrupy*
- (o) *when buns are cooked, brush over glaze and transfer to wire rack*

Makes 12

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Cambridge Bound

Louise Wells will be leaving St Mary's School at the end of this term. Louise has been a very popular young teacher with pupils and parents alike, and they will be sad to see her leave.



Photograph Rev. Andrew Spurr

Louise came to St Mary's as a newly qualified teacher four and a half years ago after graduating from the Roehampton Institute. Her first class was Reception, which she looked after for three years. During this time her energy and enthusiasm showed both in the class and in after-school activities. She ran dance, football, netball clubs and latterly a lunchtime computer club.

For the past eighteen months she has been teaching Year 5 and has been looking after the new computer network in the school. It will be to pursue her speciality in information technology that she has taken a position with a Cambridge firm that specialises in training teachers to make the transition to IT.

She has also produced dance presentations and liturgical dance for church services and the church youth group. "Louise has been a really sparky presence in the school." said the Rector, "It has been like working with Tigger from Winnie the Pooh. ... on speed. Things will be a bit quiet after she's gone." Mrs Lyn Inston, the school's Deputy Head added, "She has so many talents, that it will be impossible to replace her with just one person."

A new job is not all that is in store for Louise. On Easter Saturday she will be marrying Stuart, her partner of seven years. "I'm surviving the arrangements," she smiled, "my mother's a seamstress and she's making the dress. But its amazing how much work goes into one day."

Louise's last day at school is on 6th April and there will be a last dance performed by the children the day before. They have persuaded Louise to dance with them, which I think will be one to watch.



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THE W.I. GETS MUSICAL



Recently several of our members were lucky enough to join a group of Essex members for a backstage tour of the Royal Opera House which re-opened after major rebuilding and refurbishment in December 1999. There were about 30 of us in all and we were met by our guide and ushered into the auditorium, which was ablaze with light, and all for us. We sat in the stalls while our guide gave us a brief history of the Royal Opera House; the first theatre being built in Covent Garden in 1732 by John Gay and so called because the site in Bow Street was originally church property, a Convent Garden. This was used mainly for plays, though three of Handel's operas were given their premiere there, as was the 'Messiah' in 1743. A fire in 1808 destroyed the house entirely but it was rebuilt in only a year becoming the largest opera house in the world. Still mixing plays and opera, it became the Royal Italian Opera in 1847, retaining that title until 1892. Before then, in 1856, during a masked ball, a fire was discovered and the theatre was burnt down for the second time in its history. The building re-opened in 1858 when two statues and part of the frieze salvaged from the earlier theatre were placed on the frontage in Bow Street. In 1860 the floral hall was opened and leased out to the flower markets until 1956. During the First World War the theatre was commandeered by the Government for use as a furniture repository and during the last war Mecca Dance Halls leased it as a dance hall. After the war it re-opened with resident opera and ballet companies and was renamed The Royal Ballet in 1957 and The Royal Opera in 1969. It is interesting to note that it was once responsible for the police reading parliament's Riot Act, when, in 1809, the manager, John Kemble, raised the prices of the tickets so much that for six nights the productions were disrupted by the public and he was forced to lower them again. Among its other firsts was a piano being played in public in Britain in 1767, and in 1837 the introduction of blocks of lime that shone when heated by a gas flame and could then be pointed in a particular direction - hence 'limelight' and the world's first spotlights!

The idea of developing the Royal Opera House originated in 1965 when it was planned that the fruit and vegetable markets would be moved out of Covent Garden and the land purchased. New rehearsal studios were opened in 1982 and in 1997 the house closed for the first major rebuilding in more than 100 years. This was made possible by a generous grant from the National Lottery through the Arts Council of England and an additional £100 million was raised by the Royal Opera House from the Trustees, Friends of Covent Garden and the sale of the retail developments on the site. Now it is fully restored. The Auditorium is air-conditioned and the front of the house is spacious with pictures and cases showing costumes used in past productions. There are two new performing venues, the Linbury Studio Theatre and the Clore Studio as well as the beautiful Vilar Floral Hall, which is used for many events such as choral concerts and it has a splendid gallery restaurant which overlooks the hall which is available for functions.

Whilst we were being told much of this information there was a team of men on the stage assembling the scenery for a

production of 'La Fille Mal Gardee' to be staged that evening. The stage is enormous and has been reconstructed to include six sections, each of which is an elevator that can carry up to 18 tonnes and may be raised 2.5 metres or lowered 6 metres below stage level. The actual area on which performances take place is 15 metres square, although space at the sides and the rear can also be added. Small wonder that the men up there working were so numerous and appeared to be quite small in stature! There are now four teams of backstage crew and they can change the sets within a few hours where previously they would have worked overnight. The stage can be closed off using acoustic doors of which there are six backstage, which we saw when we were then taken upstairs and around the back. There are viewing windows in the corridors all around the backstage areas which give a fascinating insight into another world. Twelve per cent of the development funds were used for new technology so that the Royal Opera House is foremost in international theatre design. Scenery is constructed off site and is delivered to Bow Street where up to 28 tonnes can be taken at any one time in the lift and these days entire sets can be stored on site.

We were then taken up to the workshops where the costumes, props and wigs are made, passing through the Vilar Floral Hall on the way where the tables were being set up for dinner. There are four workshops on the top floor of the house from where you get a wonderful and unique view of London. There was a huge vat of boiling colour and we were able to feel many of the materials and marvel at the printing and dyeing of them so that the most ordinary of fabrics become jewel-encrusted or appear to be richly embroidered. On our way back down we were allowed a peep into a ballet rehearsal room where two dancers were perfecting steps which already seemed perfect to us. At that moment a small figure passed through our midst and when she had gone our guide said 'Yes, that was Darcey Bussell!' Two hours had passed all too quickly but what a wonderful insight and incentive now to go to a performance!



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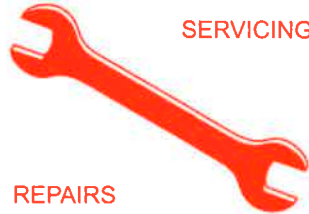
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