

April 03

The *LINK*



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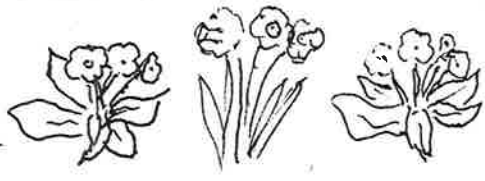
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and**

EASTER



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Interdenominational Events

Agape	Palm Sunday 13th April
	6.30 pm Friends' Meeting House
Walk of Witness	Good Friday 18th April
	6 pm leave Lower Street
	6.30 pm Stations of the Cross St Therese's

St John's Church of England

Maundy Thursday 17th April
 8 pm Holy Communion

Good Friday 18th April
 9.15 am Good Friday Project for children
 3 pm Good Friday Project Service

Easter Eve 19th April
 8 pm Rites of Initiation and Eucharist

Easter Day 20th April
 8 am Holy Communion
 9.30 am Parish Communion

St Therese of Lisieux Roman Catholic

Maundy Thursday 17th April
 8 pm Mass of the Lord's Last Supper

Good Friday 18th April
 10 am Children's Service
 3 pm Passion of Our Lord

Holy Saturday 19th April
 8 pm Vigil & Renewal of Promises

Easter Day 20th April
 9 am Mass
 10.30 am Mass

Methodist

Easter Day 20th April
 9.30 am Holy Communion

United Reformed

Maundy Thursday 17th April
 7.30 pm Communion

Easter Day 20th April
 11 am Communion

Society of Friends

Easter Day 20th April
 11 am Meeting for Worship

The Link (price £3.50 per year) is published monthly by Churches Together in Stansted

Advertising enquiries Tel 01279 812797

All other enquiries to Janet Townsend Tel 01279 812593

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stanstedlink@aol.com

by 10th April for publication on 26th April

by 15th May for publication on 31st May

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux, High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane
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 - Saturday 9.30 am

Confessions Saturday 10am and by appointment

Baptisms By appointment

The Story of Bamboo

Once upon a time in the heart of the great western Kingdom, there was a beautiful garden where, in the cool of the evening, the Master used to walk. Of all the dwellers in the garden the most beautiful and beloved was a gracious and noble Bamboo. Each year Bamboo grew more beautiful and gracious. He was conscious of his Master's love for him, yet he was modest and gentle in all things. Sometimes when the wind came to revel in the garden, Bamboo would throw aside his dignity. He would dance and sway merrily, tossing backwards and forwards, leaping and swaying in gay abandon! He was the leader of the great dance of the garden, which so delighted his Master's heart.

One day the Master drew near to Bamboo and looked at him with eyes of expectancy. Bamboo, in a passion of love, bowed his head to the ground in greeting. The Master spoke: "Bamboo, I should like to use you."

Bamboo flung his head to the sky in utter delight. Day after day he had waited for this moment when he would find his completion and destiny! "Master, I am ready. Use me as you wish!"

The Master's voice was grave. "Bamboo" he said, "I have to cut you down".

A trembling of great horror shook Bamboo. "Cut ... me down? Me ... who You, Master, have made the most beautiful in the garden? Cut me down? Oh! No not that. Use me for your joy, Master, but *please* don't cut me down!"

"Beloved Bamboo" the Master's voice grew still graver, "If I do not cut you down, then I cannot use you".

The garden was still. Wind held his breath. Bamboo bent his proud and glorious head. Then in a whisper "Master, if you cannot use me unless you cut me down, then do your Will and cut!"

"Bamboo, my beloved Bamboo, I have to cut off your leaves and branches too".

"Master, Master, *spare me!* Cut me down and lay my beauty in the dust, but must you strip me of my leaves and branches?"

"Alas, Bamboo, I also have to divide you in two and cut out your heart; for if I do not cut this way, I cannot use you."

Bamboo answered: "**Master, then cut and divide!**"

So the Master of the Garden took and cut him down, hacked off his branches and stripped him of his leaves. He divided him in two and cut out his heart.

Then lifting him gently, carried him to where there was a spring of fresh water, sparkling in the midst of the Master's dry fields. Carefully He put one end of His broken Bamboo into the spring and the other end into the water channel that led to His Fields.

The spring sang a welcome and the clear bubbling water raced joyously down the channel of Bamboo's torn body into the dry fields. Rice was planted and as the days went by, shoots grew. The harvest came. On that day, Bamboo, once glorious in his stately beauty, was more glorious in his brokenness and humility. For in his beauty, he was life abundant, but in his brokenness he became a channel of abundant life in his Master's world.

The above story was given to me by someone I met in Charismatic Renewal which I thought might be appropriate during Lent and I wanted to share.

Wendy Moss

Meditation:

Dear Father, I love to sing and pray with words that praise you. Simple words that I understand and mean - at least in theory

In practice though could I surrender my possession, loves and hates, hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, relationships, work, gifts, talents, habits, pride, anger ... my will? How can I abandon these easily? They make up my image - without them I am nothing! ... **Yes, Father I see, I understand clearly! I am nothing** until I have been made into the image and likeness of your Son and that means **my image** must first be broken!

Yet, I *am* afraid of being broken! I have been broken before by people, by circumstances. Painful experiences, and sometimes almost too much to bear. But were my pride or self pity hurt more?

..... Yes, Father, by surrendering *all to you* seeing and feeling the comfort of those torn and bleeding hands of your Beloved Son - those hands which were nailed to the Cross - that show the depths of your love *for me!* **Those hands** could never be anything but gentle, loving, healing and kind!

Dear Father, send your Holy Spirit to give me courage to allow myself to be broken by your Son, so that **YOU** could mould me into something beautiful, something that will please you well!

With growing love,

Your Wayward Child,

Wendy Moss

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 11 am

When I wrote this article I tried to think of how appropriate it (the article) may be in the context of whether the world would be in the midst of a conflict or not. I decided to stay away from the subject of war and peace for obvious reasons, and tried instead to focus on a subject that is timeless, one that shall enchant Homo Sapiens ad infinitum.

Sometimes we may find it necessary to quote other authors because they express our thoughts with clarity and accuracy that we cannot match. I quote some of Saint Thomas Aquinas below:

'There is one activity that is peculiar to man namely the contemplation of truth, which is the consideration of things divine. It is the only action that is in no way shared by other animals. It is not ordered to anything else as to its end since it is sort for its own sake.'

Some of us meet in fellowship to share this activity in silence, or sometimes through the spoken word. Meeting for worship offers an opportunity to take time out from the busyness of the secular world, an opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between ourselves and the divine, our outer world and our inner world, the nodal point between the past and the future. The past matters less and the future matters less because the experience of the present contains all that is needed for the absolute satisfaction of our deepest cravings.

Paradoxically there is perhaps a tendency for one to be distracted by the intellectual claim that there are a hundred and one good causes out there, and before we know it we are burdened by a fevered programme of good committees and good undertakings. It is worth noting then that it is important for us to attend to a relatively simplified life program of social responsibilities ordered and organised from within, one that is in opposition to the hurried superficial tendencies of our age.

Graham Thwaites

NANCY TENNANT

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Nancy Tennant at the age of 105. She died on March 13th in Princess Alexandra Hospital where she had been for a few weeks following a stroke. Her funeral is to be held at St Peter's Church, Ugley. We shall be holding a Memorial Meeting for her later on at the Meeting House where she had been a much-loved member for a large part of her life. Her support of us all was unflinching and her faith unwavering.

We hope her many friends in Stansted will join us at the Memorial Meeting to give thanks for and celebrate a long and wonderfully rich life.

Catharine Hurford

UNITED REFORMED

Chapel Hill

Minister Rev'd David Simpson
32 Loompits Way
Saffron Walden
CB11 4BZ Tel 01799 526618

Contact Mrs Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill Tel 01279 812593

Preachers for April

6th	10-30am	Mr Ralph Friday
13th	10-30am	Rev'd D. Simpson - Communion
17th	7-30pm	Rev'd D. Simpson Maundy Thursday Communion
18th	11-00am	Group Good Friday Meditation at Newport URC.
20th	10-30am	Dr David Thompson Group Easter Day Worship
27th	10-30am	Rev'd David Simpson

Since the opening of our new building the members of the Church have been contemplating new ways of using our Church for the benefit of the community at large, and one idea that has been suggested was to serve tea and cakes on a Sunday afternoon. We feel that a number of people find Sundays a very long day, especially if their family do not live locally, and would like somewhere to go for a chat and a cup of tea.

Having said that we will do this on Sundays, we are going to start off by opening up on the May Day Bank Holiday Monday which is the 5th May, The other planned dates for this year are on the following Sundays:

June 1st, July 6th, August 3rd, September 7th

Come and join us at the Church on Chapel Hill between 3 and 5pm, whether you are wanting company, out for a walk or just simply would like a cup of tea, everyone is welcome old and young.

Janet Townsend

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 Reccation Ground
Stansted Tel 01279 813579

Email: methodists@stansted.net

All services start at 9.30am unless otherwise stated

Services and preachers for April

6th	Jerry Heyhoe
13th	Ken Mark
20th	Easter Sunday – Rev'd Jim Gill Holy Communion
27th	Joan Kennet

Friday, 11th April – Fellowship Meeting



The Parishes of
Stansted Mountfitchet
with Birchanger
and Farnham

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>

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
Cams, CB3 7HH
phone/fax (01223) 263640
<church.music@stansted.net>

Children's Church
Mrs Marion Johnson
(01279) 812284

Mother & Toddler Group
Mrs Tina South
(01279) 814371

A Country Parish

One of the best things about writing about people is being allowed to step into their world. Most often, this comes my way through writing a funeral address. Sometimes, through writing for this publication, I'm given a glimpse into worlds I scarcely knew existed. I'll never forget an afternoon spent following PC Jim Sollars around his beat in Soho, which was both a fascinating discovery of Jim, and the world he brings with him to church on Sunday.

I wish others felt the same. Since I have been working for the Church of England I have faced TV cameras on four occasions. Each time, when I came to see the outcome, I have regretted my part in it. There is a lot in the church which is worth poking fun at, but I have seen colleagues, women and men of stature, forced into camp clichés at the hands of film directors with no imagination, and even less real interest in finding out what makes their subject tick.

The latest target has been the Revd Jamie Allen, a Nuneaton curate who was filmed making the transition to his first incumbency in rural Wiltshire. He was the subject of the series *A Country Parish* for BBC2. I gave it the benefit of the doubt and tuned in, but it wasn't long before I saw a man, and his family, being gently and firmly shoe-horned into a Dibley view of the church. Alright, so we have the odd Dibley moments in these parishes, but they usually just pass by and don't stay.

The trouble is, that while the film crew were busy with small things, they missed the big ones. We were regaled with all the usual cameos you would expect when cultures meet. His tattoos, magic tricks and fresh enthusiasm were set against a stony-faced, wilfully rural establishment. Jamie and his wife had the usual task of coming alongside the complete social range of their parishes, and trying to see the world through the eyes of people whose lives would not normally have touched theirs.

The truth is that the film-makers gave us a caricature both of rural clergy and rural communities, so the series showed us nothing new, and little that was authentic.

What they missed was what drives a man to leave one successful and lucrative career to pursue such a poorly paid, implausible and deeply unfashionable one, and take his family with him?

We finally and unexpectedly catch a glimpse of the man behind the cartoon when Jamie is asked about prayer. He prays for his people morning and evening, and this comes as a surprise to his interviewer. Like all journalists I have encountered, they will spend any amount of time on why the enterprise is a throwback, or slightly attractive in its naïve, sunny optimism and, of course, when it goes wrong they will give it their undivided attention. But, in talking about prayer, and praying as if something depends on it, Jamie wrong-footed his interviewer, and we saw, for a short moment, the heart of a man who does what he does because he sees God working in the lives of his parishioners.

I'm surprised that the interview did not end up on the cutting room floor. I am glad it didn't, as it rescued Jamie from being yet another straw man set up by the media just to be knocked down and that, when it comes to Christian faith, there are some people who are prepared to walk the talk, at considerable cost.

Andrew Spurr

St. John's Diary

Sundays	8:00am Holy Communion <i>said</i>
	9:30am Parish Communion <i>sung</i>
Wednesdays	11:00am Open Door Service on the 6th and 18th of April
	10:00am Holy Communion <i>said</i> followed by coffee
	7:30pm Intercessions and Night Prayer

Children's Church meets at 9:30am on Sundays in the Church Hall. **Tiny Tots** is a mother and toddler group that meets fortnightly on Tuesday afternoons in term-time. **Laser Group** is a 12-16 youth group which meets fortnightly on Sunday evenings at 7:30pm for activities in the church hall. The evening concludes with candlelit Night Prayer in the chapel in church. A housegroup meets fortnightly and is currently studying Paul's letters.

(continued)

From the Registers for February:

Funerals:

13th Michael Meadows age 69 years
14th Douglas Stanley Hudgell age 84 years

Dates for your Diary:

Grand Sale and Afternoon Tea on Saturday, 17th May in St John's Hall - details to follow.

The Rector's Annual Lunch will take place on Sunday, 13th July (allowing diners to proceed to the Open Gardens later in the afternoon) - details to follow.

St John's Church Hall

Church Hall activity has continued to be busy during the past year with about 20 organisations regularly using the venue and further work was completed on the refurbishment.

Emergency lighting has been installed and showed its worth during a power cut last autumn. The toilets were refurbished. Estimates to replace the aged heating system were too daunting and the Hall Committee decided to install double-glazing instead to see how much this would improve things. Funding came from the Airport STACC Fund, a Quiz Night and a donation from the Art & Craft Market. Other fund-raising events during the year included another enjoyable Hill Chilli at Sonia Levy's house. The remaining major project is the redecoration of the main hall, obviously an expensive job for which we shall have to raise several thousand pounds.

In addition to this refurbishment work, the PCC approved a scheme to build a small extension off the north west corner of the Hall which will also provide a separate entrance from the car park with disabled access. A grant from Bretts Environment Fund has been approved and the Parish Council agreed to make a loan towards the cost. Go-ahead with the project now depends on getting an acceptable builder's tender. One day the extension could be pushed out further to accommodate a choir rehearsal and enrobing room, and a re-sited benefice office.

The smooth running of the Hall depends on a lot of help, much of it voluntary, and I am very grateful to the Committee and other people for their cheerful efforts.

Looking ahead, two fund-raising events this year will be another **Hill Chilli on Friday, 27th June** and on **Saturday, 5th July at 7.30pm, a concert of "Summer Magic" in St. John's given by the fabulous Cantate Youth Choir.**

Put these dates in your diaries and bring your friends!

Jeremy Wagener

Christian Aid

We believe in life before death

Thank you to everybody who supported the **Fairtrade coffee morning**. £25 was sent to Christian Aid and the Traidcraft stall took £142.70. The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of fair trade products, and the fairly traded chocolate cake from a Stansted supermarket was a great hit.

The competition to guess what the Fair Trade symbol represents sadly had no winner. Perhaps it should mean what some people guessed – the fruits of the earth being gobbled up by the richer nations. However, if you look at the black background you see a person with his/her hand raised, rejoicing in fair trade. This is the meaning of the symbol! So I shall be giving the prize of a fairly traded bar of chocolate to my daughter, Amy, who saw it straight away!

Christian Aid Week 2003 is 11th to 17th May. There will be a **Service** to start the week on Sunday 11th and a **Market** on Saturday 17th May, both at the Friends Meeting House.

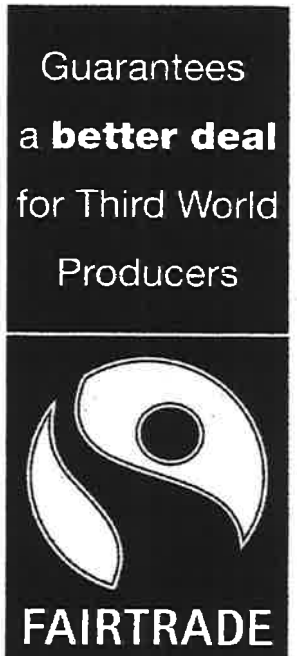
This year's Christian Aid Walk is **Circle the City** on Sunday 18th May, starting from Wesley's Chapel. There are three walks, 2km, 3km, and 3.5km so within most people's capability, although walks can be combined for the more hardy walker.

Whether we hire a coach or go by train will depend on the number wanting to go, so if you are interested, please let me know a.s.a.p.

Finally, the usual plea for **Volunteers**. I don't pretend there aren't better things to do on a May evening, but you do get to meet some interesting people and have the warm glow of knowing you are doing something for the disadvantaged people in the world. So if you do have a few hours to spare, please let me know.

Many thanks,

Catherine Dean
813579





SHALOM



CHURCHES
TOGETHER
in STANSTED

April Meetings

7th April An Easter Meditation at 7 Blythwood Gardens
28th April Prayer and Praise at 7 Blythwood Gardens

Meetings start at 8pm and are open to everybody.

Replete retreat

Can you imagine a sweet retreat? My office colleagues have a clear picture of my impending weekend. As I depart early one Friday February evening they imagine my destination, replete with gurgling Jacuzzi, muscle rubs from pretty young girls in white tunics, a yoga room with a single oil burner filling it with lavender fragrance.... Even now, on approaching the near perfect Tudor silhouette of Hengrave Hall, a fragile glow illuminating the porter's entrance, it seems that it could indeed house such benefits to body and mind.

However the spartan and yet homely interior signals a different kind of retreat! Our leader, once the principal of a theological college charged with training reformed church ministers, has already laid out the framework of our spiritual training; the Old Testament book of Numbers or, using its original meaning "In the Wilderness". That is to be our sourcebook and we are to examine the wilderness we are in and the states of our inner beings and that of our churches. And so, as the weekend unfolds, we consider the plight of the Israelites frustrated at the very point of entering the Promised Land and begin to see parallels revealed with our lives today.

So, all gloomy introspection and holy huddles then? Well not entirely. We always party like crazy. Bridget's fabulous fruitcake can chase away the chill of any winter's day and of course Brian still prides himself on the well stocked bar he keeps. "Red or white?" will probably be the words that ring in my head as I look back in the coming weeks rather than "burned but not consumed" (a reference to the burning bush, by the way and the resurrection power of Christ!).

"So are you nicely relaxed?" my boss gleams as he hands me the next stress-laden piece of analysis on Monday morning. "Well I would be if I could only remember the punch-line to Brian's joke about the nun and the taxi driver....what I mean to say is...yes very spiritually refreshed and lots to think about! Lots of challenges ahead!". Maybe I should think about a Jacuzzi and a vapour rub...

Alan Wheeler

Lent Groups

The final two Lent groups will be held on Friday, 4th April and Friday, 11th April at 8pm in the Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill. Following these, an Agape service will be held at 6.30pm on Sunday, 13th April, followed by a bring and share supper. All are welcome

CTS Executive

A reminder that the next Executive Committee meeting is on Tuesday, 8th April at 8pm in the URC Vestry.

Ruth Rawlinson



Save the Children

FUND RAISING WEEK 27TH APRIL - 3RD MAY

- EVERY THREE SECONDS A CHILD DIES -

The Save the Children Fund is one of the three charities supported by R.A.P. (Regular Aid for the Poor), works in 70 countries throughout the world, including Great Britain, caring for children - the homeless, the orphans, the Aids victims, child workers, child soldiers - there is no end to the list of ways in which, these days, children are denied their childhood. Providing food, shelter, health and education are only part of the work covered by S.C.F., outside major crises.

In Goma, where S.C.F. had a permanent base, within twelve hours of the volcanic eruption staff were out tracing separated children, despite many of them having lost their own homes (those homes left undamaged were stripped by looters - even in one house down to the kitchen sink). Within three days a general food distribution to 70,000 residents was completed. Around 600 separated children were identified and the majority have been re-united with their families.

Save the Children week follows the joys of Easter week and there will be envelopes available in the Stansted churches so please give generously to a very worthy cause.

£1 donated = 78p to charitable expenditure to benefit children, with the remaining 22p we go out and raise another £1. Also, remember that by Gift Aiding your donation the Fund receives a further sum from the government.

Joan Mercer

Bentfield School PTA

SPRING FASHION SHOW

6.30 pm Tuesday 1st April

Tickets £2.50 inc. wine



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

SPRING SHOW

2.30 pm Sat 5th April

United Reformed Church Hall
Chapel Hill

Visitors welcome



ZING Quiz



St John's Church Hall
7 for 7.30 pm Sat 5th April
In aid of Chevetogne visit

Includes Refreshments
£5 Tel 812109 **£5**

*Bienvenu a tous nos amis!
Venez avec une bouteille!*

April

VILLAGE EVENTS

- 1 Tue Spring Fashion Show
- 2 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
Garden Club
- 3 Thu Local History Society
- 4 Fri Lent Group
- 5 Sat Garden Club Spring Show
NCT Nearly New Sale
Quiz (for Chevetogne visit)
- 8 Tue Craft Sale Afternoon
- 10 Thu WI
- 11 Fri Lent Group
- 12 Apr Lib Dem Ploughman's Lunch
- 14 Mon -17 Thu Amenity Skip
- 16 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
- 17 Thu RBL (Women)
- 18 Fri Good Friday Walk of Witness
- 20 Sun Green Waste Skip
- 23 Wed RBL Fish & Chip Supper
- 26 Sat HEAL Quiz

- Bentfield School 6.30 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
- U R Church Hall 2.30 pm
- St John's Hall 3 pm
- St John's Hall 7 for 7.30 pm
- Bentfield School 2 pm
- St John's Hall 7.45 pm
- Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
- Day Centre noon - 2 pm
- Lower St Car Pk 7.30 am - 3 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 7.30 pm
- Lower Street 6 pm
- Lower St Car Pk 1 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 7.30 pm
- Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm

May

- 1 Thu Local Authority Elections
Local History Society
- 2 Fri East Herts Home-Start Quiz
- 3 Sat Bowls Introductory Day
Rainbow Chinese Auction
- 7 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
Garden Club
- 8 Thu WI
- 10 Sat Plant Sale
Lib Dem Ploughman's Lunch
Mariners' May Fair
- 12 Mon -16 Fri Amenity Skip
- 13 Tue PTA Fashion Show
- 17 Sat Christian Aid Market
Green Waste Skip
Summer Sale & Tea

- Day Centre 8 pm
- Wisdon Park Ware 7.30 pm
- Bowls Club 10 am - 1 pm
- St John's Hall 7.30 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- St John's Hall 7.45 pm
- Fire Station 10 am - noon
- Day Centre noon - 2 pm
- Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
- Lower St Car Pk 7.30 am - 3 pm
- Mountfitchet High School 7.30 pm
- Quaker Meeting House 10 am - noon
- Lower St Car Pk 1 - 4 pm
- St John's Hall 2 - 4 pm

Bentfield School PTA

CRAFT SALE AFTERNOON

2 pm Tuesday 8th April

*includes
second-hand uniform sale
cake sale*



QUIZ EVENING

Saturday 26th April

7.30 for 8 pm
Day Centre

Bring your own drinks
£6 (incl ploughman's supper)
Tel 813871

Save The Children Week

27th April to 3rd May
Envelopes will be available
in the churches

*Please give generously and
use the Gift Aid option*

St John's, Stansted Grand Summer Sale and Tea

2 - 4 pm Sat 17th May
St John's Church & Hall

All manner of goodies on sale

The place for bargains and a
good cuppa!

Bentfield School PTA Mariners' May Fair

2 - 5 pm Sat 10th May

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Mermaid make-over etc...
Fancy Dress Competition

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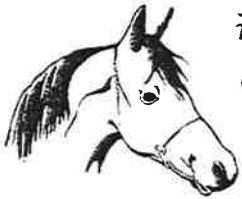
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STANSTED FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Welcome again to our bi-monthly round up of Fire Service news for the village and surrounding area.

The New Year got off to a flying start with a spate of calls on the 2nd January caused by the floods, which affected the area. We were called out six times that day to flooding incidents including a flooded property in Manuden, a mother and two small children trapped in a car in floodwater at Widington, a 94 year old couple in a similar predicament at Broxted, vehicles trapped in floodwater at Old Mead Lane, Henham, and another in North Hall Road. The day was rounded off with a full emergency at Stansted Airport: an arriving aircraft with engine failure landed safely. By contrast, the following day we were called to relieve Saffron Walden's fire crew on a serious haystack fire.

During the course of the month, we attended no less than six different car fires, as well as two derelict cars set on fire by juveniles on Rochford's Nurseries - a constant headache, mainly because of the difficulty of access. We had 45 calls in total in January, a high proportion of which were automatic fire alarms, many at the airport in various places. On the 8th, we were again called to a full emergency: an arriving aircraft with 109 persons on board landed safely despite serious handling problems. On the 15th, we were called to an aircraft tug on fire at the airport, but fortunately this was not serious.

It was not a good month for road accidents, we attended no less than nine in all, including five on the M11. The most serious was a collision between four cars and a lorry on the M11 on the 22nd and, although no-one was seriously hurt, we arrived to find that one of the vehicles, a Citroen Saxo, had lost its engine and gearbox: it had literally flown out of the car and was some twenty yards down the road! Amazingly this is the second time we have come across this occurrence with a Saxo.

The following evening, we were called to another accident in Bury lodge Lane, where two cars had collided outside the old terminal entrance, one having overturned into trees beside the road. The moment we had made the scene safe, we were called away to another RTA near Endeavour House, where a vehicle, crossing on a red light, had collided with another. Fortunately there were no serious casualties at either.

The following day brought two more RTA's; a car overturned at Broxted, with a driver trapped, and another at Manuden, where the car was on its roof. Apart from a Bonfire out of control in Stansted at midnight (!) on the 16th, the memorable event of January was of course the snow on the 30th. We were called out to the accident on the M11, which caused all the chaos, so well reported on the TV and radio. Our normal response time to the motorway is of the order of 15 minutes, but on this occasion it took over an hour and a half to reach the scene, which turned out not to have been an accident at all! An articulated lorry and two vans had slithered into the central gully, blocking the motorway. The sheer volume of slow-moving, tightly packed traf-

fic inevitably came to a halt as a result, but we were unable to assist. Our 4x4 off-road fire appliance was busy around the north of the County rescuing other ordinary fire appliances trapped in the snow.

February was little quieter, with 40 calls, amongst them 7 RTA's, including a car overturning and demolishing a fence on the Henham road: the young male driver sustained a broken collarbone; one car fire; the usual clutch of automatic alarm calls; 6 fires, including a chimney fire in a thatched house in Hallingbury, and an Industrial Oven fire at the Diamond Hangar, requiring the use of breathing apparatus and a hosereel jet.

We had a full emergency on the 28th, with a Ryanair aircraft landing safely despite an overheated engine. A flooding in a flat in Stansted was easily dealt with, whilst a bathroom emergency of a different sort occurred on the 29th, when a little girl in Farnham locked herself in the loo at home! She was soon released without difficulty and tears gave way to smiles! As can be seen, the range of calls are many and varied, and firefighters never know what the next call will bring.

At Stansted, we have two fire appliances (Firefighters call them 'pumps'), one a standard Rescue Pump, capable of a (relatively) high speed response, and carrying a crew of six, the other being our 'old faithful' Mercedes Unimog 4x4 off-road machine (known affectionately as 'the Mog'), carrying a crew of two. The Rescue Pump is a five-speed automatic, which carries all the essential equipment for any emergency, ranging from cane rods and stirrup pump for chimney fires through to high-tech hydraulic cutting gear, spreading gear, and compressed-air operated airbags for rescues from road accidents or from machinery. We also carry breathing apparatus for four men, and the bright yellow chemical protection 'moon suits' for chemical incidents, together with all the decontamination equipment: we are the only station in the North West of Essex so equipped. The Rescue Pump can pump water at a rate of 1,000 gallons per minute, supplying up to four hoses and two hosereels at once. It is also equipped with a 110 volt generator to provide emergency lighting by an overhead mast, as well as two tripod floodlights. It also supplies power for electric cutting equipment and that other essential piece of kit - an electric kettle!

In the next article, we will look at some of the other equipment carried and the training involved. Meantime, please keep checking those smoke alarms: remember there should be one on each floor of your home, tested monthly: they are a real life saver, especially at night. If you haven't already done so, take a few minutes with the family to make an escape plan for your home and make sure everyone knows what it is. You must ensure alternative means of escape should the normal exits become blocked. We will deal with this in detail next time.

Lastly, get ready for our popular plant sale, the next one will be held on the station forecourt on Saturday May 10th. As always, the proceeds will go to the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

Philip Hastings

Pub Profile No. 4

The Feathers

The Feathers Public House which stands on Cambridge Road has had a variety of names in its history. It was an old coaching inn and lodging house in the 1800's, and records show that there were 13 people living or lodging there in 1881. It was then known as The Bell Inn, but it later became known as The Bell and Feathers. Perhaps the name was changed when the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, had interests in the area including his friendship with the Blyths and the Gilbeys. The name was changed again to The Feathers six years ago to avoid confusion with the Old Bell Inn on Pines Hill.



Alan and Barbara

The pub has seen many changes since 1989; in fact The Feathers has positively blossomed from the dark pub with two divisive bars, one public, one lounge and an off-licence, to the open, bright and very friendly place it is today. The pub is owned by Pubmaster, who do not brew beer but own a large number of pubs nationwide. They set up the deal with the brewery as to which beers will be offered by their Landlords. Therefore the brew can change at any time if Pubmaster find a better deal, but this does not apply to soft drinks or spirits.

The clientele ranges in age right across the board from youngsters in their 20's to the older folk of the village and all are given the same warm welcome, as we saw from our visit there. There is ample opportunity for pool, darts and watching sport on the big screen. In fact there is a thriving Pool Team that meets every Monday evening to play local pubs. In the summer Alan arranges the Pool League, which involves pubs from further afield. Barbara serves food on match evenings, and we were told that once the kitchen has been refurbished food will be served regularly. There is also an annual golf tournament held against the Kings Arms in Stansted, which is very popular.

Monthly discos at The Feathers are well attended, as are the occasional live entertainments involving solo artists or duos. Alan and Barbara have held a Hoe Down on the summer bank holiday for the last six years, and this appeals to all ages. Also in the summer it is very pleasant for families to sit outside, as there is ample space and a playground area for the children.

We asked about the trend of drinking lager these days and wondered if real ale or cask beer might fade away. Alan assured us that although lager is popular, a very large number of people still prefer traditional cask ale. We also asked if any famous people had visited, and Alan recalled that while making "Country File" in the village John Craven popped in for a pint.

We were curious to know if there was ever any "trouble" as the age range varied so broadly. Alan advised us that as he had so much experience running pubs and clubs in London he deals with any potential trouble before it happens with a



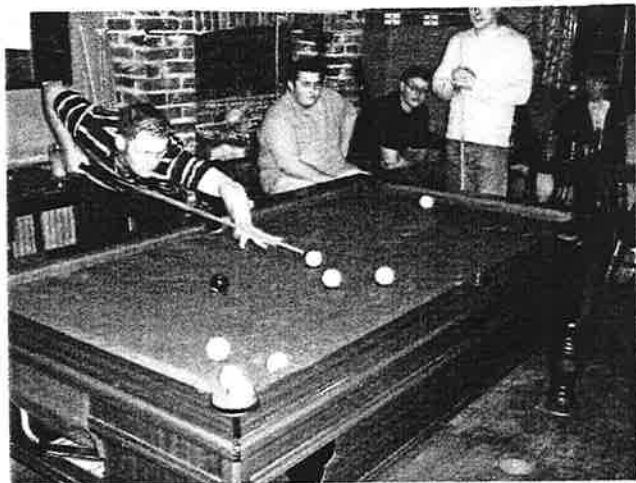
The Bell Inn c.1915

Alan and Barbara Hogg have run The Feathers since 1989. Alan comes originally from Hackney in the East End of London and has had great experience in managing clubs, pubs and restaurants there. Alan and Barbara have three sons, and because they felt that a pub atmosphere was not the best in which to bring up children, Alan changed course and took a job at Stansted Airport for a number of years. When he became redundant and his family had grown up, his thoughts turned to managing a pub within the area. It was then that the tenancy of The Feathers came up and Alan was keen to take up the reins again. It is his sons who stand in now for Alan and Barbara when they go on holiday.



The Feathers as it is today

friendly word of warning. This he emphasised was based on mutual respect. We found this to be true as, to our utter embarrassment, when we returned later that evening to take photos of the Pool Match, we were asked very politely not to put the players off by our flash photography - point taken Alan. Fortunately The Feathers team went on to win the First Division match against The Marne 'A' team! The young people speak very highly of Alan and it is clear that he is held in great respect by everyone.



Joe

We were left with the feeling that The Feathers is a very happy pub with a welcome extended by staff and clientele alike to anyone who pops in for a drink, either now and again, or on a regular basis.

Interview by Mary Warnett and Mike Dyer
Photographs by Mike Dyer.

'The Bell Inn c.1915' by courtesy of Mr Paul Embleton.



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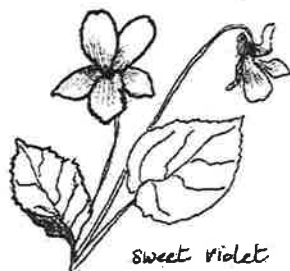
For details please contact

**Ann Conroy on
07966 506997 or
Gill Pursglove on
01279 814701**



Nature Notes

Two species of violet are in flower this month, the sweet violet, *viola odorata*, and our commonest violet, the dog violet, *viola riviniana*. The latter, having no scent, is considered inferior to the sweet violet, hence its name.



The flowers of *viola odorata* are deep purple or white and are found in hedgerows and scrub as well as woodland. With its strong scent the sweet violet has always been held in high esteem. It was adopted as the symbol of ancient Athens and was much loved

by Shakespeare who referred to it eighteen times in his sonnets and plays. In medieval times violets were one of the flowers used to strew on floors to relieve damp/musty smells. The flower in fact contains a substance called ionine which has the effect of quickly dulling a person's sense of smell. This is why when sniffing the flower you find the scent soon disappears. Offensive odours of anything nearby will also not be detectable.

In 1573 Tusser, who was a musician and schoolmaster, published his "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry" in which he mentions the use of violets for strewing. The flowers were also at that time cooked with meat and game and eaten raw in salads. Tusser suggested that those who had no garden could grow violets, wallflowers and cowslips in window pots.

John Keats wrote to his wife in 1819 "I hope you have a good store of double violets - I think they are the princesses of flowers, and in a shower of rain almost as fine as barley-sugar drops to a schoolboy's tongue."

Rosina Kirkwood

THE STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET DAY AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

**DAY CENTRE
Advance Notice**

As we are always looking for new ways of improving the meals we offer our members, we are introducing home cooking on Thursdays, probably starting in May. This, we are sure, will give excellent value for the price charged.

Bentfield Primary School PTA

April, and particularly the run up to the Easter holidays, is a very busy time at Bentfield, with lots in store for children and parents. The month begins with our Spring Fashion Show on the 1st of April. Are you starting to think about summer and a new wardrobe? Then come along for a fun evening and some shopping. The children will have an opportunity to model all the latest fashions (along with some willing parents and teachers!) and the adults will have a chance to buy them at a fraction of the retail price. Brands available include Gap, Marks and Spencer, Principles and Adams. The Show takes place in the School Hall from 6.30pm and clothes will be available for sale throughout the evening. Tickets are just £2.50, which includes a glass of wine, so come along and buy all your Spring Fashions at bargain prices.

On the 8th April we are holding a Craft Afternoon, where a wide range of crafts from locally run businesses will be available for sale in the school hall. The sale will take place from 2pm to enable parents to have a good look around in peace while the children are in class. We will also be running a second-hand uniform sale and a cake sale, so it promises to be a great afternoon – who knows what you might leave with!

Just before the Easter holidays on the 11th April, the children will be taking part in a Sponsored Skip to raise money for new PE Equipment. I'm sure the children will take up the challenge with relish and raise a hearty sum while keeping fit! Of course, there will be a prize to the pupil who raises the most money.

It's now just over a month to our major fundraising event, the Mariner's May Fair on the 10th May. As the title suggests, this year we've chosen a nautical theme and preparations are in hand to make this a spectacular event. We've got all sorts of attractions lined up to suit sea-farers of all ages, such as a surf board ride, an octopus bouncy castle, walking the plank, treasure hunt, mermaid make-overs, and climb the rigging to name but a few! And of course there will be a fancy dress competition for the best dressed mermaid, pirate or even sea-monster (the possibilities are endless!). Put the date in your diaries now and come and have some fun.



The Bentfield Boat

And finally, the two new play structures have now been installed and look fantastic. The children have already been having all sorts of wonderful adventures on the pirate ship (pictured at foot of previous column), while the fabulous playhouse has been putting young imaginations to work. We hope the children will have many, many exciting playtimes on the new equipment.

Marnie Tait



March has been a very busy month at Rainbow. On the 4th we celebrated Pancake Day in our traditional manner. The children made and ate their own pancakes and then took part in pancake races across our outside play area. Parents were invited to watch and also given the opportunity to practise their tossing and running skills! It was surprising how few pancakes actually ended up on the floor.

This term's theme is Spring. The children have enjoyed going for walks to look at the new spring growth and reading and illustrating the story "Danny's Duck". They have also learnt about tadpoles and frogs. Children in the older group were extremely lucky to experience new life for real when they watched a 3 week old baby being bathed

The children have really shown their artistic talents this term. Craft activities have included making a bird's nest out of straw, an album of family members and a four foot high person out of card, coloured paper, paper plates and wool. Mums particularly appreciated the beautiful photo frames that were produced as a Mothers' Day Gift.

Our fund-raising efforts have been very successful this month. Our cake bake in February raised over £490 towards our outdoor shelter and we are now nearly a third of the way towards our target of £2000. We are always grateful for any donations however small and would particularly like to thank Derek Honour who has recently planted a tree in our play area.

Future events include our Children's Easter Party on Sunday 13th April 3-5 pm and our Chinese Auction on 3rd May at 7.30 pm both in St John's Hall.

If you are interested in a place at the pre-school from September please contact Gill Pursglove on 814701 for further information.

The Rainbow Committee



STANSTED BOWLING CLUB



The National Childbirth Trust
Education for Parenthood

Here we are getting ready for the outdoor bowling season for 2003; it really does not seem that long ago when we finished in September 2002.

We are again hoping to get new members this year from experienced players to those of you who would merely like to have a go to see what it is all about.

Whether you are young, old, male or female super fit or maybe not as agile as you used to be then this is a game that almost everyone can play.

More and more younger, school aged people are taking up the game nowadays and we would be pleased to see some of you in our Club.

As we are affiliated to the English Bowling Association and Essex County Bowling Association, there are opportunities for people to be coached and possibly play at higher levels if that is what you want to do, supported obviously by this Club.

We are inviting you to come along on the morning of **Saturday 3rd May 2003** between 10 am and 1 pm when our Coach and instructors will be on hand to teach you the basics and offer any advice. You are not obliged to join the Club and the equipment required will be provided, just bring a pair of flat soled shoes or trainers AND maybe a couple of friends – it costs nothing.

If this date is not convenient then the Coach is happy to carry out personal coaching in the mornings, afternoons or evenings during the week of Monday 28th April to Friday 2nd May.

Either way telephone **01279 813584** to book your **FREE** place over this period.

Stansted Bowling Club is part of the village; why not become part of the Club, meet new friends have fun and enjoy yourselves, there is more to it than you may imagine!

We look forward to seeing you all.

Rex Turner
Secretary

For all of you with babies and young children or grandchildren now is the time to grab your cheque books and head for our Nearly New Sale of maternity and children's clothes, toys, books, videos and baby equipment. Top quality at bargain prices. So if you need a spare potty for nanny's house or an extra bouncy chair for the kitchen then this is your chance to splash out without breaking the bank. Come along to St John's Hall at **3pm on Saturday 5th April**. Entrance is by donation and refreshments will be available.

I thought this month I would fill you in a bit on what the NCT is and does. Most people will think, from our monthly reports on these pages, that we are a group of parents with babies and young children that are very busy doing lots of fun things. And we are. Don't get me wrong - locally we are very busy and we do have lots of fun, both with and without the kids, but there is more to the NCT.

The NCT is the country's biggest parenting charity and wants all parents to have an experience of pregnancy, birth and early parenthood that enriches their lives and gives them confidence in being a parent.

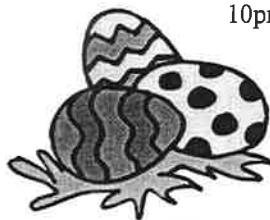
Our purpose, as a national charity, is to offer information and support in pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthood to all parents to give them the opportunity to make informed decisions; it is also to campaign for improved maternity care and better services and facilities for all new parents.

Locally we are able to provide a great deal of information and support to local parents before the birth in the form of our very popular antenatal classes, and after the baby has arrived our postnatal support structure is there to help new parents. More of all the many and varied services we provide locally next month.

All parents or carers with babies, toddlers or pre-school children are most welcome at any of our activities, coffees or events. See village noticeboards for details or call Sarah on 01279 647022 for a free diary sheet listing of events. Sarah is also able to provide information about membership and our branch activities and services. And if you're not sure if the NCT is for you, then come along and "try before you buy". You will be made most welcome and you can come as many times and to as many things as you want to.

For details of antenatal classes for first or second time parents, contact Rachel on 01279 718632. And breastfeeding support from a qualified counsellor, is available 8am to 10pm, 365 days per year, by calling 08704448708.

Tracy Todman



Stansted Tennis Club



New Season

The 2003 season will start on April 1st. This means the start of the Wednesday Senior Club Evening, the first of which will be on Wednesday 2nd April. All regular and new senior members welcome!

Spring Meal

An alternative to the annual Christmas meal took place at The Cock in Stansted on Sunday 9th March and an enjoyable time was had by all who attended.

Sweat-shirts/T-shirts

These are still available in varying shades and sizes sporting the Stansted Tennis Club logo. If you would like to see samples and are interested in purchasing these, please see either Kate Rutter (senior sizes) or Chris Hollis (junior sizes).

Coaching

Chris Hollis started the Spring/Summer junior coaching programme at the club on Saturday 15th March. As well as the usual Saturday morning classes there will also be lessons on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. A match practice session will be held on Tuesday afternoons. If you would like to find out more, please call Chris on 01279 319155.

Used Tennis Balls

A tube of 4 used tennis balls for £1 - who can resist this offer! Please contact Janet Hollis on 01279 812073 if you would like to purchase a tube.

Working Party

Sandra Ayres organised a successful working party in the club garden on Saturday 8th March, clearing the winter debris and making the area look very attractive. A big thank you to all those who helped on the day.

Tournament

The first tournament of the new season will be held at the club on Sunday, 6th April (9.30 prompt start). There will be a chilli lunch provided for all those who take part. If you would like to enter, please put your name on the list on the club noticeboard.

If you would like to join Stansted Tennis Club, please contact Kate Rutter (Membership Secretary) on 01279 813053. For any other enquiries, please contact either Richard Mott (Secretary) on 01279 466348 or Janet Hollis (Chairman) on 01279 812073.

MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB



At the February meeting, members and friends enjoyed a talk illustrated with slides by Mr Jim Buttress, on his work at the Greenwich Royal Park, where he worked for fifteen years. The park extends for 200 acres, and has many very old trees, and a large collection of Rhododendrons and Azaleas, which are well worth a visit in May/June to see them. Mr Buttress retired 6 years ago after the Royal Parks were privatised, but as so many retired people say, he said "I'm busier than ever" including giving lectures on cruise liners, and also being one of the judges for the Britain in Bloom competition, with Alan Titchmarsh. Mr Buttress answered many questions and was thanked for an interesting and amusing talk by Chairman Cyril Stoneham.

After coffee the meeting continued with the business including information on the club outing to Wisley on Sunday 8th July, leaving Stansted at 9am and returning at 6pm, the cost is set at £8 including Coach fare and entrance to the RHS Wisley Garden. Non Garden Club members are welcome.

Members were reminded to bring their photographs for the classes in the Spring Show competition to the April meeting on Wednesday the 2nd April. The show on the 5th April is in the United Reformed Church Hall on Chapel Hill, and is open to the Public from 2.30pm.

At the April club meeting the speaker will be Mr M J Able, his subject "Cacti", this will be followed by the club AGM.

Janet Townsend

STANSTED HALL JUNIOR CRICKET CLUB

Calling all young cricketers!

If you like the idea of playing 20-over matches on Sunday mornings this summer, with coaching sessions each Friday evening at the ground, come along to our registration day between 10am and 12 noon on Saturday 5th April. You can sign up for Under-11s (up to Year 6), Under 13s (Years 7 and 8) and the Under-15s (Years 9 and 10).

The ground is half a mile from Stansted station along the road to Elsenham - we shall put a white flag opposite the entrance.

If the weather is bad, we shall use St John's Hall, Stansted, instead.

Keith Sowers

**St Mary's Primary School
Parents, Teachers and
Friends Association**



Spring has definitely arrived at St Mary's - the entrance grounds are a blaze of colour thanks to some hard graft during the latter part of 2002. Members of the PTFA were busy digging and planting hundreds of bulbs and the results are delightful. This is partly thanks to a grant awarded by the Stansted Art & Craft Committee, so a big thank you for helping us make St Mary's even more cheerful and bright!

Many congratulations to the St Mary's School Netball Team (Years 5 & 6) who came 2nd in the Junior District Netball Tournament, recently held at Saffron Walden County High. They missed out on the championship by just one goal (what bad luck!) but well done nonetheless.

On March 6th, Mr Fagan of Foyles Educational paid his annual visit to the school as we celebrated World Book Week. All the children were given a £1 voucher towards their choice of book and most chose to buy at school rather than visit the shops. No doubt the children enjoyed selecting a title from the extensive range available and helped to raise £120 towards additional books for the library.

Red Nose Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm on March 14th. To raise money, the children took part in a sponsored 'Change Your Hair for the Day'. Never before have we had so many pupils sporting a Bad Hair Day! The local beauty establishments and chemists must surely have sold out of gel, hair spray, colour and any other manner of hair product or accessory. The results were quite spectacular and colourful. The children, we're sure, had enormous fun raising money for this important charity that supports a wide range of projects both here and abroad

On March 15th, St Mary's pupils and their families took part in a Learning Together Activity Day. A wide range of classes were on offer, including Family First Aid, Bicycle Maintenance, Holiday Languages, Textile Workshop and Arts & Crafts sessions. Our thanks to the college tutors from The North West Essex Adult Community College for a smashing day.

Exciting news from St Mary's - the new school web site is currently under construction. This is a new way for parents, children and the wider community to access up to date information about the school. To view newsletters, dates and events, lunch menus, clubs and examples of work, log on to:

www.st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk

Further information such as a children's page, Governors and PTFA news, Prospectus and Annual Report to parents will be available shortly. In other words, you don't have to wait for The Link to drop through the letter box to find out the latest news; you can now log on to the Internet!

Following an invitation to all pupils to compose the St Mary's School Prayer, the children have received a bookmark reminding them of the verse. There was an overwhelming response and many excellent compositions, so good in fact, that the official version is a compilation from a number of children. It reads:

Dear God,
Help us to love and care for each other
To respect everyone who comes to work and play in
our school
Keep us all healthy and happy
We thank you for our school, our families and our
friends
We are glad that we are able to learn
We remember others without families, food or
shelter
Teach us to share what we have gladly
In your name.
Amen

Wise words for us all, perhaps.

Claire Jonas
PTFA Committee Member



**Huw Johnson
Club**

What a lot of fun we had at Joanne's birthday disco. Garry King certainly has a gift and keeps the members dancing away until they are exhausted. There is always a big cheer when Garry appears. Our coach driver Ray also receives a warm welcome whenever he arrives and we are very grateful for the way he helps our less than able members to board the coach.

We have just had our A.G.M. which is always an enjoyable evening. We had to say goodbye to Yvonne who was our Treasurer, as she is getting married in June. We shall miss her and we wish her well as she begins her new life. Yvonne was a great asset when we were on holiday and always had far more energy to join in the fun than we oldies! We say a big thank you to Val Reavell who has agreed to be Treasurer. Val is certainly not a new face as she has been a driver for the Club almost from the very beginning - 28 years ago.

If you're ever at a loose end on a Thursday evening why not pop in and meet our members?

Marion Johnson



ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Already readers will be aware of the Essex County Council tax rate increase for the coming financial year - 16.74%. It is not intended to enlarge on the subject in this report, as full and comprehensive details have been published in the local and national newspapers. However, should readers wish to raise the matter they should not hesitate to do so.

Following this point, this month's report will be devoted to the consultation which is to take place on the subject of Home to School Transport. This subject is of extreme interest to many parents and comments and ideas are welcome.

Presently the policy of the County Council is to provide free home to school transport to the designated school from their home address for children of primary school age who meet the 'qualifying distance' criterion. Currently these are:

- 1.5 miles or more for children of infant school age
- 2 miles for children of junior school age

In Essex these distances are more generous than the law provides, viz:

- 2 miles for children under the age of eight
- 3 miles for children aged eight and older

In Essex expenditure on home to school transport is increasing above the current rate of inflation: thus funds that would otherwise be used for the provision of education to children, is being spent on transportation. It is also the case that the budget settlement for Essex County Council for the year 2003/04 is well below the rate of expected increase in the cost of home to school transport. Thus there must be a change in policy.

If a change in policy is agreed, the position for children remaining at their existing school, including a linked junior school, will be as follows:

From September 2003

- A. **If a child is in year 1 or 2** they will continue to receive transport under the existing policy [i.e. the 1.5 mile qualifying distance criterion] until they start year 4 when they will be re-assessed on the 3 mile qualifying distance.
- B. **If a child is in year 3** exceptionally they will receive transport under the current 1.5 mile qualifying distance criterion. However, they will be re-assessed for the following year [year 4] on the 3 mile criterion.
- C. **If a child is in year 4, 5 or 6** they will continue to receive transport under the existing policy [i.e. the 2 mile qualifying distance criterion] until they transfer to secondary education when a new application for transport provision must be made.

These transitional arrangements will apply for children remaining at the same school. For children who move school during the transition period entitlement to transport will be reassessed against any new policy.

These proposals, if implemented, will have implications for parents applying for a school place for a child of infant school age from September 2003 onwards, and will change the transport eligibility criteria as set out in the Primary Education in Essex 2003/04 booklet.

Should any reader wish to raise this subject they should contact the undersigned on 01279 812588.

Richard Wallace
County Councillor
Stansted Division

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

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



Council Offices
Crafton Green
Tel 813214
Fax 813964

Local Elections

Hopefully you are all aware that elections to Parish and District Councils are looming - 1st May is the big day! We have a supply of nomination forms for the Parish Council at Crafton Green - please contact the Clerk or call in to the Office if you would like one. If you wish to know more about the role of a Parish Councillor and what is involved, please ask an existing member, or contact the Clerk on 813214.

Playscheme

The scheme, which runs for 3 or 4 weeks in the summer holidays, is appreciated by children and parents alike. As you will know from the flyer recently circulated, we are currently without a Playscheme Leader and unless we find one soon, the scheme will be unable to run. If you feel that you have the time to commit, and have some experience in working with children, please contact the Clerk for further details. (It is a paid position!!)

Good News For Children!

You may have noticed that the redundant swing frame and base have now been removed from the play area on the Recreation Ground. A new roundabout has been ordered for this location, and it is due to arrive before the Easter holidays - fingers crossed!

Windmill

Work is now in hand at the Windmill to renovate the sails and striking gear - this will enable the sails to turn properly, albeit under supervision. Work should be completed by the end of May. Will residents in the area please note that the gate to the Windmill must be kept FREE OF VEHICLES. This will allow the contractor access to the site, but more importantly it acts as an emergency access to Mill Cottage at the rear and must not be obstructed.

Ruth Clifford,
Clerk



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our village may not have as much public open space as we would like but we are lucky to have the Recreation Ground at the heart of the community. At our meeting on 6th March, Peter Brown and Ralph Phillips, both long-standing members of the Society, told us something of their researches into the history of this popular piece of land.

Originally, this part of Essex was covered by primeval forest and the area of the present Recreation Ground became known as Conygray Wood - cony not necessarily meaning rabbit but thief, it was likely to have been a centre for highwaymen and footpads! Owned by the Lord of the Manor, gradually the trees were cleared and the land farmed in the strip system introduced by the Saxons until the Enclosure Acts of the 19th century. Most of the Recreation Ground land was, by then, owned by the Fuller-Maitland family and at a Vestry Meeting in 1867 when his scheme for road alterations in the parish were under discussion, Mr Fuller-Maitland indicated that he would resolve the village's need for recreational space. Although used increasingly by the villagers, it was not until 1880 that the land was formally transferred to the Parish by deed of gift.

One strip at the north end of the Recreation Ground, however, did not belong to the Fuller-Maitlands. Known as the Widow's Acre, it was let by Elizabeth Chapman in Tudor times for the benefit of 10 poor widows in Stansted. Incidentally, Elizabeth Chapman could have been one of 600 persons in Essex at that time convicted as witches. The land was bought from the Charity Commissioners by the Parish in 1895 for £200, a sum which is the basis of the Charity Fund still operating to this day.

The Recreation Ground has been put to good use over the years. Cricket was first played there in 1870, football from 1893 and cattle fairs took place until 1905. The first houses around the green appeared in the 1870's. Bonfires celebrated Edward VII's coronation in 1902 and the end of WWI in 1919, when an effigy of the Kaiser was used as a Guy. The Village Fire Brigade drilled there in 1924/5 and the first swings were put up in 1932. And during WWII it was even bombed!

Attempts have been made over the years - unsuccessfully - to erode villagers' access. In 1944 it was suggested a civic centre be erected (including a cinema). A hard up Parish Council leased part of the area to the County Council as a school playing field for some years and proposals were also made for the provision of parking for the Roman Catholic Church and the resiting of the Fire Station. However, in 1989 a Parish Council report expressed concern over the overall lack of public open space generally available in the village.

Peter and Ralph accompanied their talk with extracts from contemporary accounts and with some interesting slides. This report must, however, be by way of a trailer - for the main event, they hope to publish all their research in the near future: we wait with interest.

On 3rd April at the Day Centre at 8 pm we touch on another topic of great interest to many: Lt. Col. John Sainsbury will be talking on "The Home Guard" and we hope to see you there.

Ian Seavers



Stansted Evening Women's Institute

"Hi, you guys" - the usual greeting heard by Susan Walker and her husband on their month-long, 5,000 mile trip in North Western U.S.A. which we heard about at our March meeting.

Starting in Seattle, Washington State, they travelled east as far as The Black Hills of Dakota (so named because they usually appear black when seen from a distance) before turning back west to the coast. They visited the Glacier National Park and had a good view of the Old Faithful Geyser in the Yellowstone National Park. They were fascinated by the vast areas of thermal activity and heard that the native Americans used to lower fish into some of the steaming holes and bring them up nicely cooked. Time was spent in Deadwood City and they saw the graves of Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok. At the Mount Rushmore monument they were impressed by the 60 feet high busts of Presidents Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt, but there were no leaflets or boards giving information and the Americans they spoke to there did not know in which order the faces appeared. Cranberries were seen growing in "bogs" which are actually ordinary fields which are only flooded at harvest time when the floating berries can be easily gathered. Around them were tall poles with platforms at the top for perches to encourage raptors, which catch the voles that love eating the berries. Susan saw many other interesting sights, lovely plants, redwoods in misty forests and animals which included bison.

A raffle was held in aid of the Meningitis Trust, which supplies information and educational material and funds research into vaccines and treatment, as well as offering support for those affected.

The next meeting on 10th April is on "Hanging Baskets and Containers" with speaker Valerie Day, BSc (Hort), MI Hort, at 7.45pm in St. John's Hall.

Peggy Honour



Royal British Legion Women's Section



We met in sombre mood in February as this was our first branch meeting since the death of Margaret Gabb, our much-loved President. We all remembered her during the Exhortation and our Chairman, Janet, paid special tribute to Margaret in her opening remarks. This was also the meeting at which Bessie took over as our new Treasurer and she was warmly welcomed.

Our Speakers were Edna and Alan Wright and, as always, they treated us to a feast of beautiful slides showing our local countryside. Beginning in January in their own garden we saw their donkeys, snow-covered trees and hedges and numerous birds. Then came February with snowdrops and lovely views of Broxted Church. Thereafter, there were pictures for each month of the year - pheasants, daffodils, lambs, butterflies and every type of wild flower, culminating in scenes from Finchingfield, Ugley Green and Audley End.

The result of the Coffee Morning held on 12th March was £247.55 and we are very grateful to all who helped and gave their support.

Since 1946, from Easter to Remembrance Sunday, members of our Branch have provided flowers for the two vases on the War Memorial in the Memorial Gardens.

Our members are getting older now and we would like to encourage other, perhaps younger, people from the village to help us.

If you would like to go on our rota we would be extremely grateful and, as we have a flower fund, we would be happy to pay for the flowers if necessary.

Please contact:

Doris Thistle (Organiser) 813250
Janet Hollis (Chairman) 812073
Cath Whall (Secretary) 813880
Bessie Blyth (Treasurer) 816231
Pat Clower (Vice-Chairman) 815220

Thank you very much indeed.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 17th April in the Day Centre at 7.30 pm.

Pat Clower



Royal British Legion Stansted & District Branch



A Fish and Chip Supper is to be held at the Day Centre at 7.30 pm on Wednesday 23rd April in aid of Branch funds.

We are very fortunate to have as our speaker Garry King who will be talking on "My Meat"!

There will be a raffle. Tickets available from Committee Members - £4 each. Do please give your support.

David Challis (815183), Bob Stoddart (814015), Eddie Laird (813458), John Segar (813289).

Harold Thistle (Secretary)



STANSTED & DISTRICT LIBERAL DEMOCRATS.

Our next ploughman's lunches are on Saturday, 12th April and Saturday, 10th May at the Stansted Day Centre, 12 noon to 2pm. All are welcome.

We will be holding a post-election event at lunchtime on Sunday, 4th May in the Stansted Day Centre.

Please ring 81422 or 813432 for details.

Ruth Rawlinson



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STONEY COMMON MISSION ROOM

For almost a century the Mission Room on Stoney Common has been a centre of activity that has contributed prominently in the day to day life of the inhabitants of Stoney Common so bringing about a great sense of community.

In its early days at the beginning of the 20th Century the Mission Room was very much what its name suggests. Those who regularly attended the services led by Captain Stephens and later Captain Smith, both of the Church Army, remember vividly the rousing hymns that were sung and the great feeling of togetherness. A Mr Gurton, a professional photographer, used to cycle from Bishop's Stortford to play the Alexandre organ and he was assisted by the violinist Mr Cawte, Jean McBride's grandfather. Sometimes other violins were added and on occasions Captain Stephens, working for the Mission until 1921, played the cornet.

During the 1914-18 War, for a time, the Mission Room was occupied by troops and an empty house was used for services. The Mission also provided a soup kitchen twice a week where families could supplement their war rations.

In the decades that followed the departure of the Church Army Mission the Room was still providing lively services and these were led by the Vicar of Birchanger. Church Festivals were very well attended and Mr Edmund Cawkell would send produce from Rochfords Nurseries, particularly grapes, to decorate the Room at Harvest Festival time.

Children of the '30s' and '40s' remember the flourishing Sunday School led by Mrs Mildred Chester of Broome End and Miss Ethel Church, whose sister Mrs Edith Harris contributed by playing the harmonium.

Gradually, over time, the Room was being used for many other activities which have given much pleasure to the inhabitants of those in the vicinity until its closure in July 2001. The Stoney Common Residents' Association was in place to provide for their members various interests and much enjoyment was gained at family parties and celebrations, evenings of Bingo and also at fund-raising activities which were always well supported. The energy and commitment of Mrs Ruth Wickens and Mrs Jennifer Childs and other enthusiastic helpers ensured that a strong community spirit continued. It was a fitting legacy from those early Church Army days.

Margaret Sylvester



The Stoney Common Mission Room



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SNIPPETS

We were sad to learn of the death of Mrs. Joan Cadwallader of Wetherfield. For many years she was a well-known member of several Stansted organizations and will be missed by her many friends and neighbours.

We are also sorry to report that the Revd. Margaret and Geoff Booker, formerly of Burton End but latterly of Houghton near St. Ives, have both been unwell. Not surprisingly Margaret threw herself into parish life at Houghton and until recently conducted most of the services following the retirement of their Vicar. She is also a member of the Stewarding Team at Houghton Watermill. We wish them both a good recovery with perhaps a tiny admonition to Margaret not to exert herself so much in the future.

Stansted Hall Cricket Club are to be congratulated on receiving a £5000 grant from the Lottery Fund. It is to be used for better training facilities and improvements to the Stansted House ground.

A reminder to all our readers that the next Farmers Market at Ugley Village Hall is on Saturday April 19th from 11.30 am to 1.30 pm. It will include the products from a Stansted breadmaker.

The Rock Concert at St. John's Church on March 21st was a great success. The "Best Band Ever" earned its name with a splendid performance. The audience entered into the spirit of the evening with gusto. The event was voted a resounding success and enabled some £750 to be given to famine relief in Malawi.

Bentfield School's Bike Auction organised by Diane Williamson was another successful occasion. Almost all the machines were sold under the hammer of Tim Turner from Sworders, so raising £150 for School funds. There is of course a cry for it to be held again next year.

Please pass on news you may hear, by any of the usual Link channels (E-mail, by hand to 58 Chapel Hill or a call to 647213)



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ROYSTON CHORAL SOCIOETY

Choir returns to Royston

After their first performance outside Royston in nearly five years: in front of an appreciative audience at St Mary Magdalene's Church in Barkway in mid-February, the Choral Society return to their home town for the next concert on Saturday, 5th April.

The Mercury's review of the Barkway performance described how residents were "bowed over by the concert which saw the choir unleash their mighty voices".

You can judge those voices for yourself when the choir tackle two major choral works: *Missa Papae Marcelli* by Palestrina, and Stainer's *Crucifixion*. The concert, back in Royston's Parish Church, begins at 7.30pm and concert-goers are encouraged to arrive early to enjoy a glass of wine before the start.

Tickets for the concerts are on sale in advance from Royston Library, or on the door on the night, price £8 (concessions £5, 'still at school' £1). For further details about the concerts and choir call David Boarder on 01992 623489 or Caroline Franks on 01920 822723.



St Clare Hospice

As ever, St Clare's is very dependent upon its fundraising activities to maintain the facilities it provides.

Fundraising has continued apace over the past year with a large number of successful projects including the Light Up A Life campaign at Christmastime. Perhaps one of the most striking activities was The Daniel Robinson Ball, organised by Gary Neill at The Manor of Groves Golf Club which raised a total of £20,000 for the hospice.

Looking to the immediate future, Pat Compton and members of St Clare's staff will be running in **The London Marathon** on Sunday, 13th April. If you would like to sponsor Pat and/or any of the other runners, please contact Penny Sturdy, Fundraising Manager at the hospice on 01279 413590.

Also, two events are planned at the hospice in Hastingwood:

Sunday, 11th May
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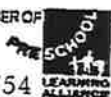
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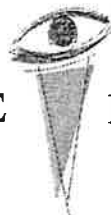
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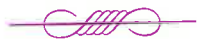
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