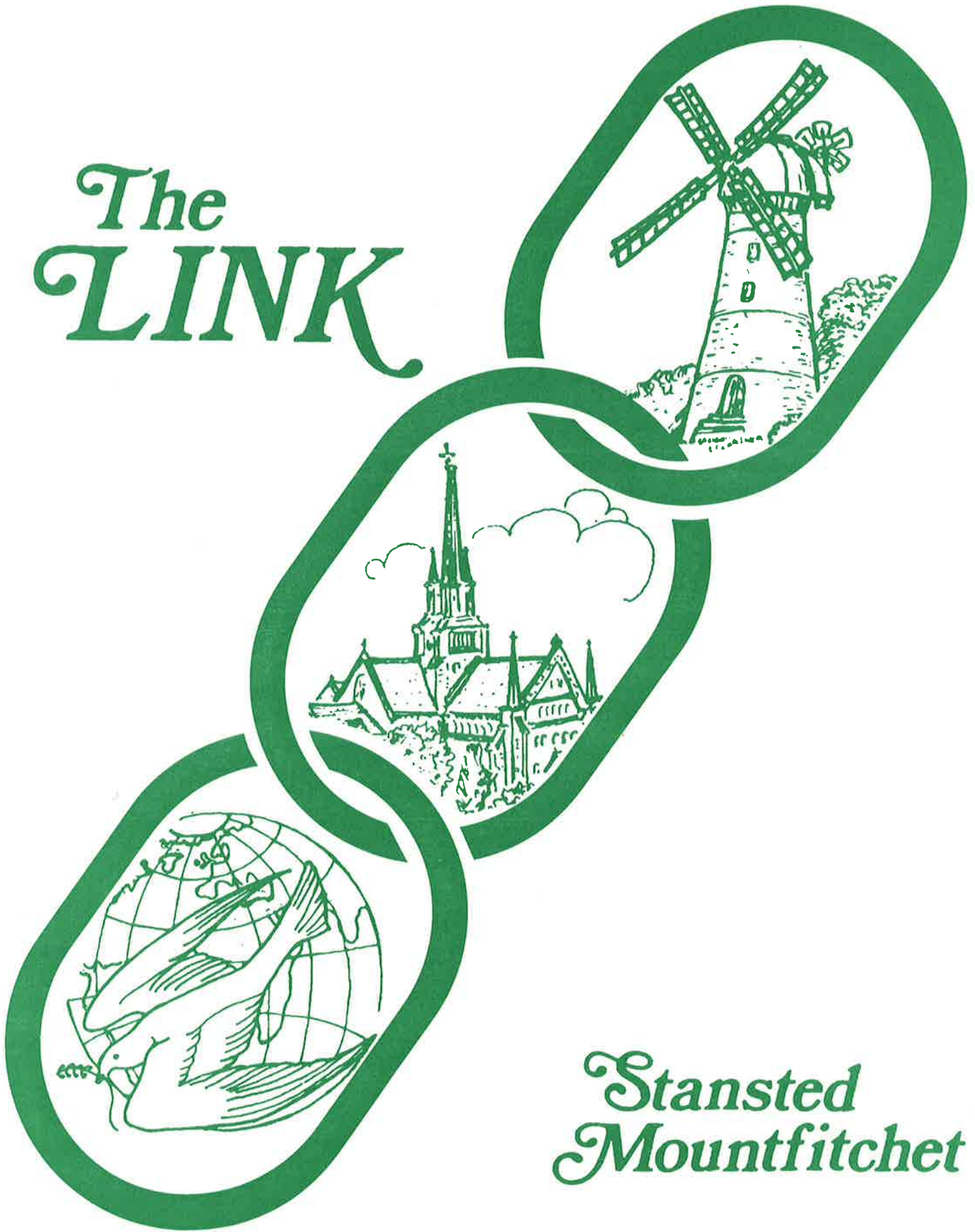


April, 2004

The *LINK*



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Carles Hill Moor Jen

*Hope
renewed*

Easter

April 11th



*Make your
journey of witness*

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

*followed by
Stations of the Cross
at 6.30 pm*

*A leaflet giving details of Holy Week and Easter services
in Stansted is being distributed*

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

Editor: Derek Honour

Advertising enquiries to Wendy Moss Tel 01279 812797

All other enquiries to Janet Townsend Tel 01279 812593

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**Copy to reach 58 Chapel Hill or email to
stanstedlink@aol.com**

by 15th April for publication on 1st May

by 13th May for publication on 29th 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 6.00pm
Sunday 9.00am and 10.30am

Holy Days of Obligation 8.00am and 8.00pm

Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am

Confessions
Saturday 10.00am
and by appointment

Baptisms By appointment

One of the readings for the Women's World Day of Prayer on 5th March was the passage from St John's Gospel where Mary Magdalene, coming to anoint the body of Jesus with spices, finds the tomb empty. In her dismay she turns to someone she supposes to be the gardener for help. He speaks her name, and it is then that to her amazement and delight, she recognises him as the risen Christ. Listening to the reading brought to mind the painting by Titian 'Noli me tangere' (Do not touch me...), which hangs in the National Gallery.

Titian captures the vividness and freshness of this moment beautifully. The figure of Christ holds a gardener's hoe, so that we understand Mary Magdalene's initial reaction, and He bends gracefully over Mary, who has fallen to her knees and is reaching out to touch him. Her joy and yearning as she does so is very evident. The words 'do not touch me' sound harsh, but emphasise that Christ is now not of this world and that Mary's relationship with Him must change to a new spiritual one. This will transform her life in an even deeper way than it was transformed by her first meeting with Him. The whole scene is set in a verdant Italian landscape, depicting the greenness and new life of spring. It is a further emphasis that the Resurrection is something new, which brings new life and hope.

The whole 50 days of Easter up to Pentecost are a season of hope, celebration and joy. Easter announces the news that something has changed, and that, whatever the headlines in the newspapers, evil has ultimately been overcome by good.

Ruth Rawlinson



SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 11.00am

Our part in Lent

As one of the five churches in Stansted, we are taking part in the Lent study groups which have been held for many years now. The meetings are being held in the Meeting House. We were asked to lead the first of these, on 'Tough Talk', the sayings of Jesus which are sometimes difficult to understand. We listened on cassette to three eminent churchmen discussing different kinds of sayings, with differing views being expressed. We learned that it was usually unwise to quote sayings out of context, that 'becoming as a little child' could have more than one interpretation, that 'being born again' was not only meaningful to the evangelical churches and that 'dying to live' could involve us taking a more positive part in the world.

We, as Quakers, do not use the Bible as frequently as most of the other churches, but regard it as one of several sources which can reveal the ways of God. We do not 'keep' Lent or even Easter as a special time because we believe that the whole of life is special and sacred, to be lived in the light given to us. That light includes the teachings of Jesus and we are happy to join with the other churches in Stansted to explore what Jesus has to say to us in the Gospels.

Margaret Whitelaw

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 April

4th Rev'd Keith Page
11th Rev'd Ronald Rawlings – Easter Holy Communion
18th Doug Coulton
25th A joint service at the United Reformed Church starting at 10.30am
led by Christine and Jerry Heyhoe

Fellowship meeting on Thursday 22nd April at 8.00pm



All enquiries are welcome at
The Church Office
 located upstairs in
 St. John's Church Hall,
 Stansted CM24 8JP

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

(01279) 815243
 church.office@stansted.net

Administrator
Mrs Elizabeth Jennings

Munch a Lunch

at St. John's

25th April 2004 12:30
 for 1pm
 Raffle and bar

Proceeds to the
 Bishop of Chelmsford's
 Lent Appeal

Positive Action

www.chelmsford.anglican.org/lent

Tickets from the
 Church Office

Holy Week and Easter at St John's

April 2nd Friday	9:15am St Mary's School End of Term service
April 4th Sunday	8:00am Holy Communion
Palm Sunday	9:20am Procession with Palms into church from the Church Hall
Monday in Holy Week	7:00pm Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Tuesday in Holy Week	7:00pm Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Wednesday in Holy Week	10:00am Holy Communion 7:00pm Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion
Maundy Thursday	8:00pm Holy Communion with Choir, stripping of the altars. 9:00pm Vigil
Good Friday	10:00am- The Good Friday Holiday 3:00pm Project
Holy Saturday	8:00pm Easter Vigil
Easter Day	8:00am Holy Communion 9:30am Parish Communion

Open Door Service

All-age Ecumenical Worship meets in April at
 St John's at 11:00am

- 4th April All-age communion
- 18th April All-age worship

Diary

Sundays

8:00am Holy Communion
 9:30am Parish Communion
 with Sunday School
 11:00am Open Door Service
 (1st & 3rd Sunday of the month)

Wednesdays

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

Groups

Lazer 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.

Prayer Group for Healing meets monthly in the parish. Contact the office for details of meetings.

Housegroups

Meet fortnightly on Tuesday evening at 30 Maitland Road. In April the course is entitled: *The story of Ruth: twelve moments in every woman's life.*
 Leaders: Lyn Hillier & Sandra Wood.

April 9th 2004

Good Friday Holiday Project

Is on again this year!
 Opportunities for adults and young people to join workshops and put together a presentation in the afternoon.

Registration deadline:
Monday, April 5th
 Call the Church Office for details.

Rector
Revd Andrew Spurr
 The Rectory
 St. John's Road
 Stansted Mountfitchet
 Essex, CM24 8JP
 phone/fax
 (01279) 812203
 rector@stansted.net
 Day off: Thursday

Open Door Service
 (Ecumenical All-Age
 worship)
Mrs Frances Richards
 phone
 (01279) 812748
 richkidz@waitrose.com

Director of Music
Mrs Glynis Morris
 phone/fax
 (01223) 263640
 church.music@stansted.net

Church Hall Bookings
 Secretary
Mrs Joy Lambe
 (01279) 817937
 joy@stansted.net

Honorary Assistant Priest
Canon Derek Jackson
 phone
 (01279) 652664

Sunday School
Mrs Sandra Wood
 (01279) 647054

Lazer Group
Mr Gary West
 phone
 (01279) 815243
 gary.west@zetnet.co.uk

Housegroup
Lyn Hillier
 (01279) 303598

Registers for February

Baptism

15th Amelia Mai Fordham

UNITED REFORMED

Chapel Hill

Minister

Rev'd David Simpson
11 Church Manor
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 5AF
Tel 01279 504900

Contact

Mrs Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill
Tel 01279 812593

Preachers for April

4th	2.30pm	Rev'd David Simpson
8th	7.30pm	Rev'd David Simpson Maundy Thursday Communion
11th	10.30am	Join with Water Lane, Bishops Stortford
11th	6.00pm	Easter Service of Praise
18th	10.30am	Rev'd David Simpson Communion
25th	10.30am	Chris and Jerry Heyhoe Joint with Methodist

Dates for your diary

April

4th	3.30pm-5.00pm	Afternoon Tea
10th-12th	10.00am-6.00pm	Bygones and Wedding dress Exhibition
19th	2.30pm	Monday Club - Mr T.Pretty Monuments around East Anglia

26th

6.00pm
Pilots

May

15th 7.30pm
Quiz night - to book a table
please ring 814850

Pilots

The Pilots are joining with other companies from around the Country for a special Pilots day at 'Legoland' Windsor on May 15th; a coach has been booked and there are a few spare seats. For more information contact Valerie on 813433.

Easter

Our Easter weekend Bygones Exhibition planning is nearly complete. In the Lecture Hall, local interest items, as well as other bygones, will be on display, and in the Church there will be wedding dresses and wedding photographs of couples who have been married in the Church over the years (some going back 50 years or more). On Easter Day there will be an Easter Praise service at 6.00pm led by Rev'd David Simpson. Refreshments will be served throughout the weekend in the Lecture Hall. SEE YOU THERE!

Janet Townsend



SHALOM

Irish Nite

The organisers would like to say a very big THANK YOU to all those who helped make the recent Irish Nite such a great success. We raised around £700 in support of Corrymeela - promoting peace in Northern Ireland.

Meetings

On 5th April there will be a talk entitled 'Living at the cost of others', led by Rev'd Andrew Spurr at 7 Blythwood Gardens.
On 26th April we will start the summer term with a Prayer and Praise evening at 7 Blythwood Gardens.

Catherine Dean



**CHURCHES
TOGETHER
in STANSTED**

Palm Sunday

Following the end of the Lent Groups, an Agape service will be held at 6.30pm on Sunday 4th April at the Quaker Meeting House on Chapel Hill, followed by a bring and share supper. All are welcome.

Good Friday

There will be a Walk of Witness, starting at 6.00pm from the junction of Lower Street with High Lane and proceeding to St Therese's for Stations of the Cross at 6.30pm.

Chevetogne Exchange 2004

This year it is our turn to visit the village of Chevetogne in Belgium, a parish exchange that has lasted nearly 20 years. We always receive a warm welcome and are accommodated in local homes, with visits to places of interest in southern Belgium. The exchange will be from **Friday 11th to Monday 14th June**, travelling by coach. Please contact Eileen Quinn if you are interested - 01279 812109.

Ruth Rawlinson

It's that time of year again when I turn my mind to organising Christian Aid Week. The materials have been ordered, though not yet received and now begins the difficult task of cajoling and coercing people to take part in the envelope collection. Some of us have been doing it for years and I have to be honest and say it doesn't get any easier, particularly if it's raining! But the reward is that of knowing that we have done our little bit towards making the life of those less fortunate than ourselves a little bit better. So if you have a few hours to spare in the week of 9th-15th May, please let me know. If you can only cover a few houses, it will be appreciated. As I say every year, the more people doing the collection, the less we all have to do.

How to get £1,000,000 from the Taxman

Christian Aid got over one million pounds extra last year because people filled in the tax declaration on the back of the envelope. This amount can build 60 health centres in Cambodia or provide clean water to 100,000 children in Ethiopia. So if you are a taxpayer, please fill in the form on the envelope - that's all you have to do to make your donation worth almost 30% more.

Dates for your diary

Christian Aid Service will be on 9th May at 6.30pm. at the Friends Meeting House. This is a chance to learn more about the work of Christian Aid.

Christian Aid Market is on Saturday 15th May from 10.00am till 12 noon at the Friends Meeting House.

Not only is there a sponsored walk on Sunday 16th May, there is to be a sponsored cycle ride as well this year. More details about all these events in May Link.

To finish, a few words from the publicity material for this year.

'By supporting Christian Aid Week, you are among the millions of people who think poverty is a scandal we do not have to accept. Your actions, commitment and contributions will bring about a better life for people in poor communities all over the world.'

Catherine Dean
813579



Tributes

It was with great sadness that we heard last month of the deaths, within a week of each other, of two of our long standing Listeners-In and Committee members, Joan Freeman and Olive Bunting. Although two very different personalities, they shared a strong faith and a dedicated commitment to helping fellow members of their community. This was demonstrated, not only by the work they undertook for Helpline, but also in numerous other activities within the village, not least their service to the Day Centre. Joan had been actively involved in this area from its inception, some 20 years ago and was on the management committee until ill

health prevented her from continuing. Likewise, Olive had been a regular helper for some years and both were very popular with the attendees and helpers alike.

Joan, a long standing member of St John's congregation, had a lively intellect and displayed, in the Rector's words, "a voracious appetite to see and hear new ways of looking at things".

Olive tended to beaver away very quietly and unobtrusively, whether it be collecting someone's pension or shopping on behalf of Helpline, helping with the collation of Link, actively supporting the activities of Churches Together in Stansted or worshipping and working for the URC (and these are just activities of which I am aware).

These two delightful ladies, to me, epitomize all that is good about our village and they will be sorely missed by the many people whose lives they touched. May God bless them.

General Update

As both Joan and Olive had resigned their duties to Helpline when their respective illnesses progressed, we have already been fortunate to have found willing volunteers to take their places, both on the Committee and as Listeners-In. This was just as well as 2003 proved to be our busiest year ever with 225 recorded calls for assistance, not counting at least another 70 tasks performed by volunteers on a regular basis, which do not go through our telephone system. Although the closure of the Post Office had some impact on the figures, we were only asked for assistance by two people, which, perhaps, indicates that many pensioners have been able to make their own arrangements or have been assisted by caring neighbours and friends.

If you are interested in volunteering your services to Helpline, or would like more information, please contact, evenings only, Yvonne Ayres (Organiser) on 814706 or Francine Cope (Chairman) on 814562.

Benefits Advice

Although our local voluntary community care service is mainly involved in providing lifts to GPs and hospitals, it is sometimes possible to give other kinds of help. As one of the committee and previous Organiser of 'Uttlesford Carers', I have, for many years, given advice on how to get the various benefits, which those who are elderly, disabled or on a low income are entitled to. I have continued to attend the regular Benefits Network on behalf of Helpline and would be very happy to help anyone who needed advice. There are many benefits which make life easier, usually by providing extra income, such as Attendance Allowance, reductions in the Council Tax and most recently the Pension Credit, to which many are entitled. Help can be obtained for those finding it difficult to look after themselves or a relative from Social Services, or getting a 'blue badge' for parking, and all elderly people should be thinking about setting up Powers of Attorney for the future.

If you need advice of this kind, please contact me, Margaret Whitelaw, direct on 01279 816972. I can give help over the phone, put you in touch with the relevant organisation or visit you at home if necessary.

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

As many will know, the Council Tax for the coming year has been set - thus, whilst a problem for those on fixed incomes, it is no longer an issue at County Hall: what for better or worse is done, is done!

Similarly the development of the airport is now in a consultation phase and the County, with its allies from Hertfordshire, East Herts and Uttlesford, is preparing the arguments against a second runway for the various groups who will hear the case. Hearings are planned to end in the summer of 2005. Then we will know what is to happen! What is more important is that period is the time for a General Election. Thus any decision will be made after this and as a result things may change. Let us hope so!

At this point the bigger issue before the County is the question of housing and where it is to be sited. As many will know, the Regional Authority which has driven this project (not the County) has decided that Essex is to have 131,000 houses built in the county over the next ten years or so, together with some 18,000 houses allotted for Harlow, but likely to be sited around or near North Weald airport and its area.

Whilst the Secretary of State has lengthened the M11 Corridor to Peterborough and widened it towards Stevenage and Chelmsford, this will not alter the fact that in the local area of Bishop's Stortford and Stansted, and including Elsenham/Henham and Felsted/Stebbing, we are likely to see much new building over the coming years. As is the case over the airport expansion, so over this the County is fighting the decision. This will take some 18 months to reach a resolution: thereafter we shall know what is to happen. It is likely that many will not be happy with the decision. In the circumstances, however, it would seem we are likely to have to put up with it, which will be unfortunate.

Should anyone wish to discuss these matters further they should contact the undersigned on 01279 812588.

Richard Wallace
County Councillor
Stansted Division

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Thoughts have turned to spring and country walks. I met last month with colleagues from the county and district colleagues to see if we can together improve the footpath network in Uttlesford. That might mean that some footpaths get more attention than others. We hope to improve signage and see whether long distance footpaths like the Icknield Way, that skirts the north-west corner of the district, could have distinctive waymarks. Then there is the Harcamlow Way that traces a figure of eight through Uttlesford from north to south. It comes nearest to Stansted at Manuden and at Takeley.

Congratulations to the residents of Woodfields and Millside for resurfacing their road. As a regular pedestrian around there, it's good to see the potholes gone.

The inspectors came to call at the end of February. These were two men and two women from the Audit Commission who came to work out how good a council Uttlesford is. It's called Comprehensive Performance Assessment. We get to know in June whether Uttlesford is a poor, weak, fair, good or excellent council. I would not be surprised if we are rated either fair or good. But what the inspectors did say is that Uttlesford is "on a rapid upward journey". So, regardless of where the new council started from last May, we are heading in the right direction. And that's someone else's opinion, not simply the council leader's!

Councillor Alan Dean
Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov

Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

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



Council Offices
Crafton Green
Tel 813214
Fax 813964

Civic Amenity Skips and Recycling Banks

We have now received information from Uttlesford about changes to the service that we have been used to for many years.

In place of the monthly large yellow container which took all rubbish, we shall be having a container for recycling which will accept WOOD, GREEN WASTE and METAL only. Plastics etc will have to be taken to the sites at Saffron Walden, Harlow or Bishop's Stortford. The container will be available on a fortnightly basis, commencing on 3rd and 4th April, on Saturdays and Sundays between the hours of 9.00am and 3.00pm.

At the same time, all of the recycling containers will be moved to the far end of the car park in Lower Street from their current location. This is to enable all the activity to be contained, and at some point in the near future, hopefully improved by some screening/planting.

Please make an effort to use this service which we believe will be of benefit because it will be more regular. Apparently, we produce half a tonne of household waste per head of population - the highest in Essex.

Refuse Sacks

We have been notified by Uttlesford that the cost of the green garden waste sacks will increase from 70p each to £1 each from the beginning of April. However, there will be a concession for Senior Citizens (60+) who will benefit from a reduced cost of 50p per bag if they can produce ID with date of birth.

The blue trade waste sacks for businesses will remain at 70p each plus VAT.

Christian Rock Concert

2 Live Bands - 'Replenish' and 'Supervision'
on nationwide tour for 11 - 19 year olds

Friday 2nd April - 7.30 pm

Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church

"LEARN TO LIVE"

Admission £3 by ticket only
BS Methodist Book Shop (10 am - 1 pm)
or call Ros 503894 / Julia 657928



BYGONES EXHIBITION

Easter Weekend April 10th - 12th

Stansted URC Church & Hall

Saturday 10 am - 6 pm

Sunday 2 pm - 6 pm

Monday 10 am - 6 pm

Wedding Dresses • Postcards • Photographs
Flowers • WI Tablecloth • Refreshments

Contributions welcomed - please Tel: 812593

LIVE MUSIC NIGHT WITH

CHARITY

AND FUN MUSIC QUIZ

Sat 17th April 8 - 11 pm

ELSENHAM BOWLS CLUB

Tickets £3 from Elsenham Bowls Club
or Hannah ☎ 816081

All proceeds to Epping Breast Cancer Unit

VILLAGE EVENTS

April

1	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
2	Fri	Christian Rock Concert	BS Methodist Church 7.30 pm
4	Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
		Afternoon Tea (after service)	UR Church 3.30 - 5 pm
5	Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
7	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Bookstart	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
		Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
8	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
10	Sat	Bygones Exhibition	UR Church & Hall 10 am - 6 pm
		Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
11	Sun	Bygones Exhibition	UR Church & Hall 2 pm - 6 pm
		Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
12	Mon	Bygones Exhibition	UR Church & Hall 10 am - 6 pm
		Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
17	Sat	'Charity' Concert & Quiz	Elsenham Bowls Club 8 - 11 pm
18	Sun	Green Waste Skip	Lower St Car Park 1 - 4 pm
21	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
24	Sat	NCT Nearly New Sale	St Johns Hall 3 - 4.30 pm
25	Sun	Boot Sale	Mountfitchet School 8 am - noon
		Munch-a-lunch	St John's Church 12.30 pm
26	Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
28	Wed	Coffee Morning / Open Day	Day Centre 10 am - noon

May

1	Sat	Introduction Morning	Bowls Club 10 am - 1 pm
2	Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
		Afternoon Tea (after service)	UR Church 3.30 - 5 pm
3	Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
5	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Bookstart	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
		Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
6	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
8	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
		Big Top May Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
10	Mon	Shalom Group	Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
11	Tue	Fashion Show	Mountfitchet Sch'l 7 for 7.30 pm



National Childbirth Trust

Nearly New Sale

Clothes ~ Equipment

Toys ~ Books

3 - 4.30 pm

Sat 24th April

St John's Church Hall

Entry by donation at the door

St John's, Stansted

MUNCH-A-LUNCH

12.30 for 1 pm

Sun 25th April

in the Church

Tickets £7.50 Children £5
from Benefice Office ☎ 815243
or after Sunday Morning Worship

Proceeds to HIV / AIDS victims

STANSTED DAY CENTRE

COFFEE MORNING

& OPEN DAY

10 am - 12 noon

Wed 28th April

Proceeds are towards the purchase of new
curtains for the Day Centre, which will cost
at least £2,000

Please come and support this event and
enjoy the stalls and company



Moundfitchet High School

Fashion Show & Sale

with 'Travelling Trends'

7 for 7.30 pm Tues 11th May

High Street brands • Sizes 10 - 20

Casual to Evening wear • Ages 16 - 90+

Tickets £3 incl glass of wine

Tel: 816282 / 813384

no ordering - buy on the night

Credit & Debit cards welcome

Bentfield School PTA

Big Top

May Fair

2 - 5 pm Sat 8th May



Try your Circus Skills!!

'THE BOWLS CLUB NEEDS YOU'

Introduction for new bowlers

SATURDAY 1ST MAY 10 AM to 1 PM

ALL WELCOME

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BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

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As the cold weather starts to abate, we have another busy month for all our children. The Uttlesford Road Safety Officer came to visit Classes 1 and 2. The children were very excited to wear fluorescent vests and to go out to learn about crossing the road, and hazards to look for in car parks. All the children received fluorescent stickers and a booklet to take home and will now be much safer out and about.

Class 5 enjoyed a visit from the aptly named CHAOS - a hands-on science group from Cambridge, which resulted in much laughter, learning, and a lot of bangs - luckily the school remained intact!

The British Museum was Class 3's destination for a special Egyptian experience. All those who went - children and adults alike, enjoyed a very memorable day!

The school was delighted to send a team to the Public Speaking Competition held at Mountfitchet High School. Stort Valley Rotary Club sponsored this and it is hoped to be an annual event. After a keenly contested in-house competition, our team of two year 5's and two year 6's was selected. Eight schools entered and the standard of the competition was very high. Watched by 30 classmates, who had walked up to MHS to support them, our team gave an excellent performance and were overjoyed to be placed second. Well done to Natalie Chandler, Caroline Crosby, Phillip Bitten and Michael Darby!

Last year each of our children received a Bible from the charity Bibles for Children. This year it was the turn of our new reception class and children who have joined higher up the school during the year. The Bibles were sponsored by the parishes of Stansted and Lindsell and were presented to the children by Rev'd Cilla Hawkes and Rev'd Andrew Spurr.

The Nursery still has some places available for this coming September. If you are interested, and your child will be four in the next academic year, please contact the school office. Also we have Messy Play, which is great fun and runs in the Nursery every Monday from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you are interested, contact the school or just turn up!

March was a busy month for the PTA beginning with our Casino Night. This was an evening of glamour and glitz (not to mention the odd Vodka Martini - shaken, not stirred of course!). Some were luckier than others, but as the play money had only cost us £1 for the night, we could afford to be a little reckless! Once the adults had had their fun, it was the children's turn, with the Spring Disco on 26th March. This proved a huge hit with both infants and juniors and left everyone in high spirits for the last week of term.

Just as spring is finally here, we are already looking ahead to Summer! The PTA is busy planning our two biggest events of the year. The Big Top May Fair is taking place on Saturday 8th May. We are having lots of fun planning activities for this year's circus theme, including a 'have-a-go' circus skills area, a mini-circus presentation by the children, and clowns on hand to keep everyone amused. Make a note of the date and come along and join the fun.

Our last event of the summer is Music in the Park on Saturday 17th July. This has already established itself as a major event on the village calendar and plans are already underway to make it bigger and better than ever. We'll keep you posted on progress over the next few months, but put it in your diaries and start practising your dancing moves!!



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

The March meeting included a talk and demonstration by Mrs Olivia Elton-Barrett entitled 'Woven cane items to use with plants'. Mrs Elton-Barrett explained that her interest in rush basket making and subsequently chair seat making and wickerwork began several years ago at a WI meeting. She showed members several types of willow of varying hues and said that natural colours of bark available included green, red, grey and black. In order to get the tannin dye from the bark into the stem it is necessary to boil the willow and then peel off the bark. In olden days the willow used to be boiled in urine in order to obtain a chestnut colour!

For her first demonstration Mrs Elton-Barrett showed how to improve a plain round plastic garden tub by creating a scalloped edging. This adds height to the display and assists in holding the plants upright. The same technique can be used for lawn edging. Mrs Elton-Barrett showed examples of rush baskets and wickerwork that can be made in a one-day workshop. She also showed how to make a woven lawn edge and advised that it is best not to make long lengths, as shorter ones are easier to replace when they rot. For her final demonstration Mrs Elton-Barrett showed how to create a support for light plants such as sweet peas.

At the end of the talk Cyril Stoneham (Chairman) thanked Mrs Elton-Barrett for her talk that he was sure would encourage members to make some items for their own gardens.

The next meeting, on Wednesday 7th April at the Day Centre at 8.00 pm will include a talk 'Attracting and Feeding Garden Birds' by a speaker from the RSPB, followed by the Club's AGM. This is sure to be an interesting talk for gardeners and non-gardeners alike, so please join us. For non-members the admission fee is 75p.

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IN MEMORIAM

Olive Bunting 1922-2004

Olive was born in Stocking Pelham in 1922, the middle daughter of Bill and Hilda Brett; the family lived in several farm cottages in that area until 1931, when they moved to Sunnyside, Stansted, and Bill began working as a woodman for Daniel Robinson in Lower Street, a job he loved and stayed with until well past retiring age.

Olive began her working life answering the telephone at Stansted Post Office, and many organisations will have heard her recollections of her experiences delivering telegrams during the war years. In 1947 she married Bob Bunting whose parents ran a greengrocery business in Lower Street, and over the years Olive would often be found serving in the shop right up until the time it closed in 1989. Olive and Bob had three children, Heather who sadly died as a baby, John a retired BT manager who lives in Bishop's Stortford, and Peter a car mechanic who lives in Elsenham with his three children, Daniel, Robert and Laura. Olive would fondly tell stories about her grandchildren of whom she was rightly proud.

Olive was a founder member of the Stansted Evening Women's Institute, and when she was very ill in the Hospice she was telling me about the WI tablecloth, made of linen and stitched with linen thread and how she had to work a sampler before she was allowed to work on the actual cloth, (this cloth still covers the table at every WI meeting). Olive was a supporter of many village organisations and would go to coffee mornings, jumble sales etc, to help their cause, and there must be many people carrying her famous shopping bags around, which she bought by the dozen somewhere in her beloved Norfolk and gave for raffle prizes.

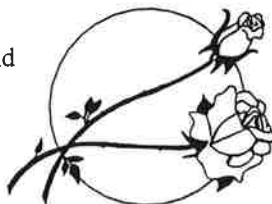
Olive together with Bob was involved with 'Link' magazine from the outset; she served on the 'Link' committee and was part of the collating team until illness prevented this. A great part of her time was spent helping people; for many years she was one of the organisers at the Day Centre, and a 'listener-in' for 'Helpline'. She was a very good friend to many people in the village, for whom she did shopping, washing or was just there talking to them as a friend.

The United Reformed Church and her Christian faith were very important to Olive; she was a member and Elder of the Church for many years, and even when in considerable pain in the last year she could be found arranging flowers, making coffee or preparing her famous salmon sandwiches and chocolate finger biscuits for various Church activities.

She will be very greatly missed by her family, the United Reformed Church and the village.



Janet Townsend





Nature Notes

This month some of our summer visitors will arrive from their winter quarters in Africa. Swallows and house martins should be here by the end of April and the cuckoo too may be heard at this time, although this bird seems to have become much less frequent in recent years. Swifts also will be seen wheeling over Stansted in early May. All these birds are returning after migrating southwards in search of food supplies at the end of the summer. Migration is a strategy that improves a bird's chances of survival outside the breeding season.



In fact most species of European birds can migrate, depending on local food supplies during the winter and breeding season. Even the robin may not necessarily always be resident here. Some robins (mainly females) fly from south-eastern England to spend winter in France or Spain. Migratory robins from Scandinavia may land temporarily on our shores after crossing the North Sea before they continue their voyage to the Mediterranean.

Some migrating birds, such as robins, cuckoos and fly-catchers, fly at night, usually just after sunset. At night the air is cooler and less turbulent and flying therefore requires less energy. The smaller birds can also avoid predators which tend to fly in the daytime. Swallows and martins fly during the day, setting off before sunrise. Clear skies and a tail wind are ideal conditions for migrating birds. The males tend to return to their breeding grounds before the females in order to establish their territories. Birds such as swifts and swallows have long pointed wings designed to reduce drag. The journey in spring can often be quicker than the autumn journey. Swallows fly northwards to the British Isles at an average speed of about 25 miles a day, flying rapidly across the inhospitable Sahara and then more slowly over Europe.

Migrating birds seem to have a basic magnetic compass, in other words they can detect the Earth's magnetic field. It is thought that magnetic orientation can develop soon after the young bird hatches. Birds can also orientate themselves by setting a course by the sun. They can even navigate under cloud cover, as long as it is not too thick, because their eyes are sensitive to ultra-violet light which has more penetrating power than those wavelengths visible to us. Birds also use a star compass, taking bearings from the fixed Pole Star.

The navigational sense of birds seems to be partly inherited and partly acquired though exploration of their surroundings. They have an internal 'clock' that regulates their

activities and controls their migratory habits, but environmental factors such as the weather and food situation are important influences, especially in the early days of departure.

Rosina Kirkwood



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our last meeting took us back to the beginning of the Norman era in England and in particular Essex. Jennifer Ward described for us how, on the death of Edward the Confessor, William, Duke of Normandy and the Saxon, Harold, fought to be King of England. 1066 is probably the only date most of us remember from our school days and it was a critical year in our country's history. Both William and Harold had been promised the Crown by Edward and further, Harold had sworn (whether freely or by trickery we do not know) to support William's claim. Nevertheless, he was on the spot when Edward died and soon had himself crowned King in 1065. His was a brief but troubled reign, firstly repelling an invasion by the Vikings in 1066 and then racing south to meet William just outside Hastings – the result we know!

Making his way to London, William was crowned King of England on Christmas Day and began the Norman settlement of the country. First, those who had fought with him were rewarded with estates and those in Essex were highly prized. Then began a programme of castle building, the remains of many of which can be seen today – in fact Jennifer showed us slides she had taken of them. She also told us of the Domesday Book and of the detail it contains, much of which was obtained from the efficient records kept by the Saxons earlier. We heard of the men and their estates and how they were appointed to the key positions in the land in order to keep the Saxons subjugated and also to make as much profit as possible! By acquiring properties in the only two towns in Essex – Colchester and Maldon – they were able, in addition, to share in the profitable continental trade.

By 1100, Jennifer reckoned that these Normans considered England as their home, although it would be in the late 1300's before English came to be the accepted language of the Court.

Jennifer gave us a fascinating and informative talk which was greatly enjoyed.

On 1st April, our next speaker, Bryn Elliot, will be bringing us right up to date with a talk on Aviation in West Essex – we hope to see you there.



Ian Seavers



**Stansted
Evening
Women's Institute**

Come along to any of our meetings as a visitor - next month is an Australian Evening - and all are welcome.

Judy Colliver

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



Recently each month we have been welcoming a new member or visitor, so that our membership now stands at 52 paid-up members, which has delighted our treasurer having funds in so early in the year! At our February meeting a collection of money was made to purchase items for George Mills to take out to Chernigov where work is still in progress at the medical centre. A sum of £33 was collected and the President and secretary caused quite a bit of interest at the check-out at Tescos when they arrived with a trolley laden with nappies, sanitary items and toilet rolls! These were all delivered on 12th March to George and his wife who are going to Chernigov again very shortly - incidentally the van that he uses was paid for by Essex WIs. The County Meeting was attended by 11 members from our WI and about 1,300 Essex members in all. We were delighted to have Simon Weston as our main speaker, who entertained us with stories of his army career in 'the finest regiment of the world' - The Welsh Guards. Simon is a wonderful speaker and a brave man who rose above a terrible tragedy, after a lot of setbacks, to form the 'Weston Spirit' which helps young people. He paid great tribute to his mother and also to his wife and family. He sat for an hour signing books in what should have been his lunch hour.

Welcome to another round up of PTFA and school news. As promised, here are details of what our valuable funds have been spent on as a result of our fund raising activities.

Every child in school has received a Collins Maths Book to help specifically with Key Stages 1 & 2. The books are beautifully bound, A4 text books – and rather thick in content! Although quite expensive, we feel the children will benefit - they are not to be used as door stops...

Still on a learning curve, pupils in Key Stage 1 & 2 have received Literacy and Numeracy Dictionaries (not quite so thick) to back up their classroom learning.

The IT Department has recently received a super new scanner which will be fantastically useful, especially for the school website as well as classroom IT lessons. Our Deputy Head Teacher, Mrs Gibbons, does a terrific job updating the school diary etc – look out for the new prospectus on the website in pdf form (quicker to download, but you will need Adobe Acrobat to read it - freely available on the web). Log on to www.st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk for more information and school news.

Our speaker in February was Mrs Joy Rorke who gave a talk on 'Unnoticed London' and donated her fee to the Christian Lewis Trust Fund, which cares for children with cancer. Ideas were suggested for fund raising and a concert has now been arranged in the URC Church for Friday, 11th June at 8.00pm featuring 'The Entertainers' who are a group of singers from the Bishop's Stortford Operatic Society. They came about three years ago and we are delighted to welcome them back with their 'Songs from the Shows'. Details of obtaining tickets (price £5.50) will be given later.

Money is spent on fun too – on 15th March Alligator Theatre Productions visited the school and performed 'Sir Lancelot and the Knights of the Round Table'. Everyone enjoyed the performance hugely as well as gaining an insight into this famous legend. The PTFA contributed to the cost, along with the recent performance by Rock n'Roll Productions – where the children discovered The Twist wasn't a new game-boy.

The netball team are looking jolly smart these days sporting wonderful new tracksuits, in vibrant yellow and blue. When representing the school at inter school matches, they are certainly easy to spot - whether that helps scores goals – we're not sure, but we are certain the team enjoy wearing them and they are a credit to St Mary's.

The March meeting started with remembrance of a founder member of our Institute, Olive Bunting, who continued to be a very active one until a short time ago and who sadly died recently. We shall all miss her very much. She, with her sister Maisie, helped to make our wonderful tablecloth, details of which have been sent to the National Needlework Archives and will be on permanent record. We are also entering it into our own County Summer Event at Layer Marney, where it is hoped that all such tablecloths will be recorded by WIs and made up into a book as a permanent record. Ours will be on display at Easter in the URC Bygones Exhibition. Our speaker for March was Ted Bennet on the 'Art of Woodcarving' and it certainly was. He brought with him a tremendous selection of all types of woodcarvings and allowed them to be passed around the hall - trusting us not to put the odd one in our handbags! His work was amazing and he made it sound as though anyone could do it - he had been a teacher at a technical school near Brentwood - and we all wished we could have been in his class. Now retired supposedly, he said one of his most prestigious jobs was helping with restoration work after the fire at Windsor Castle.

Once again, our sincere thanks to all our supporters, both in school and out. None of the above would be possible without YOUR help and as you can see, the children benefit directly as a result of the fund raising which is why we know you'd love to mark a couple of dates in your spring and summer diaries! The Chinese Auction is set for Saturday 22nd May and our Summer Fayre will be held on Saturday 26th June – more details in 'Link' nearer the time.

A trip to Chartwell is being arranged by Linda Gurr on 16th June and it is hoped to visit Buckingham Palace later in the year.

A final thought, the reception area of school is always well worth a visit - you will find superb art displays completed by children of all ages during art classes and Art Club. The work is of an incredibly high standard and beautifully mounted – the murals are particularly stunning and colourful – just the thing as we head towards Easter and Spring.

Claire Jonas

“Tell me something about yourself?”

Remembering Joan Freeman

Having been asked to write something about Joan Freeman, who died on February 26th, I find myself thinking of all we said and did, the laughing—no, giggling—at all manner of things, often when we should have been holy. It's difficult to know where to start. I am quite certain that she would have been quite put out to find herself the subject of a piece in *The Link*. She wouldn't have thought herself important enough.

I only knew Joan in her latter years. It was 1996 when I was introduced to her, as Jane Freeman's mother—something she was used to being described as. Within weeks she became an extra member of our family and when her daughter Jane went to Birmingham to train for the priesthood, I undertook to “keep an eye on Mum”. This was hardly an onerous task and indeed turned out to be a two-way arrangement. The age difference disappeared. For someone who was constantly in pain she was always cheerful and ready to be a listening ear. She always wanted to know everything that was going on in my



At daughter Jane's ordination, along with son John.

life, and my children's, and took on board all our joys and felt our disappointments as keenly as hers and her own family's. She was like this with everyone: she had the ability to make everyone feel special, whoever they were, and whatever their story. I can remember taking her to visit my mother in Blakeney, which is where Joan's family came from, and whilst I was in a changing room in a dress shop, Joan had discovered connections with the shop assistant and they were talking like old friends. Even in the last months of her life, when she was in severe pain, on the telephone or face to face, she always started a conversation with “So how are you?”.



On holiday in France in 2002

There are people reading this better qualified than I to talk about Joan's earlier life in Stansted. But I know that as soon as she moved into the village, she became involved in it's life in any way she could. The Women's Institute and the church were at the centre of her life along with the Day Centre, Helpline and the Liberal Democrats. She enjoyed her time teaching at the Mountfitchet High School and her pupils remember her with affection.

Some of Joan's stories were included in Andrew Spurr's address at her funeral on 10th March in St John's. He recounted an episode in Rome, somewhere Joan had expressed a desire to visit (“see Rome and die”), so we took her. We were in a restaurant on the last evening, and there was Joan in the thick of it, being chatted up by the patron, both of them speaking a sort of ‘Italenglish’. If we'd been there any longer I think she'd have had his entire life history—and he'd have probably proposed to her. No-one chatted me up!

Joan developed a skin cancer in her forties and spent quite a lot of time at Addenbrooke's, both as an out-patient and an in-patient. It was amazing how quickly the word got round that “Joan Freeman's in again” and she had as many visitors from within the hospital as from her friends outside. It was almost a matter of forming a queue to get a bedside seat. Quoting from the rector “When they left at my arrival, she'd tell me who all they were, where they were from and about their families. Like a complete stranger in a Roman restaurant, they came because they had fallen for her, and for how she made them feel about themselves and their lives and loves.”

Joan will be missed, but never forgotten.

Elizabeth Jennings



Hello again,

The topic of 'Food' is still ongoing as we wait patiently for Easter and the thought of those delicious chocolate eggs to eat. The children will be decorating eggs, making salt dough Easter shapes and Easter bonnets. There will be an Easter Time Concert on 31st March at 11.15am for all parents, grandparents and friends to watch and join in.

The outside play area is looking much better and with a few volunteers will be made safe for the children to enjoy.

Fundraising this half term is a 'Slide, Ride and Bounce' Circuit; hopefully we will have lots of sponsors and raise a good amount of money for nursery equipment, especially our Science Box.

If you would like to visit 'Sideways' any morning between 9.00 am and 12.15 pm you will be most welcome. Stay and play!

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Auntie Helen



Royal British Legion

Women's Section

A Memorial Service for Bessie Blyth was held in St John's Church on 11th February. It was a memorable and moving occasion and enormous thanks go to Gill Robinson, Audrey Rodgers and Janet Hollis who read and spoke so eloquently; to Rosemary Thomson, Julia North, Melvin Morton and Cath Whall, who gave and served delicious refreshments; to Christine Monk who, thoughtfully, put flowers on the War Memorial; to Doris and Harold Thistle, John Robinson and John Hollis who provided transport and especially to the large number of family and friends who attended the Service.

Bessie would have 'pooh-poohed' the idea of such a service, but she would have loved what took place on 11th February. We felt that we had said a proper "thank you and farewell" to a lovely caring lady.

We thank all who gave so generously to the collection for the Royal British Legion and The Ghurkhas.

Pat Clower

I would like to thank Pat Clower most sincerely for the tremendous amount of hard work and great thought that she put into arranging Bessie Blyth's Memorial Service so very well.

Sadly the future of the 'Women's Section' is now very much in doubt. During the last 12 months we have lost Margaret Gabb, our President, Bessie Blyth, our Treasurer and so many other prominent members, including our previous President, The Hon. Catherine Ruck, who was still a member of our Branch although she lived in Devon, that, regretfully, we feel we can no longer continue as an official 'Women's Section'.

We do, however, hope to continue to raise funds for the Royal British Legion and the Ghurkhas and any offers of help to this end will be gratefully received.

Thanks to a wonderful band of volunteers from Stansted and organisations in the village, flowers will continue to be placed on the War Memorial each week from Easter to Remembrance Sunday in November. A rota will shortly be circulated to all these caring ladies who wish to continue to honour those who gave their lives in two World Wars and, by doing so, to remember their own lost loved ones. We would still be grateful to receive names for the rota. Please contact: Doris Thistle, 813250 or Janet Hollis, 812073.

Janet Hollis
Chairman

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We have been very busy at Rainbow Pre-school during March. After February's trip to the windmill, the older group took part in a visit to Sainsbury's bakery where they were shown how bread is produced. We very much enjoyed our little tour particularly the tasting session at the end!

Our own baking endeavours last month were extremely successful. The sponsored cake bake has raised £270 so far with some monies still to be collected. We would like to thank all those who helped out, particularly Pen Hopkinson who co-ordinated all the cake-making.

Spring is here at last and the children have enjoyed observing and talking about the changing seasons. Children in all groups have planted sun flower seeds in pots and are looking forward to seeing them bloom in the summer. Let's hope that Mum and Dad's gardening skills are up to it!

Easter is almost upon us and the children have been busy practising for their Easter concerts which will take place on the last day of term. We will round off the term with our traditional Easter party on the afternoon of Sunday 4th April in St John's Church Hall. There will be fun and games and a party tea plus the opportunity to take part in our Annual Easter Bonnet Competition.

The committee is busy planning a wine-tasting evening in the summer and we hope that you will all support this entertaining and educational fund-raising event.

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



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Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

Check in Tongues

It befell me recently to be waiting 50 minutes for my train (on time!) in the pleasantly furnished booking office at Stansted Mountfitchet Railway Station.

Having already perused, at another station, the intriguing, nay, challenging literature displayed, and having visited the alluring offers of exciting excursions into Wild West Anglia, I found my attention drawn to a well-designed notice-board whereon I was forbidden to smoke in TWELVE languages. ('Strictly' in English, not so in French, whose speakers may perhaps smoke standing in the open door?). I was dismayed, however, to see no admonishment in Welsh, Irish or Scottish Gaelic, (remember the pottery in Lower Street?) or Flemish, still spoken in this area.

Sir, I would now plead! "LINGUISTIC MINORITIES OF STANSTED, UNITE! CLAIM YOUR RIGHT NOT TO SMOKE IN YOUR RAILWAY STATION!"

I remain yours ardently,

Phyllis Harrison



Huw Johnson Club

Excitement is now building up for our holiday in Eastbourne in August. Our members like to be ready well in advance and are already clamouring to know what outings have been arranged (at the time of going to press none!). Before that, however, we have a visit to the bowling alley in Bishop's Stortford, at least two discos and a barbecue to look forward to.

We are very pleased to announce that the group 'Charity' will be performing at Four Winds, Burton End, to help raise funds for the Club. This will take place on the evening of 26th June. More details in the next issue of 'Link' but do look out for posters advertising this event. Please put the date in your diary now. Many thanks to all who came to our coffee morning at which we raised just over £183. It is only through the generosity of so many friends of the Club that we are able to widen our members' horizons and give parents and carers a much needed break. We all say a very big thank you.

M G Johnson

Local Occupations

No. 4

Farmer

John Latham

We met John and Angela at their comfortable rambling farmhouse, Waltham Hall, situated within sight of the airport terminal buildings, to conduct an interview gaining some insight into what it means to have farmed in this corner of Essex over many years and before the proposed airport expansion blights the rural horizons irrevocably as modern jets, not larks, soar over their fields.



However, as anyone who knows John will appreciate, he is a fund of stories and has many a tale to tell of notable ancestors, famous for enterprises other than farming! There was the fascinating tale of Latham House, the last stronghold to give out during the Civil War and where Lord Derby was hanged from the portals. There is also a French connection. One Latham took part in the battle of Agincourt in 1415 and married a French girl. They had nine children and with a second wife had another family of 10. One of their descendants was Hubert Latham, a friend of Bleriot. The story goes that Hubert heard Bleriot had taken off to fly the Channel when he was in bed with his mistress. He was furious that Bleriot had gone without him and quickly jumped out of bed and having a faster plane proceeded to overtake him. Unfortunately, he ditched his plane on the shore whereas Bleriot landed after him, but on the cliffs. The Daily Mail, which was awarding a prize for this first Channel flight, gave it to Bleriot. But, to the people of France, however, Hubert Latham is the hero and there is a statue to him at Cap Gris Nez near Calais, commemorating his historic first crossing of the English Channel.

John can trace his family back to the time of William the Conqueror, so it was difficult to focus on the present family and their life in Stansted environs when so much fascinating family history was being revealed! John came to Waltham Hall farm in 1961 and originally farmed 312 acres eventually expanding to 1600 acres. He started with pigs but has also run a beef suckler herd. His most noteworthy enterprise was no doubt the 3000 turkeys he used to rear for the Christmas market and of which countless local people will remember as the centrepiece of many Christmas celebrations. Angela's memories of these times recall the nights she spent guarding the turkeys from rustlers!

John's family have been farming for generations, but his connection with this area began back in 1904 when John's grandfather came down from Lancashire. His sister had married into the Pimblett family who farmed in Henham; and in his turn John married into another farming family, the Padfields who are the largest farming family in Essex, one forebear arriving from Somerset at the turn of the 20th century with 12 sons and one daughter, all of whom farmed.

John met Angela, his wife of over 40 years, at guess where, the Young Farmers' Commemoration Ball. He recalls that he did not seem to make a great impression as a prospective suitor at the time, but when they met again 18 months later, it was a different matter. So John was a very fortunate man to start with such an asset as Angela and theirs has been a team effort. They have four children (one of whom is in partnership with John and Angela in running the business) and 10 grandchildren. Obviously family life is very important to them. The house is full of family pictures and a tree of the births of the grandchildren is painted on a wall in their lovely farmhouse kitchen.

Over the years John has seen many changes in farming, with an engulfing bureaucracy balancing the demands of the EEC Common Agricultural Policy that replaced the annual price reviews, supermarket directives, and the demands of the 'cheap food policy' that has dominated the national market trends for decades. Farmers have had to join together into large co-operatives, sharing machinery such as satellite controlled harvesters and tractors, and to diversify. Today they are even being seen as managers of the countryside rather than producers of food.

In 1992 John gave up his turkeys and diversified with letting of the buildings and barns on the farm, which range in use from light industrial and storage to offices. They are still an arable farm, but grain crops are not actually stored at the farm any more as they go directly to the Camgrain stores at Linton. This is a cost effective operating scheme for cereal farming today.

With the large machinery which is shared between the farms, only a few full-time workers are now needed. 'Genty', a remarkably fit lady, has worked for John for 43 years. Many of you will have seen her also working on the landscaping of St Therese's Church, where she is highly regarded for her unstinting hard work in clearing the land and planting, with John, some 800 trees, shrubs and flowers.

You would think wouldn't you that John must have been fully pre-occupied over the years with his farm and wouldn't have had the time or energy to take on other projects. But

you would be wrong. In 1978 he was asked to look after the trees at Saffron Walden Golf Club. In 1979 he became Chairman of the Greens when it expanded from 9 to 18 holes on what was then Capability Brown's Deer Park. He landscaped each hole and John and Genty planted 8,000 trees. As well as a scenic golf course it is also a lovely arboretum. John also ran the Essex County Showground for six years, was NFU branch chairman three times and participated on many sub-committees.

In 1983 the family bought a farm in Suffolk which they have enjoyed also using as a bolt-hole from their busy life at Waltham Hall. However, there John bought with the farm an ancient woodland which has been restored after the 1987 gales where idyllically wild garlic and bluebells grow to his delight. John also used to sail and often took his boat across the North Sea (maybe to take a look at that other wayfarer's statue?!.)

John and Angela will soon be moving to their 'bolt-hole' full time; we would hesitate to call it retirement, as John and Angela are an indispensable part of an agricultural team, but hopefully they will be able to spend more time together enjoying the expanding family.

Eileen and Brian Quinn
Photo by Mike Dyer

North & West Essex Adult Community College



Lingo Links!



2004 has seen the creation of a partnership between Newport Free Grammar School, which achieved Language College Status in September 2003, and the North & West Essex Adult Community College, to offer language classes to adults in the community (must be over 16). Languages include Italian, Japanese, German, Spanish and French with plans to extend classes to Russian, Turkish and Mandarin Chinese. Ten week courses for beginners are currently running during the day and evenings, with plans to extend these if demand is sufficient.

If you are thinking about forthcoming holidays or business trips or you might wish to help your children with their homework, please phone the N&WEACC branch in Thaxted on 01371 830245 or, if you have children at the school, you might prefer to speak to Melanie Watson in person in the school's Languages Department.

If you have any other linguistic requirements we would be glad to hear from you!



ART 4 ALL

I'm fascinated by BBC's Antiques Roadshow – aren't we all? The thought of finding a lost treasure in an attic or a boot sale seems to appeal to everyone. Art 4 All had the same sense of excitement when Sworders presented their Contemporary Art Sale over the weekend of 13th, 14th and 15th February.

The format was unusual as bids were displayed for each painting on a large board at the reception desk. Over the three days it was interesting to see the bids increase, culminating in the final bid for each painting by 4.00pm on the Sunday afternoon.

However, the excitement was enhanced not only to see a favourite painting was still yours at 4.00pm but it became obvious that one of the paintings was proving to be a hidden gem. The painting was coincidentally No. 1 in the catalogue – Girl with a Ruff Collar – a portrait by the Irish painter Daniel O'Neill with an estimated selling price of £2,000-£3,000. There is at present a strong interest in Irish art and Irish artists, hence the telephone bidding to Sworders from across the water.

The painting was gradually rising in price, so much so that the auctioneers decided to auction it separately after the other final bids at 4.00pm, as at least eight people were seriously interested in acquiring this wonderful painting.

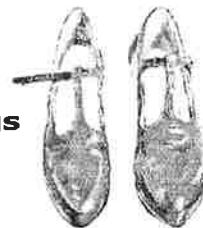
The painting at 4.00pm stood at £5,500. At 4.30pm the bidding began with seven mobiles being used and one other bidder in the auction room. Five minutes later the bidding was completed and the painting was sold for a remarkable £17,500 to one of the telephone bidders.

The organisers should be congratulated on the quality of the paintings, pottery and sculptures that were exhibited. This was a wonderful weekend that I hope will be repeated, so if you're interested in art, look out for it next year.

Ross Loveday

Jessica Pearce

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Stansted Tennis Club



Hospital Cup

The Annual General Meeting of the Saffron Walden and District Hospital Cup took place at 105 Cambridge Road, Stansted on Tuesday 9th March. Stansted, represented at the meeting by Janet Hollis and Sandra Ayres, will be hosting the finals in July.

Tree removal

If you walk past the Tennis Club, you may notice a large gap next to the clubhouse. This is because the very large horse chestnut tree, which was diseased has finally been felled.

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 for club members who wish to improve their game. Two classes take place between 2.00pm-4.00pm on Saturday afternoons. Please call Martyn on 816386 if you would like to find out more or would like to join in.

From March, Chris Hollis will start the spring/summer junior coaching programme at the club. This will mean that as well as Saturday mornings, there will be lessons on Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. There will also be match practice sessions for the older juniors on Tuesday afternoons. Chris now has more availability for individual lessons, so if you have specific areas of the game you want to refresh, or just want a general lesson, please get in touch. You can contact Chris on 319155.

Tennis Balls

Janet Hollis still has a lot of tennis balls (of varying standards) for sale. Please contact her on 812073 or call in at 105 Cambridge Road, if you would like to buy any.

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.

SNIPPETS

One of the friendly library staff, Mary Phillips, is being retired this month. Many of the library's "customers" will be sorry that she is no longer there but we all wish her happiness for the future.

We also learn that the new General Manager of the famous Cantate Youth Choir is Sarah House, who with her husband and three children lives in Stansted.

We wish her well too.

A POINT OF VIEW

Interest is gathering in the use of Elms Farm land for a Health Centre. It would appear that there is a negotiable possibility for the Health Centre, Parish Council offices and up to 70 houses to be accommodated on the site. The central location for the Health Centre will probably meet with general approval from the community, for although the Surgery statistics indicate that most patients come by car, for various reasons the day may not be far off when we are required to rediscover our legs.

What is of concern, however, is the impact on Stansted Park. Whatever may be said about there being no rights attached to a view, the prospect from Chapel Hill over the valley is exceptional and certainly one of the finest village views in Essex. Fortunately an increasing number of residents are becoming conscious of this but will this be enough to give the Park immunity from despoliation? It does seem a pity that a price far greater than the fair value of the land has to be paid for social necessities. Everyone concerned in the decision-making process should be acutely aware that the footprint or groundplan of a development tells one story but the elevation or eye-level scene can tell another. Even a conventional dwelling house is 9 - 10 m high, so any development would impose an increasing visual impact the further up the hill it extends. In this particular valley the result could easily be disastrous. As of course could be creeping extension to an initial proposal. The matter is of sufficient importance for anyone who cares - and that could be nearly everyone - to let their concern be known. Once safeguarded the restoration of an outstanding heritage, once influenced by Repton the 18th century designer, could become a possibility.

The Editor



WHITECHAPEL MISSION

Do you have surplus clothes?

They would be much appreciated by the guests at Whitechapel Mission, who are often living and sleeping rough on the streets of London.

If you would like to donate clothes, linen, towels, toiletries etc, please call Peter or Rosemary Thomson on the number below. They will arrange to collect them from you and transport them to the Mission.

01279 834053



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

Monday March 15th was a momentous day for the mill. A fresh SW wind and a visit by Neil Medcalf, our millwright, combined to enable the sails to turn again by wind after an interval of 94 years.

The sight of a 'live' mill is inspiring at any time but especially so for those Millers and helpers who have worked long and hard over the years. On this occasion it also made an impression on motorists as they came over the hill past the Bell and we must hope that their surprise did not provoke any near-accidents! There remain some further adjustments to the shutters, hopefully to be completed before April, so we can now look forward to further displays when wind and available operatives permit. A sincere thank-you is due to all who have donated and steadfastly worked to make this possible. Please, Stansted, keep up your interest in the mill and so ensure that it remains our prime (and no longer sleeping) monument.

On the following day the Millers held their AGM. Ted Pretty and Derek Honour were re-elected as co-chairmen, while Marion Williams was elected secretary and Peggy Honour as treasurer. Committee members re-elected were Molly Clark, Bridget Gott, Rosemary Minshull and Vanessa Pedder. The transfer of another £2,000 to the Parish-administered Windmill Fund was approved.

A short illustrated presentation on primitive and horizontal milling was given by Peggy Honour. A proposal by Pearl and Tony Wellings for a jumble/bric-a-brac style sale to be held over the National Mills Weekend on 8th/9th May was enthusiastically adopted. The Millers now look forward to a well-supported visitor season, enhanced we hope by occasional days when turning sails mark the skyline.

Come along and see your mill on 4th April or Easter Sunday and Monday.

Derek Honour



STANSTED FUN RUN

www.stansted10k.org.uk
info@stansted10k.org.uk


Plans for this year's Fun Run at 11.00am on Sunday 11th July are now well under way. The committee were sad to record the recent death of Mike the Clown who had entertained the children (and adults) at our event for several years. This year we are pleased to welcome The Clown Doctor in Mike's place.

The money raised this year will be supporting two charities: The Huw Johnson Club which, as most of our readers will know, aims to help anyone with a disability extend their range of social activities and make new friends whilst providing mutual support for their carers. The money raised from this year's run will go towards the expense of their annual holiday, plus the purchase of much needed new equipment.

The Assin Endwa Trust aims to improve the environment of the village of Assin Endwa in Ghana, by providing building materials and using local skills. Although only a tiny, five year-old charity, already they have built a large communal latrine, a four-roomed schoolhouse and a community library. They are now hoping to build a small primary health clinic with accommodation for visiting doctors and nurses who travel large distances to visit the village.

As in 2002, all finishers will receive a souvenir medal and there will be additional plaques and medals for the winners plus our usual raffle with superb prizes, and a tasty barbecue after the event. Entry fees are the same as last time: Adults £7 in advance, £8 on the day. Under 16s £3 in advance or on the day. Please note that team entries must be sent in advance. Entry forms will be available from the beginning of May. Forms will be sent to all previous entrants and there will be a form in the June edition of 'Link'. In addition, forms will be available from our website or by e-mailing us. For more details about the event please look at our new website www.stansted10k.org.uk or you can e-mail us at info@stansted10k.org.uk

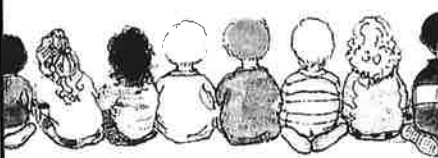
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CAMPAIGNERS UNITE TO CALL FOR BAN ON NIGHT FLIGHTS

Campaigners from Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) joined MPs, MEPs and members of other airport communities from the South East and the Midlands at a 'sleep in' on 27th February in London to launch a Europe-wide campaign to ban night flights at all European Airports.

The call for the ban on flights between the hours of 11.00pm and 7.00am takes the form of a Written Declaration and already has considerable support within the European Parliament and follows the European noise conference of campaign organisations attended by SSE in November.

The Declaration calls on the European Parliament to introduce legislation for a ban on night flights at all airports in the European Union between 11.00pm and 7.00am. If 381 MEPs from across Europe sign it, it will be debated in the European Parliament before the European Elections in June. SSE is calling on local people to press their MEPs to show their support for such a ban and to take action. The campaign group will also be making its own representations to the region's European politicians.

Night noise from aircraft has been proved to be responsible for sleep disturbance, increased heart rates and day-after effects such as depressed moods. The World Health Organisation recommends that night noise inside a bedroom should not exceed 45 dBA, or even lower where background noise levels are low. Even as much as 15 miles away, an aircraft coming in to land can cause noise levels higher than this inside a poorly insulated bedroom.

Night flights are regarded as one of the biggest problems facing communities across Europe and very few major airports have no night flights at all. Direct comparisons are difficult because countries define 'night' in different ways. However, Stansted has an average of 30 flights per night, compared with 16 at Heathrow, 40 at Gatwick and 60 at East Midlands Airport. At Stansted there are many more flights in the summer than in winter.



**STANSTED &
DISTRICT LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS.**

Our next ploughman's lunches are on Saturday 10th April and Saturday 8th May at the Stansted Day Centre, 12 noon to 2.00pm. All are welcome.

A Treasure Hunt, followed by Tea, will take place in Henham on Sunday 18th April, starting at the Village Hall at 2.30pm. Cost of entrance to include tea is £5. For further details and tickets, please ring 814222 or 813432.

Ruth Rawlinson

APRIL

It seems that there are different opinions as to the origin of the name of this month. One source says that Aprilis was a goddess of the Etruscans (an ancient people of central Italy) and another states that Aprilis is from Aphrilis, a corruption of Aphrodite, the Greek name for Venus. A further suggestion is a god or hero named Aper or Aprus. Could 'aper' (meaning a boar) have been his nickname? Whatever the derivation, it seems certain that April was a time particularly dedicated to Venus. Another Roman goddess connected with this month was Flora, goddess of flowers and flowering plants, whose games were celebrated on 28th.

The April Fools' Day tradition probably started in France around 1582. There were eight days of festivities to mark the New Year. As 25th March was regarded as the start of the year, the last day of celebration fell on 1st April. When the calendar was altered (as explained in February's 'Link'), not everyone changed their ways immediately and those that were behind the times were laughed at, called fools and teased. So arose the idea of playing practical jokes on them on 1st April. I am not entirely convinced by this explanation but has anyone a better one?

St George, whose feast day is 23rd April, is the guardian saint of England and Portugal although he had no connection with either country. Little is known definitely about him but there are many fables, including the story of him slaying the dragon.

Weather-wise, this month is known for sunshine and showers. As Sir William Watson put it:

"April, April,
Laugh thy girlish laughter;
Then the moment after,
Weep thy girlish tears!"



Peggy Honour

A TIMELY REMINDER

Bentfield School's 25th Anniversary on 1st & 2nd May takes the form of music, food and bar on the Saturday evening and an Open Day on the Sunday with photographs, etc. If you were there in any capacity between 1979 and 1984 ring 813734.

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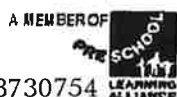
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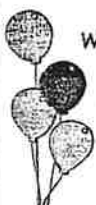
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