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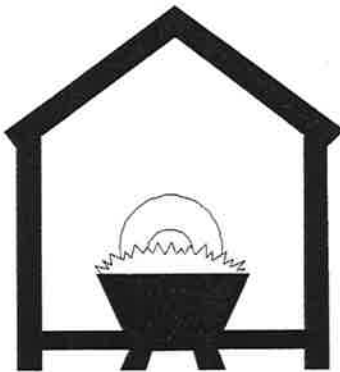
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Carles Hill Manor, Jeax

Christmas 2003

Jesus Christ
the same
yesterday,
today and
for ever



*A leaflet giving details of Christmas services is being
distributed throughout Stansted
See also listing inside*

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

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CHRISTMAS 2003



SERVICES AT STANSTED CHURCHES

St John's Church of England

Sun 14th December Christingle 3pm
 Wed 24th December Crib Service 3pm
 First Communion of
 Christmas 11.30pm
 Thurs 25th December Holy Communion 8am
 Parish Communion 9.30am

United Reformed Church

Thurs 25th December Christmas Service 10.30am
 Sun 28th December No Service in Stansted

St Therese's Roman Catholic Church

Sun 21st December Children's Service and
 Party 2.15pm
 Mon 22nd December Penitential Service 8pm
 Wed 24th December Family Mass 6pm
 Midnight Mass midnight
 Thurs 25th December Mass 10.30am

Society of Friends and Methodists

Sun 21st December United Worship 9.30am

A WELCOME AWAITS YOU

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux
 High Lane

Once again the end of the year approaches and our thoughts turn to the Christmas season, the sending of cards and greetings to family and friends, arranging the family get-together and that all important Christmas binge, but also, for many, a more important event is celebrated at this time - the birth of Jesus. Matthew and Luke each tell the story of the birth of Jesus slightly differently. Matthew starts his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus and then the birth at Bethlehem, Luke with the announcement of the births of John the Baptist and of Jesus and it is not until the 2nd chapter that he reports on the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem.

What of John, the fourth Gospel writer? His gospel is factual: the other gospels, known as the synoptic gospels, cover much of the same material but from somewhat different points of view.

The first chapter of John's gospel is known as "The Prologue" and is the third gospel reading used at Christmas, usually on Christmas morning; it has always been one of my favourite gospels and as such I would like to share my thoughts on it with you. I feel it sets out the whole of the Christian faith and the mystery of life. It is impossible to deal with all of John's Prologue in a short article, so I will only write about the first four verses (John 1-4) and leave the reader to reflect on the other 13 verses.

John opens his gospel with the words "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God. The Word was God. He

was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things came to be. No one thing had its being but through Him. All that came to be had life in Him and that life as the light of men" (Jerusalem Bible).

The word of God is eternal. It has always existed. It was not called Jesus before he came as a baby at Bethlehem. The Word then was called by other names in the Old Testament.

If we now move from the word, which existed before time, to the Birth at Bethlehem, this Word, then, is not simply a message someone can put into words, it has become a person, a life enfleshed and enacted. It has to do with compassion and vision, God so vulnerable, casting this unphilosophical proposition into our world. The messenger and the message are thus joined, "the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us", the Word is incarnate in the form of Jesus and came as a human being and dwelt amongst us.

I hope this short article will help join the last gospel of Christmas Day to Bethlehem for you and do read the Prologue, it is wonderful poetry.

Our Altarpiece

It should not surprise those who worship at, or have visited, St Therese's Church to learn that the magnificent circular depiction of the Resurrected Christ in our Church was the design recently used as a backdrop in Wembley Arena. The occasion was Westminster Diocese's Renewal known as 'At Your Word Lord'. Stephen Foster, the local artist, is to be congratulated on giving us such uplifting symbolism.

Francis Mercer



A Celebration of Christmas

There will be a concert of carols, Christmas music, readings and poetry at 4pm on Saturday 20th December 2003 at St Mary's Church, Stansted. The Benefice Choir invites singers from all local churches to join them for the musical items. Rehearsals will be from 8-9pm on the following evenings at St John's Church, Stansted:

- Wednesday 26th November
- Thursday 11th December
- Wednesday 17th December

There will also be a short rehearsal on the day, immediately before the concert. If you enjoy singing and would like to join the choir for this event, please let Glynis Morris (01223 263640 or church.music@stansted.net) have your name and voice part as soon as possible. We do need to have these details in advance so that we can arrange to have the appropriate number of music copies available for the first rehearsal.

Concert for Aids in Malawi

A concert was held at the beginning of the year to raise money to help the famine in Malawi. The main concern now is for the millions in the country affected by Aids, leaving hundreds of thousands of children without parents, as well as widows trying to support families on their own. It is a truly terrible situation. Another concert will be held on Sunday 28th December in St John's Church at 8 pm, as before, under the auspices of RAP (Regular Aid for the Poor).

The Concert will be a performance by the music group Charity (see the October issue of the Link), with additional music by Pete and Clare Baker, performing 'French Cafe' style music on violin and accordion. There will be a bar, raffle and light refreshments and the possibility of dancing for those who wish to.



Schoolchildren in Malawi

The work for Aids in Malawi is both preventive, and to help those left on their own by the death of relatives. Moira Chimombo, who is married to a Malawian and has lived in the country for over 30 years, is now working full-time on various projects. She has written the 'Why Wait?' curriculum for schools, which aims to tell young people about the dangers of Aids and to help them make informed choices about their lives. She is running several groups for pre-school orphans using basic materials such as cardboard and clay and training older children to run the groups. She has also started another project, mainly with widows and orphans of Aids victims, to teach the use of sewing machines and basic tailoring skills: she needs funds to actually buy, rather than rent, sewing machines so that they can be much more available for use by the villagers - one sewing machine costs about £100. Moira is also teaching widows to knit, to produce woollen hats in Malawi colours, to sell both locally and in this country: money is required as payment for them and for the wool.

We hope that as many as possible will support this evening by coming to the concert (or making an individual donation if you are unable to attend). Tickets are available at £5.00 each and can be obtained by ringing 01279 816972 or 850209.

Carol Singing

The annual Christmas tour-de-force of Stansted's roads will take place on Monday 22nd and Tuesday 23rd December. The monies collected will go to Hearing Help Uttlesford so complementing the collection from the Celebration of Christmas which is to be for Uttlesford Crossroads, two deserving local causes.

The carol singing is a jolly event and made all the better when well supported, so please join the singers on one or both nights. If you feel that your voice is not quite adequate for the occasion you would be equally welcomed as a collector. The details are on page 7, Village Events, from which you will see that instrumentalists also have a place. Come on, give it a whirl - the evenings do end with seasonal fare!

Margaret Whitelaw



Shalom

Monday 1st December
Advent Meditation at the Friends Meeting House

Monday 15th December
Christmas party time at 7 Blythwood Gardens
Be there or miss out!



St John's

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Director of Music

Mrs Glynis Morris
Wakeley
Leetes Lane
Eversden
Cambs, CB3 7HH
phone/fax (01223) 263640
<church.music@stansted.net>

Children's Church

Mrs Sandra Wood
(01279) 647054
<sandra@skygod.demon.co.uk>

This time it's personal

Sixth formers, as a breed, generally do not need another reason to disregard the church. If they think about church at all, it is usually as a branch of the National Trust that sings hymns, theme park England, a costume drama, and what goes with that is irrelevance, disdain and (this was a new one on me) pity.

We had talked before in class about sexuality and the church, when there had been the leisure to theoretically consider biblical texts and the worlds from which they sprang. This time it was personal, this time it had legs; four of them, Jeffrey John's and Gene Robinson's though, to be precise, there were eight legs if you counted their respective partners. It is the partners which fuels the sense of offence, on both sides of the argument and, in the absence of a fundamentalist African bishop, it was me who was held to account for the church's public statements.

Why I was so ill-at-ease was because, it seemed to me, that this group of young people seemed to be much better informed about both the nature of sexual orientation and the emotional range of affective love than has been evident in the recent public news releases of the church. In the past, the church at its best may have called secular culture into account, or, just as likely, been lagging behind secular wisdom while blindly protecting its own interests. In that classroom, I was uncomfortably aware that these young men and women had not needed to be taught about the values of compassionate and inclusive community, for them it was a given. It fell to me to try and interpret for them what appeared to be blind bigotry, and I did not have the heart to know where to begin and neither did I care to.

The problem is that I do not have a *position* on homosexuality. For me it is personal, it

has legs, lots of them. I cannot reduce to an issue my liturgy tutor from university who first introduced me to Thomas Tallis, and showed me what it was like to regard the moods of the day as sacred and a resource for prayer, while taking my friends and me out punting in long ago August afternoons. I cannot clinically debate the man who, when it was discovered I may have to preach for a living, took a clumsy sixteen-year-old with a stammer and began to train his voice over years so he could speak a complete sentence in public. I cannot weigh the spiritual legitimacy of a man and his partner who had no reason at all to keep an unobtrusive eye on me, when I was recently divorced in a foreign country, looking after my three-year-old son. These are sufficient, but there are many, many more.

As a pastor I have learned that human communities seldom make decisions simply on the basis of logical issues. If we have an impasse, we tell our stories, we show how we came to believe the way we do. I do not know, but I would not be surprised if this had been the hope of the Archbishop at the recent Primates Summit at Lambeth. But, publicly at least, the heat has gone into an issue, and the way back looks like an increasingly distant hope.

What saved me, before the period bell went, was to convey that the gospel, before it is anything else, is news. We have four gospels in the Bible and a few others outside. Each reflects the retelling of Jesus to different communities with different cultures and interests. These have been with us for almost 2,000 years, but we have not yet taken the hint.

We start with their witness, this is one of the characteristics of a Christian outlook, but we do not stop there. We can consult scripture,

but we cannot set up camp there, even if we could. Like the gospel writers, we have to take what we have heard and seen and go and live Christ's world in our own context, by living in peace and justice with my neighbours on this earth, whatever amount of confrontation, struggle, recognition and surrender that may involve.

I am here to write this because some individuals, who have been called unclean by some of my fellow Christians, took time over me and cared for me. What is more important is that I, in my turn do the same. If I wind up caring for those who are being called outcast, and loving them because they are loveable, and that God did not make a mistake when he made them, then maybe I'm not too far off-message.

St. John's Diary

Sundays 8:00am Holy Communion *said*
9:30am Parish Communion *sung*
11:00am Open Door Service on
the 7th, the Christingle Service
will be at 3:00pm on
December 14th

Wednesdays 10:00am Holy Communion *said*
followed by coffee
7:30pm Intercessions and
Night Prayer

Children's Church meets at 9:30am on Sundays in the Church Hall. **Laser Group** is a 12-16 youth group which meets weekly 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 studying Jonah. In the new year the housegroup will be studying the book of Ruth: *The Story of Ruth: Twelve moments in every woman's life.*



(continued)

Registers for October:

Baptisms

19th Adam and Benjamin Ward

No weddings

Funerals

10th Wilfred Ernest Wood age 81 years

22nd Augusta Hughes Anne Morton age 91 years

29th Bessie Blyth age 71 years

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 December

7th 10.30 Rev'd M Cressey
14th 10.30 Rev'd D Simpson
Communion & Gift Service
21st 10.30 Rev'd K Anderson, Minister of the
United Church of Christ, U.S.A.
25th 10.30 Rev'd J Tollington
28th 11.00 Service at Newport
4th Jan 2.30 pm Rev'd D Simpson
Service will include a Baptism

Changes

Over the past few months talks have been going on in the United Reformed Church nationally and at local level regarding the provision of Ministry. After much heart searching it has been decided to disband the Stansted Group of Stansted, Newport and Clavering, which was formed over 30 years ago and create two new pastorates with Newport and Clavering joining with Saffron Walden and Stansted and Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford linking together and sharing a minister. Rev'd David Simpson has accepted the call to be minister of the new pastorate of Stansted and Water Lane and the Induction Service will be held on Saturday 3rd January at Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford at 2.30 pm. All friends are welcome to this service. David and Sylvia will be moving to

the manse in Bishop's Stortford during January and we at Stansted look forward to getting to know and working with the members at Water Lane in the months ahead.

Shoe Boxes

What an enjoyable evening we all had on November 4th filling shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child. The tables were filled with notebooks, pens, pencils, soap, toothpaste and other toiletries, toys of all sorts, hats, gloves and, of course, sweets. The production line, helped along by cups of coffee, had by the end of the evening filled 90 boxes which, added to the ones left at my door, made the magnificent total of 128 boxes, which have started their journey from Stansted to Eastern Europe.

Special thanks must go to the music group Charity for their Quiz and concert which over 40 people enjoyed on 1st November, and which raised £200 towards the transportation costs and, of course, to everyone who knitted, shopped, covered boxes, came and filled the boxes or gave money, a very big thank you.

Afternoon Tea

Join us on 7th December at 3 pm for a cup of tea, mince pie and a chat. As we have a special service of Baptism on January 4th the "Cafe" will not be open, but we hope to welcome all our friends again on February 1st.



METHODIST

Meets in Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Minister Rev'd Keith Page
2 South Road
Bishop's Stortford
Tel 01279 654475

Secretary Mrs Catherine Dean
49 Recreation Ground
Stansted
Tel 01279 813579

Email methodists@stansted.net

All services start at 9.30am unless otherwise stated

Services and preachers for December

7th Ken Mark
14th Julie Finbow
21st Joint Christmas service with Friends
28th Rev'd Jim Gill – Holy Communion

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

Weather and Beauty

It has been a strange year. If my memory serves me right, it was a very wet winter and spring. Then came summer which was wonderful, but it was sufficiently wet early on, at least around here, for most farm crops to keep growing and get to maturity. Autumn has been glorious with the development of wonderful leaf colours. My brother lives in Vermont, USA and they are proud of the wonderful leaf colours that develop in 'fall'. There is an industry in New England devoted to what my brother and others call 'Leaf Peeping'. If this autumn was to be repeated most years then to cross the Atlantic to look at maple leaves would become a thing of the past. I am now looking forward to the Christmas season, and I would love to have snow, but only in the period from Christmas to the New Year! Snow can be beautiful and last February my wife and I went to visit relations who live in Bavaria. They had had little snow, but we flew into Munich airport in a snowstorm! The countryside was covered in a blanket of snow and then the sun shone; it was wonderful, bright and shining. I took a number of photographs of 'Snow-Scenes' and we are now using these pictures and our computer to make our own Christmas cards.

An American Quaker, Rufus Jones, wrote the following in the 1920s: - "Perhaps more wonderful still is the way in which beauty breaks through not only in a few highly organised points, it breaks through almost everywhere. Even the minutest things reveal it as well as do the sublimest things, like the stars. Whatever one sees through the microscope, a bit of mould for example, is charged with beauty. Everything from a dewdrop to Mount Shasta is the bearer of beauty. And yet beauty has no function, no utility. Its value is intrinsic, not extrinsic. It is its own excuse for being. It greases no wheels, it bakes no puddings. It is a gift of sheer grace, a gratuitous largesse. It must imply behind things a spirit that enjoys beauty for its own sake and that floods the world everywhere with it. Wherever it can break through, it does break through, and our joy in it shows that we are in some sense kindred to the giver and revealer of it".

May you all have a Happy Christmas and I hope that you find beauty in it and in the weather that we will inevitably be given.

Peter Burgess

Nancy Tennant's Memoirs

Nancy Tennant, who died earlier this year at the age of 105, wrote down her memories for her relatives several years ago. They tell the story of the family from Orford House in Ugley

and her childhood before the First World War, between the two wars and the years after the Second World War, especially her work with the W.I., as its national Musical Director and Vice President, much of it a real social history of the 20th century.

Copies can be obtained at the price of £7 - contact Margaret Whitelaw on 816972.



30th Celebration!!

What a fabulous time we had. Lots of children past and present came with their families and enjoyed gluing, making models, painting, construction toys and generally chatting about Sideways. The Observer newspaper covered the event so we should see ourselves in the paper. The children helped to make a 30th celebration cake, which we iced and decorated, then cut, while toasting the day with champagne. Refreshments were available throughout the day, hot dogs, crisps, sweets and drinks.

In the evening we all enjoyed the "DISCO". Many thanks to those who helped and provided the raffle prizes. A great time was had by all!

The topic for this term is Nature. All about acorns, conkers, falling leaves, autumn, harvest and festival, hibernation, feeding the birds, etc., through into winter.

The children are taking part in the Meningitis Trust 'Toddle Waddle' to raise funds. We will be toddling around the Church grounds and hope to make lots of money through sponsors.

If you would like your child to join in the fun and play at Sideways please call in to St John's Church Hall any morning to pick up an enrolment form. You will be very welcome to stay and play!

Monday - Friday 9 - 12.15 in St John's Church Hall
Tel: 816600, or after 12.15, 813828





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2 - 4.30 pm
Saturday 6th December

Santa's Grotto ~ Raffle ~ Crafts
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Refreshments ~ Games
Come along and join the festive fun!



THE VILLAGE
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JACK LIEBECK Violin
KATYA APEKISHEVA Piano

3 pm Sun 7th December
St John's Church

Tickets from usual outlets
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VILLAGE EVENTS

December

- 1 Mon Shalom Group
- 3 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
Bookstart
Garden Club
- 4 Thu Local History Society
- 6 Sat Windmill Goods Sale
Christmas Fair
- 7 Sun Village Music Club
Afternoon Tea
- 8 Mon - 12 Fri Amenity Skip
- 11 Thu WI
- 12 Fri Huw Johnson Club Concert
- 13 Sat Lib Dem Ploughman's Lunch
Christmas Fayre
- 15 Mon Shalom Christmas Party
- 17 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
- 20 Sat Celebration of Christmas
- 22 Mon Village Carol Singing
- 23 Tue Village Carol Singing
- 28 Sun 'Charity' Concert for Malawi

- Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- by Savages, Lower St 9 am - noon
- Bentfield School 2 - 4.30 pm
- St John's Church 3 pm
- United Reformed Church 3 - 5 pm
- Lower St Car Pk 7.30 am - 3 pm
- St John's Hall 7.45 pm
- St Mary's School 7.15 pm
- Day Centre noon - 2 pm
- St Mary's Church 2 - 4 pm
- 7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- St Mary's Church 4 pm
- junct Cambridge/Croasdaile 7.30 pm
- outside St John's Church 7.30 pm
- St John's Church 8 pm

January

- 7 Wed Bookstart
- 8 Thu WI
Local History Society
- 10 Sat Lib Dem Ploughman's Lunch
- 12 Mon Shalom Group
- 18 Sun Village Music Club
- 20 Tue Art & Craft Public Meeting
- 26 Mon Shalom Group

- Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
- St John's Hall 7.45 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Day Centre noon - 2 pm
- 7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
- St John's Church 3 pm
- URC Hall 8 pm
- Quaker Meeting House 8 pm

St Mary's School, Stansted
CHRISTMAS
FAYRE

2 pm - 4 pm
Saturday 13th December
Santa's Grotto ~ Face Painting
Raffle ~ Tombola
Homemade Cakes ~ Refreshments
Do come along - you'll be most welcome!



A Celebration of
Christmas



Congregational Carols, Christmas
Music, Readings, and Poetry
4 pm Sat 20 December
St Mary's Church
(parking at Mountfitchet School)
Retiring collection for
Uttlesford Crossroads



Carol
Singing

You are warmly invited to join
in singing round the village
Meet at 7.30 pm
Monday 22nd December
corner of Cambridge Rd/Croasdaile Rd

Tuesday 23rd December
by St John's Church in St John's Rd
Followed by refreshments
All are welcome
Hope to see you there!

Collecting for
Hearing Help Uttlesford
Recorder, flute & clarinet players
also welcome
Please tel 814059 to arrange music



Concert for Malawi



Sunday 28th December in St John's Church at 8 pm
Live music from *CHARITY* and Pete & Clare Baker
Bar - Light Refreshments ~ Raffle Tickets £5 - 01279 816972 or 850209

Proceeds are to help combat AIDS in Malawi - a desperate situation

Art & Craft
Market

Special Public Meeting
to discuss future plans

Tuesday 20th Jan. at 8 pm
United Reformed Church Hall

Please come along
and save your Market!



THE VILLAGE
MUSIC CLUB

RODNEY CLARKE Baritone
HELEN COLLYER Piano

3 pm Sun 18th January
St John's Church

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Donna Lee Thornton

Donna was 29 when she died of cancer. She was married to Andy and they have a daughter, Cara who is just two. I make no apologies for the fact that what I am about to write is very personal because with Donna, everything was about being personal. She was about getting involved, not being afraid to shine a light into dark corners because it might mean you need to make a response and take action when it might be more comfortable to pretend you didn't know it was there. Fortright and honest, you never had to wonder about Donna's opinion of life, death or God. For Donna, God was never very far away; He was central to her being.



Throughout her 'journey' with cancer, and I use her word not mine, she faced her own dark corner and shouldered not only her own grief but also the sadness of the people who loved her. And I think about that word 'journey.' She had no patience with the words 'fight' or 'battle'; there was nothing she could do to win this one and she wasn't leaving this world a loser. Journey would also be the word I would choose to describe her life. Short it may have been; cruelly so, but with every hurdle she overcame, she grew in strength and insight and character. It was these qualities which drove her to help set up a project to look after prostitutes in Hull and then to nurse and counsel people with AIDS.

I knew her for such a short time, but from the first encounter I felt that I had gained a friend. She had the gift of making people feel valued and cared for. You learned never to ask her opinion if all you were looking for was reinforcement of your own views. She was fiercely loyal and if you were between a rock and a hard place, you could count on her to be there with you.

Bolshy, impatient, strong-minded, headstrong, vibrant, warm, caring, devoted. Take your pick, you could use one or all of these characteristics to describe Donna. But most of all, I know that Cara, who is just setting out on her own journey, will grow up with the knowledge that her mother was a person who inspired love. A love that will remain with us, always.

Lyn Hillier



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In your family are there items which have been handed down through the generations - photographs (often with no indication of whom they represent), articles belonging to grandparents, books? Peter Pennington joined us at our November meeting to tell us of his 'lost' relative, William Wood, and his wife Sarah. Peter had inherited an old exercise book from his grandmother which told how William and Sarah, with their son Charlie, had emigrated to Australia in 1852. William had kept this diary daily from arriving in Liverpool to board the sailing ship 'Constance' until they disembarked in Melbourne three months later and it gave wonderful detail of the life experienced by emigrants at that time. They travelled steerage and life was hard, especially for Sarah, who was pregnant. The Captain and crew, however, were attentive and did their best for their passengers, in spite of the primitive conditions.

Members were fascinated by this tale of a young Methodist lay-preacher working in the silk industry in the Midlands, who then became a school teacher and a pharmacist on the other side of the world. Peter gave many details of their experiences and explained that this had been a time of great social change in England, leading to large numbers of people emigrating to Australia, America, Canada and New Zealand. The discovery of gold in the State of Victoria, Australia, provided a further incentive. William later made one trip back to England but he returned to Victoria where he died in Melbourne in the 1880s. Charlie, the only child to reach maturity, accompanied him to the UK but elected to remain here. Nothing further is known of him.

In recent years friends had advised Peter that the diary would make a great subject for a book. Having prepared his manuscript, Peter decided to publish the book himself. He sought out a printer willing to undertake the work, discovered the whereabouts of a painting of the 'Constance', obtaining permission to reproduce it on the book's cover and eventually found himself in possession of 1,000 copies. How he managed to publicise his work was an amusing and interesting part of Peter's talk and we were pleased to learn that the book was still selling well, both here and in Australia.

Christmas is approaching and at our meeting on 4th December we shall be joined by our friends from Manuden Historical Society for a season celebration. We will be shown film from the East Anglian Film Archive of 'Festivals and Celebrations'. Join us for an early taste of the Christmas spirit! Oh, and please note that the January meeting is a week later than normal, i.e. on the 8th, same time, same place.

Ian Seavers



Nature Notes

After the long fine summer the holly trees are laden with berries this year, ensuring a plentiful supply of branches for Christmas. The custom of using evergreens such as holly to decorate homes at the time of the winter solstice is an ancient one going back to pre-Christian times. Christianity continued the tradition, seeing holly as symbolic of Christ's death, the prickly leaves representing the crown of thorns and the red berries Christ's blood.

Holly is one of our few native evergreen broad-leaved trees. It grows all over Britain and Ireland and is tolerant of different soils. It can reach a height of 60 feet and sometimes forms dense thickets or small woods. Locally such a thicket borders both sides of Church Road above Elms Farm.



Holly trees are either male or female. Although both have clusters of tiny white flowers in June, it is only the female tree that will bear red berries in the autumn and winter. These provide food for birds. The leathery leaves become less prickly higher up the tree, those at the very top being almost smooth edged. Surprisingly, holly branches have traditionally been fed to both cattle and sheep as the leaves are highly nutritious. This practice seems to have been fairly widespread until the 18th century. There are still places today where holly is fed to animals. In the New Forest when the ground is covered with snow, people cut branches for the ponies and cattle.

Hollies grow very slowly and can live many hundreds of years. The wood of the tree is almost white and very hard. It is used for wood carving and inlay work where it contrasts with a very dark wood such as ebony. In the early 19th century bobbins for the Lancashire cotton mills were made from holly wood and, as the young branches are very flexible, it was much used for driving whips for carriages and traps in the late 18th and much of the 19th centuries, and also for the horse whips used by ploughmen.

With their dark appearance, holly trees are very conspicuous in the landscape. They are often left uncut and sometimes a solitary tree marks the line of an old field boundary or former hedge. They have survived partly because they serve as pointers in the landscape and provide valuable shelter for animals, but also because of a widespread belief that it is unlucky to cut down a holly tree. Yet paradoxically, in the

depths of winter for over 2000 years, we have cut down branches of this tree to decorate our homes for the festive season.

Rosina Kirkwood



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

Mrs Jean Crane from Bishop's Stortford was the speaker at the October meeting of the Mountfitchet Garden Club. Jean is an international flower arranging demonstrator, a floral art judge as well as being able to give an amusing talk while arranging flowers. Jean and her husband, Brian, have just returned from the USA where Jean was demonstrating in Boston before having a holiday in New England in 'the fall' where the maple trees were a marvellous red due to the high sugar content because of a very hot summer. She told us many stories of their trip while creating four very different arrangements, including using a silver mesh grill frame with white flowers and a table arrangement with just six gold roses. The four arrangements were then added to our normal monthly raffle. Jean was thanked by Chairman Cyril Stoneham and she replied by saying she hoped she had been able to give members some ideas for the floral art classes in the Spring and Autumn Shows.

Mr Harrison then read the minutes of the September meeting which were agreed and signed. Mr Stoneham told members that a donation had been sent to the Essex Air Ambulance in memory of Wilf Wood, a former committee member of the club who will be sadly missed. Messages of sympathy have also been sent to his wife, Iris. Cyril then closed the meeting and reminded members that the December meeting was a Quiz and party night and he hoped to see everyone there.

Meet The Ancestors...

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For that unusual present this year, why not drag out your old, or not so old, family or special photographs and restore them to their former glory. No matter how torn or faded, they can be reproduced in the presentation condition they enjoyed before the "archaeologists" were called in.

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Royal British Legion Stansted & District Branch

The Stansted Roll of Honour 1914/18

This Roll, listing all 413 names of men who served in the First World War, is now back in our Parish Church of St John. Do go and see it on the wall of the south transept especially if one of your forebears is included.

The Royal British Legion is delighted that the restoration has been completed but contributions towards the very considerable costs are urgently needed. If you wish to make a donation towards the outstanding charges please contact the secretary, Harold Thistle on 813250.

The Poppy Appeal 2003

The Fish and Chips supper held on 10th October was a great success and thanks are due to all who gave their help and support. John Hollis entertained all those present with his amusing description of his National Service and we thank him for his help in making the evening so enjoyable. The sum of £121 was raised towards the Poppy Appeal.

May I thank all the collectors for helping in the house to house collections. We had a few new volunteers this year and we are very grateful to them. Thanks must also be given to the pubs and shops that had collecting boxes. The biggest thank you must be to all who gave so generously. The counting is still far from over but the figures will be available for the next magazine.

I accept that not everyone will have had a house to house call but I hope you obtained your poppy somewhere. We will need more helpers next year so please contact me at any time. Also collecting in the dark is not advisable and we would not expect older people to open the door at night.

John L Segar
Hon Poppy Appeal Organiser
Stansted & District
Tel: 01279 813289

CHRISTMAS PUDDING TOO HEAVY AFTER DINNER?

Try this Victorian RUM SORBET recipe. (Serves 4 - 6)

- 8 oz (225g) sugar
- 1 pt. (600 ml.) water
- Rind and juice of ½ lemon.
- Juice of 1 lemon and 1 orange (strained)
- 1 glass rum
- 1 oz (25g.) Crystallised fruits (chopped)

Dissolve sugar in water, add rind and juice of half lemon and bring to the boil. Boil briskly for about 10 minutes or until liquid reduced by half. DO NOT STIR while boiling or it will granulate. Strain and leave until cold. To ½pt (300 ml.) of the syrup, add fruit juices, rum and crystallised fruits. Place in shallow container with lid and freeze for about 30 minutes. Turn out and mash until no large pieces remain. Keep in freezer until required.



Royal British Legion Women's Section

Our AGM on 14th October was completely overshadowed by the serious illness of our Treasurer, Bessie Blyth. Bessie had taken over the Treasurership from Vera Levey and her diligence, hard work and unflinching energy had won the gratitude of us all. In addition she undertook numerous other tasks and did them all superbly. Sadly, Bessie died on 20th October. She will be irreplaceable.

This past year we have certainly suffered 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'. Margaret Gabb, our beloved President, died suddenly in December 2002, and two other staunch members, Joan Cadwallader and Doris Bemment, died in March and September 2003. And now we have lost Bessie.

Trying to look on the brighter side, our Chairman, Janet Hollis, thanked the Royal British Legion members and their wives for their tremendous support. She also thanked members of the Women's Section for their loyalty and hard work, mentioning several by name.

Janet particularly thanked all those members who keep the flowers on the War Memorial looking so beautiful - especially those more recent volunteers who are not members of the Women's Section but who have kindly joined in and breathed new life into the Memorial.

The Group Carol Service will be in Felsted Church this year on Sunday 14th December - all to be seated by 6pm for 6.30pm.

We have no meeting in December or January - meanwhile we wish our members a Happy Christmas and a healthy and Happy New Year.

Pat Clower

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'Pub' Profile No. 9

Stansted Social Club

The building, hosting the Stansted Social Club in Lower Street, must be one of the most photographed in Stansted.



Stansted Social Club

Considering it was only built in 1888, it blends very well with the 16th Century houses opposite. It was given to the village by Henry Parry Gilbey as a Working Men's Club, at the princely cost of £2000. When first erected it was known as the Liberal Working Men's Club and was officially opened by the Earl of Rosebery (Prime Minister from 1894 to 1895) on July 25th 1888. A plaque recording the event is still to be found just inside the main entrance, and a bust of Henry Gilbey, donated by Lord Blyth in 1933, is part way up the stairway.

The opening of the Club was used to promote a grand Liberal rally addressed by Lord Rosebery. On the day, two large marquees were erected on Castle Hill at the rear of the Club, one being used to accommodate the rally and the other for the dissemination of liquid refreshment or, as a critic at the time put it, "by supplying beer at or below cost price, to win over the Conservatives in the place!" Gas was specially laid on from the mains and the Excelsior Band from Saffron Walden was engaged to supply music. Unfortunately it rained, and the numbers that turned up were not as great as had been expected, although they numbered between 1200 and 1400.

Up to 30 years ago the Club was for men only, and women were only allowed in as associate members. Eventually the ladies campaigned for full membership and this was granted

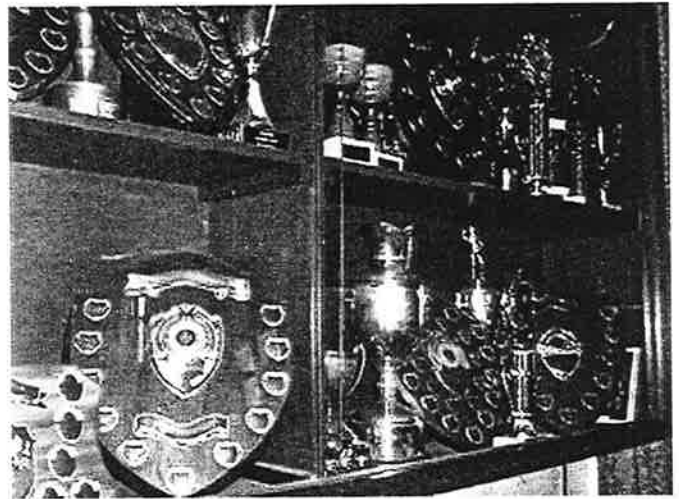
about 25 years ago. The Club is run by four trustees, seven committee members, a Chairperson, Vice-chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Membership is by subscription, and the Club is in effect owned by the members. At the moment there are 585 paid-up members and 300 Senior Citizen members, so



Plaque in main entrance

Liz Burford, the Stewardess of the Club, leads a busy life with the Club open every day.

The entertainments committee arranges a wide variety of activities to keep the members happy. Wednesday is darts night, and the Club participates in two local leagues; Dunmow & District and Herts & Essex (the Club 'B' team are current award holders). The snooker players take part in the Bishop's Stortford league matches and, with three full-size snooker tables (in a separate room upstairs), obviously get enough practice to vie with the darts teams to keep the splendid trophy cabinet full. Golf is not left out, and the 19th



A few of the many trophies!

Holers Golf Society plays each month on a Friday. Its annual champions are listed on a board in the side bar opposite the trophy cabinet.

Less energetic events include the regular Tuesday lunch for the senior citizens, cooked by the indefatigable Liz, and Bingo in the evenings. Fridays are always a social evening, and on Saturday members can enjoy listening to a variety of

live music groups or maybe a disco for the younger (or younger in heart) members. Once a month on a Sunday there is a popular quiz night and every Sunday lunchtime there is a members' draw and meat raffle. Unfortunately (or fortunately for others!), if the member is not in attendance, the draw rolls over to the next week, increasing by £5 each week. This should encourage some lunchtime camaraderie, and when this interview was taking place the prize money had reached £175!

Last July the Senior Citizens were treated to an outing to Yarmouth, all paid for. They are now looking forward to a free Christmas lunch on 8th December, and a buffet and bingo session on the 16th December; so there are certainly no complaints here about the older generation not being appreciated and looked after. The children are not forgotten either, with various family discos and BBQs held throughout the year, and a much-looked-forward-to party with gifts at Christmas. Children are allowed in every day except Tuesday and Saturday nights, but have to keep to certain areas in order for everyone to enjoy the facilities to the full. In between all these activities, there are many private parties, functions and even wedding receptions fitted in for lucky members.



Enjoying some after-lunch drinks

The Club holds a charity function once a year, and currently supports Cancer Research UK, following the sad death from cancer of previous chairman Trevor Blaney. A bottle is kept on the bar for donations. The Union Jack that you may notice flying proudly at the right hand side of the Club building is always lowered to half-mast on the death of a member. A newspaper clipping inside the Club shows Trevor, Liz and others carrying the new 30 ft flagpole as part of the recent VE anniversary celebrations.

If just reading this list of activities makes you feel tired, spare a thought for Liz who will be retiring next year. With two sons and five grandchildren, she will be looking forward to life in retirement, free of time-tables, early mornings and late nights. Instead, Liz and husband Bob hope to buy a canal boat in Ely and enjoy a more leisurely way of life. They already have a boat at Lode and spend as much of their spare time as possible just sampling the good life to come! Liz will certainly be missed when she goes, having spent 30 years behind the Club bar and the last 6½ years as Stewardess. Unfortunately Bob had to give up Stewardship

some time ago after a bout of ill health, but he is still a great support to Liz and the Club.

If you feel like becoming a member of this lively Social Club, under the rules, you will have to be introduced by a member and be interviewed by the committee. Successful



Liz with Gary the barman

applicants can be assured of a great welcome from Liz and her staff, and the lively membership. You may even bump into local celebrities such as Kenny Ball and Mike Reid who have visited from time to time!

Opening times are:

Mon – Fri	11am - 3pm	5 - 11pm
Saturday	11.30am - 3pm	7 - 11pm
Sunday	noon - 4pm	8 - 10.30pm

History: *Irving Sanders* by kind permission of *Rene Sanders*

Interviewers: *Eileen Quinn* and *Mary Warnett*

Photographs: *Michael Dyer*

Merry Christmas



See local group *CHARITY* perform in St John's Church on Dec 28th



**SEND AN EMAIL TO TONY BLAIR – URGENT
APPEAL TO SSE MEMBERS/SUPPORTERS**

There have been press reports of a rift between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown on the airports debate. Brown favours an extra runway at Heathrow on economic grounds. Tony Blair favours Stansted allegedly because there would be fewer Labour seats at risk.

There are indications that the reports are true. It is understood that Alistair Darling supports Gordon Brown's view and we believe it unlikely that Tony Blair can carry the Cabinet on this issue. SSE does not advocate expansion at Heathrow or Stansted but Tony Blair should receive a loud and clear message that Stansted is no push-over.

We urge you to send the Prime Minister an email, immediately, making points from the following:

- For the Prime Minister to make party politics a consideration would be wrong, and a flagrant breach of the whole consultation process.
- Over 400,000 members of the public have responded in good faith to this year-long airports consultation.
- If the Prime Minister were to come and see the Stansted landscape for himself, with its ancient woodlands and centuries-old villages that pre-date any British Prime Minister, he would realise that this is a precious and irreplaceable heritage. It would be unforgivable if all this were to be cast aside on the grounds of political expediency.
- If decisions of this nature are to be made on these grounds, they represent a threat not only to our natural heritage, but to democracy itself.
- Even if the Prime Minister defies the courts he can't buck the market. If another Stansted runway is proposed in the White Paper, it will come to nothing. BAA admit that a second Stansted runway is not commercially viable without subsidy from Heathrow and there will be serious regulatory obstacles and likely legal challenges if this is proposed. In addition, BAA shareholders and financiers in the City are unlikely to give their backing for a project which will not produce a commercial return.

To submit an email to Tony Blair, go to <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page4345.asp> and follow the simple instructions.

Please remember to include your address. An avalanche of emails from Stansted in the first week of December will be reported to him and will make an impact. Even if you cannot email immediately, it will still be worth doing when you can. If you have time to do a proper follow-up letter along similar lines then please do so.

A NEW ECONOMIC REPORT

A major new report published on 24th October on 'The Economics of Stansted Airport' by leading regulatory economist Professor David Starkie casts serious doubts on the feasibility of adding extra runways at Stansted airport.

He traces the financial performance of Stansted since the last major expansion in the early 1990s and concludes that this has been 'astonishingly bad'. Stansted has only been able to survive as a commercial entity as a result of cross-subsidisation, which puts up the cost to users of other BAA airports in the South East.

When the last major expansion of Stansted took place in the early 1990s (a result of decisions in the last Aviation White Paper) the government and BAA insisted that Stansted would be financially viable and that there would be no need for cross subsidisation. But it proved otherwise and the regulator - the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) – had no other option but to accept cross-subsidisation on the grounds that the investment had already been made at Stansted and, however mistaken, this could not be undone.

Although Stansted has grown considerably in size in recent years, this is because it has been able to attract the low-cost airlines by offering very low airport charges. Stansted is still unable to make a profit sufficient to cover its financing costs. It is widely known that continued cross-subsidisation is a serious concern to Heathrow based carriers BA, bmi and Virgin who resent the idea of subsidising competitors – particularly in the low-cost sector – based at Stansted.

The CAA has made clear that any future investment will need to be justified on a stand-alone basis, also reflected in the Government's consultation for the White Paper which stresses the need for financial viability. This is because of concerns that to allow cross-subsidisation could result in a distortion of competition and an abuse of BAA's dominant market position. In addition, independent airports such as Luton would be faced with unfair competition from Stansted.

BAA has admitted in advance that an additional runway at Stansted would not be commercially viable without cross-subsidy from its other London airports (Heathrow and Gatwick).

BAA FIGURES WRONG, CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY REPORT REVEALS

Recent claims by BAA that nine out of ten passengers using Stansted are 'local' have been proved completely false with the release of new information by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), prompting fresh criticism of the airport operator by Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE).

The latest CAA figures would have been known to BAA at the time they made their claims about local use of the airport, making the attempt to pull the wool over the public's eyes by overplaying the significance of the airport to the local community, even more scandalous according to campaigners.

SSE (cont.)

In reality, a quarter of all passengers using Stansted are foreign residents and about the same proportion are from Greater London. Only one in five of Stansted passengers comes from the local counties of Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire or Suffolk. Even if Norfolk and Bedfordshire are tacked on as part of the local region, the proportion of local users still only increases to one in four.

Stop Stansted Expansion has called on the Government to develop a better regional balance for air travel in the White Paper, due for publication before Christmas. With almost two thirds of all UK air travel presently concentrated in the South East and East of England (where only one third of the population live), the Government should, the campaign group believes, aim to reduce this concentration to 50%, so that the benefits as well as the impacts of aviation are more equitably balanced across the United Kingdom.

The CAA statistics also show that 79% of all Stansted business are leisure passengers and only 21% are business passengers.

For further information:

- Carol Barbone M 0777 552 3091
- cbarbone@mxco.co.uk
- SSE Campaign Office: 01279 870558
- info@stopstanstedexpansion.com

Stansted Art & Craft Market

Last Year of Art and Craft Funds?

The 2003 Stansted Art and Craft Market Committee is now able to announce that £1,400 will be distributed to village groups as a result of this Market. The groups to benefit will be:

St Mary's School
Bentfield School
Mountfitchet High School
Rainbows
Sideways
St John's Church
The United Reformed Church
Stansted Venture Scouts
Stansted Tortoises
Homestart
The Link
Huw Johnson Group
Stansted In Bloom
Stansted Day Centre

We are delighted to be able to help these village groups in their work. If this is not to be the last year in which they can benefit in this way, more people are needed to join the organising committee. A public meeting will take place on Tuesday 20th January 2004 at the United Reformed Church Hall

at 8pm to decide the future of the Market. If the Market is to continue we need at least three people to join the Committee and several more people to volunteer for stewarding slots on the Market weekend. This will be the village's last chance to save the Market: if insufficient people come forward the Market will not be happening in 2004.

Mark your diaries now: Tuesday 20th January 2004, 8pm at the United Reformed Church Hall.

BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA

November started with a bang at Bentfield with our annual Sparkler Party on Bonfire Night. The children all had a brilliant evening enjoying not only the sparklers, but also the games and activities on offer. As usual the apple bobbing and doughnuts on a string proved a popular, if somewhat messy, option! Our beautifully re-vamped Bat the Rat was a huge hit as were the gooey dare boxes, cauldron challenge and face painting. To warm everyone up there were baked potatoes, soup, and hot dogs washed down with the obligatory toffee apple and of course mulled wine for the adults! The safe enclosure for the sparklers was extremely well supervised, ensuring a happy and safe evening was had by all.

With December now upon us it is time to start the festive season with our Christmas Fair on Saturday 6th December, 2pm - 4.30pm. This promises to be a great afternoon with something for everyone. We have Santa's grotto, a fantastic raffle, tombolas, crafts, Christmas wreaths, cards, plants, toys, homemade cakes and mince pies, refreshments, entertainment and games and activities galore. So whether you want to do some Christmas shopping, pay Santa a visit, play some games or simply get into the Christmas spirit, this really is the place to be. See you there!

This Christmas the PTA held a Competition to design a Christmas Card. The children all worked incredibly hard to create some fantastic designs and a winner was chosen from each class. The eight winning designs were then made into cards and are on sale in packs to friends, family and of course at our Christmas Fair! This new venture proved really enjoyable for the children, who took pride in designing the first official Bentfield School Christmas Cards. We hope that the cards will now become an annual event.

The Bentfield PTA would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2004.



UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Decision Time

December will see the publication of the Government White Paper on Airport Expansion. Will Stansted have another runway? The Council has worked together in resolutely opposing runway expansion. Councillors of all parties and none, have been unanimous in stating that such expansion would be environmentally disastrous for the district. Without public support council opposition would not count for much. That is why the referendum was so important and also why support for Stop Stansted Expansion is crucial.

The Stansted Campaign newsletter that the Council publishes and which is distributed to opinion formers states:

“This is a battle we did not choose. It is a battle we do not want. It is a battle in which we have no choice but to fight. We are fighting for the future of our countryside and our children And we will never, ever, give up.”

Stansted Post Office

The Council has made representations to the Post Office about the closure. In a letter to our Acting Chief Executive dated 14th October they state that an applicant has offered premises and that they have advertised the Sub postmaster vacancy. They state that every effort is being made by them to restore post office services to Stansted and that there is no intention that the service will be permanently lost. Living near to Chapel Hill I know only too well how important the Post Office was in the lives of many Stansted residents.

Essex Police Force Information Room

For policing purposes Stansted falls within the Braintree Division of Essex Police. This covers the whole of the Braintree and Uttlesford District Council areas. I represent Uttlesford on the Police and Community Consultative Group and in that capacity I recently attended a meeting at Braintree. This is the only police station in the division that is open 24 hours a day. It operates a centralised switch-board. Which means that calls to Stansted Police station automatically go through Braintree first. The force information room for the whole of Essex is based at Braintree and the Divisional Commander gave a presentation on its work, which indicated the pressures that the force is under. Nationally 999 calls have risen from 20.7 million in 1998/99 to 33.1 million in 2001/02. This increase was reflected in Essex. There is a concern that some of the 999 calls are not emergencies. However, some non-999 calls were deemed serious enough to have warranted 999 status. The distinction is important for 999 calls have a target of being answered within 15 seconds.

Last year the Braintree division recorded over 50,000 incidents. These are divided into three categories

- a. Calls requiring an emergency response. There is a three minute target time in which to allocate resources.

- b. Calls requiring a managed response i.e. resources will be despatched as soon they become available.

- c. Calls that will involve non-attendance by officers.

The Police are good in responding normally quickly to serious incidents where life is at stake. However, of the 50,000 incidents recorded, over a third fall into category C.

Councillor Geoffrey Sell
Tel: 01279 815925
Email: Cllr Sell@uttlesford.gov.uk

Medical Centre

There have been several meetings in the past few weeks to try to settle on a location for Stansted's new medical centre, including the doctors' practice. The county council has agreed to carry out a feasibility study on the Peter Kirk Centre site to see whether it could accommodate existing education services, medical services and other council services in a new village centre. We should have an idea of the outcome by January. Elms Farm is still being discussed as an alternative. A building next to the railway line would not be suitable, as there would be too much vibration, but there may be suitable alternatives that have not yet been checked out. The Primary Care Trust favours a site near St. Therese's Church, but that site has more planning obstacles as it is outside formal development limits and could play into the hands of those that would like to see major building from Stansted in the direction of Ugley and Elsenham.

Buchanan Report

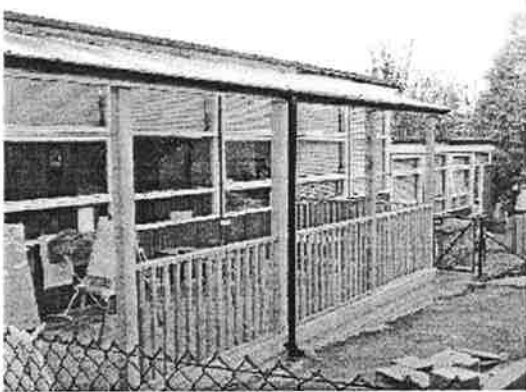
Uttlesford sent a very robust response condemning the Buchanan report that I referred to in November. This is the report that suggested Stansted Mountfitchet should grow in size several times over as part of the Government's M11 growth area. A game of brinkmanship is being played out between Essex County Council and the Regional Assembly planning people over future housing numbers in this area. We will have to accept some more housing if only to meet local housing needs. It's a question of how many. The risk is that if the proposals that come out from the region in February don't meet the Government's high expectations, then John Prescott will simply impose the numbers his civil servants say are correct in a way that removes all local involvement in how and where they are built.

Councillor Alan Dean
Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk
Tel: 01279 813 579

“...and it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any man alive possessed the knowledge. May that be truly said of us, and all of us!”
(from A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens)



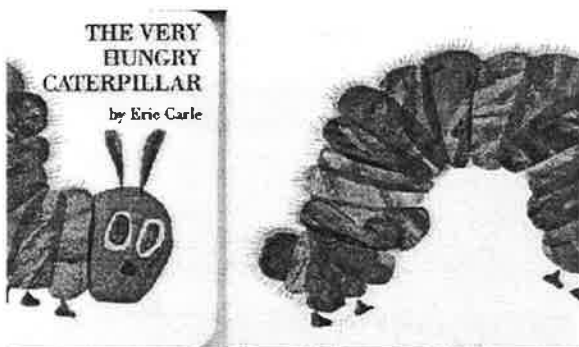
November has been an exciting month for Rainbow. During the half-term break our outdoor shelter was erected and the children are now able to play outside in our wooden shelter whatever the weather.



We are absolutely delighted that our fund-raising last year has culminated in the building of our shelter and would like to thank again all those people who supported our fund-raising activities.

The children have been working on the theme of mini-beasts. The older group enjoyed a visit to Hatfield Forest at the end of October. Unfortunately the exceptionally good weather meant that bugs were few and far between. The children however have produced plenty of mini-beasts themselves during creative activities, including spiders and snails made out of eggshells.

This term we have introduced a healthy snack for all the groups and this has been really successful. The children have quickly got used to a range of food, including different fruits, vegetables and breadsticks. The children are currently reading the story of the Very Hungry Caterpillar and snack time is reflecting the theme.



I think the children will particularly enjoy snack time when they get to Saturday in the story as the Very Hungry Caterpillar tucks into one piece of chocolate cake, one ice-cream cone, one pickle, one slice of Swiss cheese, one slice of

salami, one lollipop, one piece of cherry pie, one sausage, one cupcake and one slice of watermelon!

We are looking forward to our events in December. Parties are planned for all children in the last week of term and our annual nativity play takes place on Monday 15th December at 10.45am in St Mary's School Hall. Our Christmas raffle with a fantastic Christmas hamper as first prize will be drawn at this event. Tickets will be available from the pre-school from the beginning of December.

Our website is currently being redeveloped but a copy of our prospectus can be downloaded from www.rainbowpreschool.net.

If you are interested in a place at the pre-school please contact Gill Pursglove on 814701 for information about our waiting list or e-mail at info@rainbowpreschool.net.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

December 2003

As Christmas approaches so does the White Paper on Airport Development. It will be of interest to all to know that the Minister will decide - is it to be Heathrow- followed by Stansted - followed by Gatwick; or will it be perhaps a variation on this order! Perhaps instead the Minister may make no decision but let events dictate. So far as the County Council is concerned, clear and strong objections were raised and it is to be hoped they will bear some weight. As perhaps will the activities of 'Stop Stansted Expansion' (SSE). We shall see.

Similar objections were raised by the Council in the Buchanan Report on future housing development in the M11 Corridor, these objections being based on a lack of proper infrastructure both in material and human resource terms. To date, of course, the subject is still a matter of debate and discussion in which the County will be heavily involved. At this time there is no immediate cause for positive action, but readers should prepare themselves to develop additional arguments which can be used to resist the proposal over the coming months and years, since this fight will be long and hard and promises - in the teeth of Mr Prescott's desires - to be very difficult to win.

In terms of day-to-day business, the County is now heavily concerned in the matter of transportation for children to denominational schools of their choice. The subject was debated at a meeting on 12th November of the Children & Family Services & Schools Policy Development Group and will come before the full Council on 21st November. It is not reasonable in this article to predict the decision, but readers can be sure that the subject will be thoroughly explored and a fair result achieved.

Finally it is appropriate to wish all readers a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Should anyone wish to discuss these subjects in more detail they should contact the undersigned on 01279 812588.

Richard Wallace

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



From the Headteacher

Having read the last couple of issues of The Link, it is great to now be writing an article to introduce myself. I have been working at St Mary's Primary School officially for 10 weeks, as Headteacher. It has been wonderful to encounter such a welcoming set of staff, parents and governors, as well as meeting so many of the wider community. This is my first headship, following on being a Deputy Headteacher in a Harlow school.

I have enjoyed meeting many parents during my time on the school gate, though I have to admit to still struggling with remembering names!

We have recently undergone an Ofsted inspection which has not been all we hoped it would be, but which recognised the supportive, caring ethos of the school. I am confident that we are improving as a school and I expect this to be an exciting place over the next few months. During my time at St Mary's I hope to pass on my own love of learning to all involved with the school and for it to increasingly become a centre for that.

Wendy Wood
Headteacher of St Mary's CE Foundation Primary School

Other News

October was a very busy month at St Mary's and everybody was ready for the half term break and has returned refreshed.

Before half term we enjoyed our annual book fair hosted by Mr Fegan of Foyles. We bought an amazing £389 worth of books and St Mary's then received books to the value of £120 donated by Foyles. This was an excellent promotion of reading while gaining more resources for the school and we are very grateful to Foyles.

Also last month we started our Christmas Shoe Box Appeal. We are delighted to announce that 120 boxes have been collected for Operation Christmas Child and want to thank Mrs Atkinson for coordinating this project.



Having said a fond goodbye to Mr Arbuckle before half term we are pleased to welcome Mrs Blurton and Mrs Watson who have taken over Year 5. Already familiar faces at St Mary's, these two excellent teachers have settled into their new roles well.

On 9th November St Mary's took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and our school community took time to reflect upon those who have lost their lives in conflicts both past and more recently.

As we head rapidly towards Christmas there was a lot of support for the Christmas Shopping evening at St Mary's on 13th November. It was a big success and enjoyed by everyone who attended. If you missed your chance to stock up on Christmas goodies then don't forget our Christmas Fayre on 13th December from 2 - 4pm.

We look forward to seeing you there

Kathy Hersh



**Huw Johnson
Club**

You are all invited to join us in St Mary's School, St John's Road, Stansted, for our fabulous Christmas Concert. Don't miss the final of our 'Stars in their Eyes' competition and the opportunity to join in singing some old favourite songs and carols. Mince pies and wine are also on the programme plus a super raffle. Please come along on Friday 12th December. The doors open at 7 pm for a 7.30 pm start. Entry is free but there will be a donation box for Club funds should you wish to contribute.

You have read about our activities in the Link so please after all their hard work come and meet our members. I can assure you that you will have an enjoyable and interesting evening.

Marion G Johnson

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Stansted Tennis Club



Sunday morning open adult club morning

All current adult members are welcome to come along and join in this session, which starts at 9.30am. every Sunday.

Coaching

Martyn Taplin is currently holding adult coaching sessions on Saturday afternoons. There are two sessions from 2-3pm and 3-4pm. Please call Martyn on 816386 if you would like to find out more or would like to join in.

Chris Hollis is coaching juniors on Saturday mornings. If you would like to find out more and get your name on the waiting list, please call Chris on 319155.

Mini Tennis

Chris Hollis is currently compiling a waiting list for all those budding 4 to 6 year olds who are keen to have a go at mini tennis, so if you would like to find out more and get on the list, please call Chris on 319155.

Clower Junior Doubles Shield

16 boys and girls aged between 12 and 15 took part in a Junior Doubles tournament held at the club on Sunday 12th October. Pat Clower, who used to be a member of the club, has kindly donated a trophy, which she presented to the eventual winners, Fred Kirby and Sanjay Cheema, who beat James Ingram and Alex Crocker 4-3 in a very closely fought final. Pat has been made an honorary life member of the club in recognition of her support for the junior club membership.

Used Tennis Balls

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

H.E.A.L. and Save the Children tournament

On a very sunny Friday 24th October, 12 Stansted Tennis Club members played a round robin tournament to raise money for the charities, H.E.A.L. and Save the Children Fund. A buffet lunch, brought by the participants, was served and £114 was raised, from entrance fees and a raffle. The winners were Kate Rutter and Richard Crosby, who beat Sue Sebley and Jenny Kirby in the final.

Christmas Dinner

Even though there has been a recent change of ownership, this year's Christmas Meal will still be taking place at The Mill House, Lower Street, Stansted on Saturday 6th December. If you would like to come along, please put your name up on the notice in the clubhouse.

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.



Christmas & New Year
2003/04



Please see below for your revised REFUSE collection dates for the Christmas & New Year period.

Please make your refuse available from 7:00^{am} on your collection day.

NORMAL COLLECTION DAY		REVISED COLLECTION DAY	
Monday	22 nd December	Saturday	20 th December
Tuesday	23 rd December	Monday	22 nd December
Wednesday	24 th December	Tuesday	23 rd December
Thursday	25 th December	Wednesday	24 th December
Friday	26 th December	Saturday	27 th December
Monday	29 th December	Normal Collections	
Tuesday	30 th December	Normal Collections	
Wednesday	31 st December	Normal Collections	
Thursday	1 st January	Friday	2 nd January
Friday	2 nd January	Saturday	3 rd January

Normal REFUSE collections will resume from
Monday 5 January 2004.



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SNIPPETS

By convention the end of the year is a time for recalling its highlights. A Link-eyed look-back makes interesting reading - see if you agree.

- The hottest and driest summer in living memory.
- The local Church of England hosted a rock concert. Hardly a silent revolution but a revolution none the less.
- Stop Stansted Expansion campaign was and is a model of responsible opposition; providing information, research, impact in the important places and on occasions humour and entertainment. It deserves success.
- Farmers Markets at Ugley and elsewhere have been well received; long may they prosper.
- The return of the Village Fair to the Recreation Ground was a good move.
- The Day Centre has changed organizers and is now doing home-made lunches once a week
- In the new St. Therese's we now have one of the most attractive church buildings anywhere.
- One shop sadly stands empty but the business continues and a Lower Street restaurant has changed hands - probably an average year in the retail market.
- The Shoe Box Christmas campaign by the U.R. Church and schools has become a popular event.

Perhaps this is one year when the ups exceed the downs.



St Clare Hospice

Light Up A Life 2003



Light Up a Life is one of the most demanding fund-raising events organised by St Clare, but it is also the most rewarding. Each year, the Hospice hosts ceremonies at select locations throughout our region with a Christmas tree at each location decorated with lights, symbolically representing the lives of lost loved ones. This year we will be holding ceremonies in the following locations:

Dunmow

• The Star Fri 12th Dec 6 pm

Harlow

• St Paul's Church Sat 13th Dec 4 pm

Confirmation of times and dates will be included with your dedication card. Alternatively, you can call us at the Hospice Centre or pick up one of the official Light Up a Life leaflets from one of the Hospice shops.

Light Up a Life allows members of the public and supporters of the Hospice to remember their loved ones while providing financial aid to St Clare; helping to ensure we are able to continue providing care and comfort to people throughout the West Essex and East Herts region.

If you would like to remember someone through Light Up a Life please either complete the cut-off form below, or collect a leaflet from one of our shops in Harlow, Epping, Dunmow and Saffron Walden.

All those remembered in this year's ceremony will be added to a Book of Remembrance which can be viewed in the Hospice Sanctuary from Spring 2004.

New Telephone Numbers

With effect from 1st December 2003 the Hospice will have new telephone numbers. This is necessary as we become busier and grow to meet the ever increasing demands on our services. The new technology involved will increase our efficiency and help cut our running costs.

For a period of six weeks following the changeover, you will still be able to get through to us by using the existing numbers. After this time you will hear a recorded message telling you the new numbers. The numbers are as follows:

General Enquiries	01279 773700 (phone) 01279 773701 (fax)
Patient Services	01279 773770 (phone) 01279 773771 (fax)
Adviceline	01279 773773
Fundraising	01279 773750
Lottery & Shops	01279 773730

Light Up A Life 2003



St Clare Hospice

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Email: enqs@stclare-hospice.co.uk

Website: www.stclare-hospice.co.uk

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I enclose a cheque for £5 £10 £20 £50 Other £ _____

In memory of Surname _____ (additional dedications may be

Forename _____ made on a separate sheet)

My chosen tree is located in: _____

Please treat all donations I have made since 6 April 2000 and all future donations I make as Gift Aid. I confirm that I pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that St Clare Hospice will reclaim on my donation.

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