

May 2004

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Carters Hill Maaoudeh

“International trade between my country and the West is like an antelope and a giraffe competing for food which is at the top of a tree. - You can make the ground level but the contest will still not be fair.”

says the Secretary General of the Christian Council of Churches in Ghana

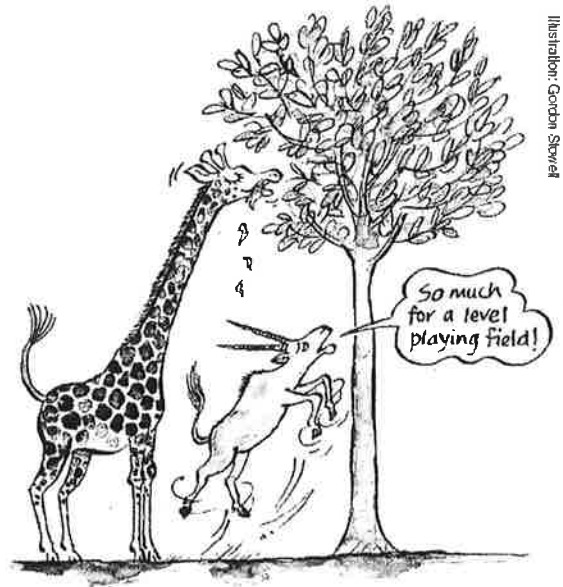


Illustration: Gordon Stewart

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buys rice for a family in Sierra Leone to plant, providing food, income, and seeds for the next season

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pays for taps and troughs to provide two villages in Bolivia with a safe and reliable water supply

The Link (price £3.50 per year) is published monthly by Churches Together in Stansted
Editor: Derek Honour
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All other enquiries to Janet Townsend Tel 01279 812593

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by 10th June for publication on 26th June

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 11.00 am

Coming home

This is a personal reflection on what Quakerism has come to mean to me since I attended my first meeting in Stansted in the summer of last year.

After one abortive attempt, I finally plucked up the courage to walk through the Meeting House doors unsure of exactly who and what I would find. It came as a relief to be greeted warmly but without being smothered. I had an immediate sense of ease and a freedom to explore something new without any demands or pressures being placed upon me. In the weeks that followed I came to have a sense – described by others new to Quakerism – of ‘coming home’.

As I spoke to members of the Meeting and began to read about Quakerism, I was struck by how inclusive the Quaker way is. Having been an Anglican for many years, I was reassured that Quakerism valued the tradition from which I came just as it values all church traditions and religious faiths.

Among the first characteristics of the Quaker way that struck a chord with me were tolerance, equality, social concern, a commitment to peace and a respect for the dignity and rights of others – especially the vulnerable and dispossessed.

At the heart of this was the recognition of the light within all of us and that of God in everyone. For me this is what illuminates the Quaker path and gives sense and strength to Quaker values.

Acceptance of oneself and of others as they really are and not as we might wish them to be, is also central to how I understand the Quaker way.

While I feel accepted for the person I am, complete with all my faults and failings, Quakerism for me does not represent a complacent acceptance of personal weaknesses and failure. The sense of ‘that of God in everyone’ is deeply challenging. What should my response be to somebody begging in the street? How should I best try to meet the needs of others? What is my capacity to love and care and to make a positive difference to other people’s lives? Since trying to follow the Quaker path, I find these questions increasingly difficult to avoid. Quakerism challenges my complacency and exposes my shortcomings and prejudices. But it does so in a loving and forgiving way. It is my own personal

response to Quakerism that challenges me to think about how I make the best use of my time and resources. It is not an external imposition. It is part of how I understand the Quaker way that I can accept myself and feel accepted for the person I am while at the same time striving to live my life in a way that makes me more truly myself.

For me Quakerism is about community – a community of friends who accept and care about each other. But it is not an insular community that cares only about itself. It has an active concern about religious, social and other issues locally, nationally and internationally and reflects carefully on how it can help; however small that help may be.

Jonathan Morrell

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 May

2nd Rev'd Keith Page – Holy Communion
9th Rosamunde Page
16th Christine Heyhoe
23rd Joint service at the United Reformed Church at 10.30am led by Rev'd David Simpson
30th Rev'd Harry Wood

Thursday 13th May – Church Council meeting at 8.00pm

For the last year or so we have been sharing in occasional Sunday worship with our friends at the United Reformed Church. More recently this has become formalised as a regular joint service on the fourth Sunday of the month. Responsibility tends to alternate, but sometimes a group with representatives from both churches plans the worship. Both churches enjoy the joint services and feel the benefit of being part of a larger worshipping community. Coffee is served afterwards, which enables us to get to know one another in an informal way. We are grateful to the URC for the welcome they extend to us, and we look forward to an even closer relationship with them, when the time is right.

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 May

2nd	10.30am	Rev'd David Simpson
9th	10.30am	Mr C. Wright
16th	10.30am	Rev'd David Simpson - Communion
	6 pm	Christian Aid Service at the Quaker Meeting House
23rd	10.30am	Rev'd David Simpson - Joint with Methodists
30th	10.30am	Rev'd Dr D. Thompson

Dates for your diary

2nd	May	3.30pm - 5.00pm	Afternoon Tea
8th	May	10.00am	Pilots Nearly New sale in Lecture Hall
15th	May	7.00 for 7.30pm	Quiz Night ~ to book a table ring 814850
17th	May	2.30pm	Monday Club Rev'd Keith Page
5th	June	10.00am - 12 noon	Coffee morning & mini market
6th	June	3.30pm-5.00pm	Afternoon Tea

Easter exhibitions

A very busy, but happy and successful weekend was had over Easter by everyone connected with the exhibitions at the URC.



The wedding dresses and photographs in the Church were greatly admired; there was also a family Bible on show, which was presented to the first couple to be married in the new Congregational Chapel in 1867. This was among several books and papers loaned by Terry Patmore of Sudbury, nephew of Cis Abrahams (née Patmore), who used to live in Stansted; it was the subject of much comment. The Bygones were enjoyed by all who visited the Hall, and brought back many memories of times past; and the comment "I remember that" was heard many times. The water-colour painting of St Mary's Church, Stansted kindly donated by Katharine Hurford, was won by John Bunting of Bishops Stortford, and the book of Stansted postcards was won by Peter Lambert of Stansted. There were eight correct identifications of the mystery object, which was a Brazil nut, and the winner drawn from the box was Cyril Stoneham of Stansted.



Our very grateful thanks go to all who visited over the weekend, and to those who helped and contributed in any way, especially Tony Wellings, for without his help the Lecture Hall would have been quite bare. The marvellous sum of £450 was raised towards our hall refurbishment fund.

Elephant Pumps

By the time you read this edition of 'Link' magazine, a member of our congregation, Howard Reeve, should have completed a 50 mile sponsored walk from his home in Elsenham to Ongar and back, raising money in the process to purchase Elephant water pumps for villages in Africa. Howard works for Tesco at Bishops Stortford who have agreed to add 20% of his sponsors' money to the total. So if anyone would like to help Howard reach his £1000 target for this very worthy cause, contact Janet on 812593; Howard would be very grateful.

Janet Townsend



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

Open Door Service

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

- **2nd May** All-age communion
- **16th May** All-age worship

Mel's Passion

I wasn't going to see it. It wasn't that I felt strongly about the movie, one way or the other, it was just not top of my list of must-do's. It was only when I was alerted to the fact that *The Passion of the Christ* might be a subject at a dinner party that I thought I might give it a go, especially as one of the other guests would be a former parishioner, now decamped to the wilds of Seward's End, and it's a point of honour not to be outdone by her whenever our paths cross.

I kept waiting for something to happen. That's not to say that there was not plenty of action, far from it. I patiently sat and noted the various bits of the gospel stories which Gibson had pressed into service. I flinched a little at the initial bloodletting. Patiently I watched for the androgynous Devil character to develop into significance, but it never quite got there. By the time Caviezel's Jesus fell a second time, I realised we were doing the stations of the cross, and I wearily ticked them off in my head as they passed across the screen.

At the end I was left with a big 'so what?' I didn't know what Gibson wanted me to do with his tale; I was left with a surfeit of blood and carnage with nowhere to put it. It was beyond me why some of my colleagues had block-booked theatres, to use the movie to encourage people to faith.

The point about telling a Jesus story is that you do so to answer a question, or to raise one. Each of the gospel writers was telling

their version of the Jesus story in such a way as to address a particular need of the community to whom they were writing. The question might be about who belongs in the Christian community? or who is my neighbour? Why should we take Jesus seriously? Either way the stories are written in such a way that invites a response. Gospel writers are not simply spinning a tale for the sake of it, they want you to take what they've written and do something with it.

The Gospel according to St Mel does none of this, unless having your nose rubbed in the brutality of first century Roman justice somehow makes you want to say your prayers. If the film was created to answer a question it was certainly lost on me.

Gospel writers and preachers know that there is no such thing as a plain vanilla Jesus story. That's why the four gospels differ in the way that they do. Why they write and preach is because they recognise that people start with real-life questions, and so the story has to be told in such a way that speaks to the real-life situations of their hearers, and all of these are different. They shaped their material in the belief that God meets us where we are. So, don't send me to a movie, tell me in your own words how you, a person like me, with problems and concerns like mine, has been changed by Jesus. If I can see that it is possible for me as well, then it's news I can use, good news.

AS

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

The current housegroup is devoted to issues around understanding Holy Communion, the characteristic Christian rite. Special attention is being given to admitting children to receive communion.

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



(continued)

Registers for March

Baptism

21st Alexandra Daisy Pocknell

Funerals

Alfred Wilkinson age 74
 Kathleen Sheffield age 76
 Percival Heal age 85

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

Reflection on Micah 6 v 8

"This is what Yahweh asks of you: only this, to act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."

This passage has long been a favourite of mine, perhaps because it appears simple, non-threatening, and easy to follow. For the Lord asks only this. Many other spiritual passages advising on how to please God can make one ashamed of one's shortcomings, of guilt at waywardness, and sometimes despair at ever being able to get anywhere near the perfection apparently asked of us. This passage

from Micah seems more on my level. It's almost 'everydayish', something one could achieve without too much effort. But exploring it more, it will be realised that it asks much of us in a simple, forthright way.

Only this - to act justly. To 'search for justice', to 'help the oppressed' (Isaiah 1 v 18-19). Maybe the simplicity comes from realising this is asked of us where we are - in our community, in our family. To stand up for those who are downtrodden, to be bold on their behalf, not to look for popularity but righteousness.

Only this - to love tenderly. As in Matthew 5, it says it is easy to love your family, your friends, those who love you. But what of those in our community who one may find it difficult to love. It's easy perhaps to be nice, helpful, but can we love tenderly? Tenderly meaning more than liking, meaning compassion, understanding, and respect. It also means 'soft', taking a soft, concerned approach. Can we say we tenderly love and respect those whose opinions differ from our own, whose religion is not ours?

Only this - to walk humbly with your God. This appears to me to incorporate the other two decrees. In acting justly, in loving tenderly one should believe it is a privilege to help and to love others, not something to be proud of. But in walking humbly with our God, we are not walking alone. Also, we must walk with other people as no-one can do anything on their own. Together, we can make a better world - our world of where we are. It is as simple or as difficult as that!

Rita Morson



1350th Anniversary of St Peter's on the Wall, Bradwell

This year, St Peter's on the Wall, Bradwell-on-Sea, celebrates the 1350th Anniversary of the building of the chapel by St Cedd in 654AD. A number of events are being planned to celebrate this significant anniversary, which will give a special flavour to this year's Bradwell Pilgrimage on Saturday 3rd July, 2004.

One of the special events is an Open Quiet Day at St Peter's Chapel and the Othona Community on Saturday 15th May, 10.30am - 3.30pm. This will be led by Fr Gerard Hughes S.J., author of 'God of Surprises' and 'Finding God in all things'. The cost of the day will be in the region of £15. To secure a place please contact Canon Hugh Beavan (01621 776203).

Christian Aid

We believe in life before death

Christian Aid Week 9th-15th May

The Week starts with a Service at the Friends Meeting House on Sunday 9th May at 6.30pm and finishes on Saturday 15th May with a Market outside the Meeting House from 10.00am to noon. In between, 300,000 people collect for Christian Aid (not all in Stansted!).

If you would like to join this merry band, please contact me on 813579 – I shall be waiting by the phone as soon as 'Link' is delivered!



What would you do with 1 million pounds?

Christian Aid can do a lot with the million pounds it gets from the tax man, because tax payers fill in the declaration on the envelope. But if more tax payers were to fill in the declaration, the million pounds could perhaps be doubled. So please fill in the Gift Aid part of the envelope and if you collect for Christian Aid please encourage those who are donating to complete the declaration.

Circle the City either on foot or by bike on Sunday 16th May from 1.00pm.

This year's walk/bike ride has three routes, two of 5km and one of 10km; all starting and finishing at All Hallows by the Tower. All routes take in churches and the bike route is mainly on cycle paths and quiet roads. If anyone is interested in taking part please contact me on 813579.

A message from Christian Aid

By supporting Christian Aid Week, you are among 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.

Please support Christian Aid in Stansted.

Catherine Dean
Tel: 01279 813579



SHALOM

Meetings

Monday 10th May

- a themed evening on 'Hope' with Catherine Dean at the Quaker Meeting House.

Monday 24th May

- a talk by Roger Pope on the Mormon Faith at 7 Blythwood Gardens.

Hope to see you there!

Catherine Dean



Huw Johnson Club

We hope you all have noted the date of our Summer Concert, when we shall be entertained by the local group 'Charity'. Tickets will be on sale soon. The concert will be at Four Winds, Burton End, on Saturday 26th June.

Tom and Marion are in the midst of moving house and our new address is 26 Spencer Close. Look out for the date of the first coffee morning in our new establishment.

We all had a super time at the Bishop's Stortford Bowling Alley on our last evening before Easter. Everyone had a really good time and the food was delicious. The staff were so kind and helpful to us all and we say thank you to them for looking after us so well.

Marion G Johnson

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VILLAGE EVENTS

May		
1 Sat	Introduction Morning	Bowls Club 10 am - 1 pm
1 Sat/2 Sun	Green Waste, Wood, Metal	Lower St Car Pk 9 am - 3 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
	Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
6 Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
8 Sat	Plant Sale	Fire Station 10 am
	Windmill Open	12 noon - 6 pm
	Big Top May Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
9 Sun	Windmill Open	12 noon - 6 pm
10 Mon	RBL (Women)	105 Cambridge Road 2.30 pm
	Shalom Group	Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
11 Tue	Fashion Show	Mountfitchet Sch 7 for 7.30 pm
13 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
14 Fri	Stop Stansted Expansion Quiz	St John's Hall 7.30 for 8 pm
15 Sat	Christian Aid Market	Quaker Meeting House 10 am
	URC Quiz	URC Hall 7 for 7.30 pm
15 Sat/16 Sun	Green Waste, Wood, Metal	Lower St Car Pk 9 am - 3 pm
16 Sun	Boot Sale	Mountfitchet School 8 am - noon
19 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
24 Mon	NCT Open House	URC Hall 10 am
	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
29 Sat/30 Sun	Green Waste, Wood, Metal	Lower St Car Pk 9 am - 3 pm
29 Sat/31 Mon	Flower Festival	St Mary's Ch Hatfield Broad Oak
30 Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
31 Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
June		
2 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
	Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
6 Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
	D Day Commemoration	War Memorial 3 pm
11 Fri	WI 'The Entertainers'	United Reformed Church 7.30 pm
12 Sat/13 Sun	Green Waste, Wood, Metal	Lower St Car Pk 9 am - 3 pm
12 Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
	Croquet Club Open Day	Newport Croquet Club



QUIZ
Friday 14th May
St John's Church Hall
7.30 for 8 pm
TABLES OF 6 TO 8
Raffle ~ Bar
Tickets £8
 incl. 'ploughman's & pud' supper
 from King's Butchers or
 Liz 814931 ~ Vanessa 812280



Hall Renovation Fund
QUIZ NIGHT
 7 for 7.30 pm Sat 15th May
 URC Lecture Hall
 Tables of 8
 £5 (incl ploughman's)
 Please tel 814850
 Bring your own drink and glass

Hatfield Broad Oak Flower Festival



Bank Holiday Weekend
 Sat/Sun/Mon 29/30/31 May



In and around St Mary's Church
 Open from 10 am (12 noon Sun)
 Exhibits & Refreshments daily
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 Dog Show - Sun 12 noon
 10k Road Race - Mon 11 am

Enquiries to Janet Pugh on 01279 718435



MUSIC ON A SUMMER'S EVENING
 with 'CHARITY'
 Saturday 26th June
 6.30 for 7 - 9pm

at 'Four Winds' Burton End
 (please bring own deckchairs)

Tickets £8 inc. light refreshments
 from HJ Club or Stansted Carpets

ALL PROCEEDS TO THE HUW JOHNSON CLUB



Newport Croquet Club
Open Day
 Saturday 12th June

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 Tea & Coffee available
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More information from
 David Manley (01279) 812564



Stansted Evening Women's Institute
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UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Airport Impact

The impact of the airport on the quality of life in Stansted has hit the headlines again. According to a report based on Land Registry data, the value of our homes has on average been depressed by over £20,000 compared with other parts of Essex since the threat of an extra runway was announced. The Council is currently studying BAA's proposed compensation scheme for homeowners. Currently they do not propose to compensate anyone in Stansted Mountfitchet so I would urge residents to contact Stop Stansted Expansion for advice on how to make your concerns known to BAA.

Pollution

The Council held a conference on renewable forms of energy such as wind and solar power. I also attended a conference at County Hall in March about the steps in Essex that will need to be taken to deal with global warming. Water supplies, health services, home designs, the crops we can grow, the wildlife we enjoy will all be affected. Plans are being made at European level to help us reduce the amount of carbon dioxide produced by the energy we use in our homes. This gas is one that is causing climate change. The frightening piece of information was that the measures we can take as individuals to save energy in our homes, not just in Stansted, but across the whole of the EU, will be undone by the increase in so-called greenhouse gases produced by the aviation industry in the UK alone.

I felt this information was made even more worrying by the apparent contempt shown to local people and their opinions by a newsletter from BAA called 'Plane Talk' that came through our letter boxes in mid April.

Councillor Alan Dean
Email: cldrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk
Tel: 01279 813579

Community Safety

Residents have highlighted community safety as a key area of concern. In view of this, the Council entered a partnership last year with Essex Police to provide Police Community Support Officers. The Council contributes £50,000 per annum towards the cost of these officers. At a recent meeting the Divisional Commander Chief Superintendent Sue Harrison and Inspector Les Weller explained the work of the PCSOs within Uttlesford. There are five of them at present, four based in Saffron Walden and one in Dunmow. They began work in November 2003.

The powers of the PCSOs include issuing:

- Fixed penalty notices
- Cycling on the footway
- Disorder
- Dog fouling
- Litter

Confiscation of alcohol in designated public places and from young persons

Confiscation of tobacco from young persons

Removal of abandoned vehicles

Entry to save life or limb or prevent serious damage to property

Between November 2003 and February 2004 the PCSOs attended 189 incidents. These included:

- 124 forms being submitted to the Driver Vehicle Licence Agency
- 14 abandoned vehicles dealt with
- 71 stop-checks were made
- 2 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders intelligence forms were filed
- 6 incidents where alcohol was seized
- 18 where tobacco was seized

Chief Superintendent Harrison believed the PCSOs were doing good work in the community and thanked the Council for their support. I made the point that Stansted is the third largest settlement in the district and received no direct benefit from the PCSOs. She accepted that Stansted was rapidly growing in population and that there would be a review of the PCSOs later in the year.

Ward Walk

On Friday 16th April, with Anne Marchant, I will be accompanying Alasdair Bovaird the Council's Chief Executive around Stansted and Ugley. It will give Anne and me an opportunity to familiarise him with local issues.

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



**STANSTED
FUN RUN**

Fun, Run & Walk

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

**11.00am Sunday 11th July
Bentfield Green**

Plans for this year's 10K Fun Run are progressing well. We have a wide range of raffle prizes, generously donated by our sponsors, and all finishers will receive a souvenir medal. There will be a tasty barbecue on the Green after the run.

We are still looking for people willing to be stewards along the route. This is not a difficult task, but it is a very important one. If you can help for an hour on the day please contact Brian Quinn on 812109, or drop an email to us at the address above.

Entry forms will be sent to all previous entrants during May, and are also available by email or from our website above.

Marion Dyer
Tel: 01279 814059

ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

In previous News Reports there has been mention of the Regional Authority's proposals for housing for Essex being at a total of some 131,000 houses in Essex as a whole, allied to some 18,000 houses for Harlow in particular; in this case not sited in Harlow District Council's area. Whilst these figures have been agreed in principle by a majority of the non-elected Regional Authority, Essex as a county has decided that these numbers are unacceptable and so has decided to fight for what was originally proposed by the county, namely 111,000, and perhaps additional numbers for Harlow, but related to the requirement for new road systems – east to west using for example the A414 which will remove the current congestion in and around the Harlow area.

More details of how the fight will be conducted will be reported in due course. Sufficient now that readers are aware and understand that the county does not wish to see the rural areas enveloped by concrete and houses, and needs support in its campaign to resist.

Further to this immediate issue, it is appropriate to mention something of the activities of the County Trading Standards Department which, on behalf of the electors, supervises so many of the activities of shopkeepers, petrol stations, car boot salesmen and street marketers; which if not controlled and checked will lead to buyers being defrauded and/or cheated. Few realise what good work is done in this field by a limited and over-stretched staff who, in spite of more and more tasks being placed upon them by central government, still manage to keep abuse under control. In this respect, readers are reminded that it is for them to support the work of the staff by noting areas of abuse and reporting them to the Trading Standards Report Centre so this can be recorded and action taken. The Centre telephone numbers can be found in all telephone books.

Should any reader wish to raise these matters further they should contact the undersigned on 01279 812588.

County Councillor Richard Wallace
Stansted Division

SNIPPETS

St. John's Church Munch-a-Lunch on 25th April was blessed with sunny weather that enabled it to be held on the lawn. Over 60 people attended and upwards of £500 was raised for the Bishops Appeal for HIV/AIDS victims.



Royal British Legion Stansted & District Branch

As mentioned in the last edition of 'Link' it is proposed to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of D-Day on 6th June.

Thanks to the support of the Reverend Andrew Spurr and the Parish Council, it is now intended that there will be a service held at the Stansted War Memorial at 3.00pm followed by refreshments in St John's Hall.

It is hoped that as many residents as possible will come along to the event to commemorate the memorable events of that day in 1944, and in honour and memory of those who took part.

More information will appear in the June 'Link'.

David Challis
(Chairman)



Royal British Legion Women's Section

On Monday afternoon 8th March we met at Pat Clower's and enjoyed a chat, a cup of tea, a generous raffle and some beautiful slides shown by Edna and Alan Wright. As always, they had been on an interesting boat trip leaving Harwich last May, following the coast to Ramsgate, past Walmer Castle with its guns and the Queen Mother's Garden; on to Dover and then to Calais.

From there they hugged the French coast, putting into different harbours and visiting French towns. We saw shots of wonderful architecture and beautiful gardens – all kept especially immaculate for the annual celebrations in May to commemorate the end of both World Wars.

We plan to meet every two months during the summer, in different homes, and make as much money as we can to give to the Royal British Legion and the Gurkhas. Our next meeting will be at Janet Hollis's on Monday 10th May at 2.30 pm, when Doris and Harold will show some of their holiday slides.

Pat Clower



The month of April opened with our Easter celebrations. As usual our activities reflected the season; children in all groups made Easter chicks and delicious chocolate nests, complete with mini-eggs.

On the last sessions of term parents were invited to an end of term concert in which children performed a selection of songs complete with actions, including the seasonal favourites 'Hot Cross Buns' and 'Five Currant Buns in a Baker's Shop'. Afterwards parents enjoyed a hot cross bun, kindly donated by Dorringtons whilst the children took part in an Easter egg hunt outside in the playground.

Our annual Easter party took place on Sunday 4th April. The children played a variety of party games, danced to our disco and took part in a splendid procession of Easter bonnets. Judging the three best bonnets was an extremely difficult task but the three winning hats are pictured below.



The summer term has now begun and children have several exciting events to look forward to, including trips to Harlow Town Park and Paradise Wildlife Park at the end of June.

Rainbow Pre-school has recently purchased a computer to be used by the children in order to develop their ICT skills and have used some of the money raised by our sponsored cake-bake to purchase new software. We have also been collecting the Tesco Computers for Schools Vouchers. If 'Link' readers have any spare we would be very grateful for your donations.

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



Stansted Evening Women's Institute

At our April meeting we visited the Land of Oz courtesy of North Street Wines, Bishop's Stortford, when Jane Lockwood talked about Australian wines.

Wine was brought to Australia by settlers in about 1800, when soldiers and sailors returning from the war started making it. The standard of this early wine was terrible. The names of some of these wines were also awful like Kangaorange or Emu Claret, and Europeans would not buy Australian wines. Knowing they had the right climate and growing ability, Australians went abroad to learn about wine production. In the 1970s and 80s they started to produce better wines; sales have gone up, and the French and Germans are now looking at how the Australians produce their wines. Members were able to taste four different wines, two white and two red; one of these a sparkling wine. Jane was thanked by Linda Gurr (who's teetotal) for a very interesting, amusing and alcoholic talk.

In business time members were informed of a fund raising event we are holding in the United Reformed Church on 11th June, when we are being entertained by the 'Entertainers'. Cost of the tickets will be £5.50 which includes refreshments. The evening will be by ticket only and will be advertised round the village.

We have donated £33 worth of goods to George Mills who helps Romanians, and we also sent £25 from our raffle to Fair Trade, having bought £12 in goods for the raffle prizes.

Our Oz evening continued with slides of Judy Colliver's visit to Australia when she visited her daughter who had married earlier that year on a local beach. The beautiful slides covered all the different places they visited including old railway stations and the animals they saw. Judy had also set up a display of the various items she had brought back as souvenirs of Australia.

Our next meeting in May is on Thursday 13th at 7.30pm for 7.45pm start. Visitors are very welcome.

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**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

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



01279 812212

One would have thought that after a year of discussing the future of Stansted Airport people would be sick to death with aeroplanes and aerodromes – not so! At a packed meeting on 1st April, Bryn Elliot told us many little-known facts concerning flying in West Essex, and started by listing so many sites that had been involved, that your reporter was unable to record them all!

Fortunately, Bryn went on to show us slides of aerodromes, fliers and planes (many decidedly bent) from the earliest days of aviation until the present day, supplementing them with stories he had researched, which demonstrated West Essex's honourable place in the history of aviation. The first aircraft to land in Essex did so in 1912, and many famous pioneers from those early days designed, built and flew from local sites such as AV Roe, Handley-Page and Percival.

During both World Wars there was much aerial activity in the neighbourhood. The important place held by North Weald in London's air defence is well known. Few, however, are aware that when the Zeppelins were seeking London in the First War, a squadron from the Royal Naval Air Service was based at Chingford to combat them. Perhaps the RNAS was selected because the field was directly alongside a reservoir, requiring a rescue boat to be put on stand-by when planes were taking off or landing, but the persistent fog soon persuaded the authorities to move them. Later, in the 1920s the airfield was drowned when a new reservoir was formed on the site.

Regular passenger services began in the 1930s. Hillman Airways flew several routes, including Staplefield to Paris and Amy Johnson was one of their occasional pilots. It was on the Paris run that two grieving young ladies chose to commit suicide by throwing themselves out of the small passenger plane over East London – they had fallen in love with two RAF officers both of whom had died in a plane crash. This was, fortunately, a unique experience. Bryn finished his talk by telling us of his current involvement with the North Weald Airfield Museum. This records the history of a site which has played an important part in two World Wars and I think many of our Members will be following his recommendations to visit in the coming months.

Our next meeting at the Day Centre on 6th May will be our Annual General Meeting, and I know that many people will be looking forward to another of Peter Sanders' presentations - this time on the early days of the Parish Council. Hope you will be able to make it.

Ian Seavers

We hope that you all enjoyed the Easter break and didn't eat too much chocolate! The children at St Mary's prepared for their Easter Eggs by burning a few calories beforehand, when they took part in a skipping workshop. Some of the older children were taught new skips such as 'the Flamingo' and 'Riverdance' (you will have to use your imagination here!) and gave a demonstration to the whole school. An hour's workshop after school gave the children a chance to learn and practise further skills, and buy ropes if they wished. I was lucky enough to be in school the next day, and it was wonderful to watch so many of the children enjoying this traditional game at break.

Well done to the netball team, who were runners up to Takeley in the tournament held at Saffron Walden on 24th March. The football team (Years 5 and 6) had their chance to shine in the North West Area 6-a-side tournament held at Katherine Semar School, Saffron Walden on 24th April.

The 26th March was action-packed, with grandparents visiting their grandchildren for Granny and Grandad's day. The children showed them their work and gave them a tour of the school, followed by a cup of tea and biscuits in the hall. In the evening the PTFA held their Music Quiz, which was a really enjoyable (and challenging!) evening. Huge thanks go to Becky and Alan Carter, quiz mistress and technician respectively, who did a fantastic job and helped us to raise £700. These funds have been matched by Barclay's Bank as part of their employee community scheme, so thanks must go to them also.

Easter activities included a presentation by Puppets Galore on the Easter Message on 29th March, and the service held in St John's church on 2nd April. Children from each year took part in the service, which was well attended by parents and friends. The PTFA Easter Egg Tombola raised £65, and more thanks go to Tesco for donating the eggs. St Mary's was the venue for the Good Friday Project, which was attended by local children who took part in activities during the day, culminating in a fantastic presentation in the church, which was enjoyed by their families.

It is unbelievable how time flies; we are now in the summer term, and for the PTFA this means the start of preparations for the Summer Fayre on 26th June. Please mark this date in your diaries and join us for lots of traditional fun and games.



Nicki Kelly

St Mary's CE Foundation Primary School

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Being a school governor is an enjoyable and rewarding responsibility when working with a school like St Mary's which has a very professional and open policy approach to its future development.

During the year we attend meetings to discuss all areas of the school's organisation. Finance, staffing, pupils' progress and achievements, school visits and buildings' maintenance are some of our responsibilities. Our role is to support and help the school with the information and suggested actions provided by the head teacher and staff. One of our most enjoyable experiences is when we visit the school to talk to parents, staff and the children.

Nationally all schools have regular Ofsted inspections to review and comment on all aspects of a school's organisation and performance. A full report is provided for the school, parents and governors. Our last report in July 2003 highlighted many good aspects of the school. Relationships with parents, the behaviour and attitudes of the children in school were considered very good. All the inspectors said that the school had a friendly, happy working atmosphere where the pupils enjoyed their education. Like all reports the head teacher and governors were provided with some action points to develop after the Ofsted visit. These included monitoring the children's work and progress very thoroughly and providing targets for individual pupils. The school has already started work in this area with the report providing useful guidelines for the work to progress.

The school was very fortunate to appoint Wendy Wood as its new head teacher in September 2003. Included in her range of experiences was drawing up a previous school's action plan in the specific areas targeted for St Mary's by Ofsted.

Our day in the life of a governor was Thursday 25th March. What did we do? As a group we looked at:

- How the school has produced a new system of tracking individual pupils' progress. This involves ensuring that children do not underachieve and is very valuable for all children, including the most able, who need to be challenged and motivated at school.
- How all staff work together planning work to meet the pupils' individual needs. All school subjects have a key teacher who coordinates the work done in their area in the school.
- How the children are involved with staff in setting their own targets for improvement in their school work which are carefully checked by the class teacher.

We enjoyed the whole day and I particularly enjoyed talking to the children about their work and school life in general. They obviously enjoy school. They were keen to talk about their progress, how they were helped to set targets for improvement and how these were monitored by their class teacher to provide feedback and further encouragement.

They were all much more aware of their own responsibility to learn than I ever was at their age. By the end of the day we were fairly exhausted, but very pleased and encouraged after seeing the positive way the school is developing.

I have always thought a very fundamental question a governor should ask is "would I want my own children to attend the school where I am a governor?" The answer in St Mary's case is a very definite "yes". The Ofsted inspectors were right when they said that this is a happy school and with planning taking place to ensure individual targets are set and monitored, it will continue to provide the best education for all its pupils.

John Pashley
St Mary's School Governor


Stansted Art & Craft Market

HELP!!

As some of you may have read in the local paper, the shed that we kept our equipment in was set on fire and everything in it destroyed. We have now found new storage space thanks to Toby Lyons of Hole Farm: this will enable us to store the new equipment we will have to make to continue with the event.

We will have to make boards to display the pictures on and advertising boards. If anyone is willing to help with the making of these boards we would be most grateful as we have to produce over 30 large boards and 20 advertising boards. Without this equipment there will be no Art and Craft Market, which gives all its proceeds to local organisations.

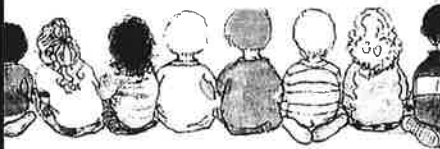
Offers of help please phone Brenda Ryan on 812725.



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Stansted Tennis Club



Nature Notes

New Committee members

The Annual General Meeting of Stansted Tennis Club took place on 15th March 2004. It was well attended and two new members, Michaela Bitten and Martyn Taplin, were elected and welcomed to the current committee.

Tournament results

The first Adult/Junior doubles tournament took place at the club on Sunday 28th March. 16 pairs battled through their round-robin groups and the freezing weather. The final was a keenly contested affair with Matt and Charlie Kirby defeating John Bitten and Ruby Hollis 4-1. Afterwards a barbecue (in the dark) was enjoyed by the competitors and spectators.

16 members took part in a charity tournament in aid of HEAL on Tuesday 30th March. A bring and share lunch as well as a raffle all helped to raise money for charity. The final was won by Sandra Ayres and Richard Crosby who defeated Jenny Kirby and Roger Loveday.

Club Open sessions

All adult members are welcome to come along and join in any of the following open club sessions:

Sunday mornings from 9.30am

Wednesday mornings from 9.30am

Wednesday evenings from 5.00pm

Friday mornings from 9.30am

Coaching

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

Chris Hollis has started the spring/summer junior coaching programme at the club. Group lessons are now taking place on Saturday mornings as well as Monday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. There is also a 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.

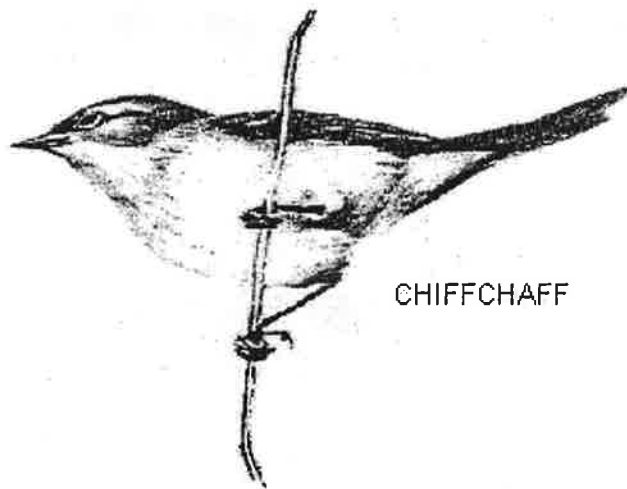
Tennis Balls

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.

2004 may, among other things, be the year of the Lesser Celandine. This ground-hugging symbol of spring has proliferated and become both a nuisance and a blessing. Anyone with a penchant for a 'clean' lawn will be of the former persuasion as it can appear to crowd out the grasses; those who enjoy a temporary golden carpet instead of grass will be of the latter. The redeeming merit of celandine is that when flowering ceases in May it becomes recessive and the grasses are able to stage a comeback.

Another perennial which inspires both reactions is the cow parsley or anthriscus. It is the most obvious feature of wasteland, road verges and woodland edges in May and can be a delight, but in the garden it is invasive. Its dead flower heads and yellowing leaves are probably unattractive for two or three weeks until they are overtaken by other growth or just collapse.



CHIFFCHAFF

So far this has been a good bird year in Stansted. Jays, chiffchaff, most tits and chaffinches seem to have become more numerous and a weekly garden count of 15 species or more was noted in March and April. Other readers can probably top this. Perhaps my hearing is even worse than I thought, but the cuckoo does seem to be later and less audible than usual. It is on the list of declining species. On the other hand the corvids are becoming more numerous. The rookeries near the A120 west of Wickham Hall are more plentiful and larger than last year, while the carrion crow, magpie and aforementioned jay are abundant. They are one of the bird kingdom's most intelligent families so we should expect them to quickly fill an ecological niche or even exploit a new one, such as the carrion which is regularly sprinkled along our roads.

Derek Honour

BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

01279 813626

Spring brings thoughts of fluffy lambs and daffodils. To celebrate we joined 1200 other schools in a world record poetry-reading attempt for the Marie Curie Cancer daffodil charity. At 9.15am precisely, the whole school (and some parents) recited Wordsworth's daffodil poem. We are all hopeful of a mention in the new Guinness World Record Book and are pleased to have raised over £80 for the charity.

On a beautiful sunny afternoon our netball team travelled to Saffron Walden County High School for the inter-schools tournament and enjoyed competing against other schools from the area.

Just before Easter, years 3 and 4 staged a fine musical production of the story of Joseph. Weeks of hard work and practice paid off and the two performances to parents, and one to the rest of the school, were very well received. Well done! On the day before we broke up for the Easter holidays, our choir, together with classes 3 and 4, visited Hargrave House where the residents enjoyed listening to a varied programme, which the children performed with great enthusiasm.

All through the autumn and spring terms, our junior football club has been coached by Andy Scott, who is affiliated to Ipswich Town FC. This term Andy is coaching our years 1 and 2, which hopefully will provide our young Owens and Beckhams with a great start to their footballing skills.

We are very pleased to announce that from the beginning of the summer term, Cambridgeshire Catering have taken over our school meals contract. They offer a wide and interesting menu of hot meals, which will be available for the children to choose from each day.

Our excellent nursery still has some vacancies for this coming September. If you are interested, and your child will be four in the next academic year, Mrs Smith and her wonderful team are having an open afternoon on 19th May from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. Come with your child and join in the fun!!

Finally - Messy Play. This is great fun and runs in the Nursery every Monday during term time from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you are interested please contact the school - or just turn up!

Events

A reminder to everyone that the Big Top May Fair takes place on Saturday 8th May (2.00pm-5.00pm). It should be a fantastic afternoon centred around a circus theme. We'll have live entertainment from Silly Billy Blue Hat, a have-a-go circus area, wobbly bikes, bouncy castles and slide, candy floss, face painting, balloon modelling and a circus demonstration by the children (many of you will already have been subjected to the juggling practice!). All of this is, of course, in addition to our popular tombolas, raffle,

plants, craft activities and games. It really should be lots of fun so do come and join in.

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 under way to make it bigger and better than ever. We have a fabulous line-up of bands this year, so there will be something to suit all musical tastes. 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

Visitors and 37 members attended the April meeting to be entertained with an interesting talk and slide show by Doug Radford of the RSPB. Mr. Radford has worked for the RSPB for 24 years, and is currently Warden of the Fowlmere Reserve, which was the subject of his talk.

The Reserve covers approximately 100 acres, and is edged mainly with willows and hawthorn, but is more open in the centre. The mere is fed by natural springs, and watercress used to be grown there.

Mr. Radford then went on to show slides and comment upon the birds and other wildlife seen at Fowlmere. These include reed and sedge warblers, water rails, snipe, wood sandpipers, kingfishers and 17 species of dragonfly.

The meres are also home to an unwelcome invader, the signal crayfish, which is a carrier of the crayfish plague, but which is not affected by it. Unfortunately the native white clawed crayfish which used to inhabit the meres have been killed off by the plague.

Mr. Radford explained that there is a lot of land management required to ensure that the reserve is not overrun by trees, and that orchids and other plants are not smothered by stronger plants. Trees need pollarding every few years and ferns must be cut each year. For this work the RSPB relies heavily upon volunteers, and in 2003 Fowlmere had over 100 who contributed over 3000 man-hours.

At the end of the talk, Cyril Stoneham (Chairman) thanked Mr. Radford. The talk was followed by the AGM and election of the Committee, which includes Cyril Stoneham as Chairman and Sheila Bowles as Treasurer.

The next meeting, on Wednesday 5th May at the Day Centre at 8.00pm will include a talk 'All Creatures Great and Small - Pest Control and Bee Keeping' by Mr. Wilcox. This is sure to be interesting, so please join us. For non-members the admission fee is 75p.

David Loynds

Local Occupations

No. 5

Tree Surgeon

Jeremy Johnston

Arboriculture is a new direction in our series on interesting occupations, and one that not many of us know much about.

Jeremy Johnston, who is based at Hay Street, has his own business and not only covers a wide rural area, including Stansted, Bishop's Stortford and surrounding villages, but also has work in North London.

Having worked in a Merchant Bank after he left university, he then went into the business side of advertising. After eight years of this he realised he wanted a completely different lifestyle, so, leaving the high salary and the company car behind, he became a student again. Initially he completed a year's horticulture course at Capel Manor (Enfield) – a college that runs a wide variety of environmental courses including arboriculture and horticulture and, rather surprisingly, equine studies! He then completed a City & Guilds Diploma and an NPCT examination. He also took a Royal Forestry Society theory course on arboriculture. Later this year, having now had 11 years' experience, he will be taking his Royal Forestry Society Diploma; this is in part at Capel Manor and in part at home. This Diploma will enable him to be on the list of registered arboriculture consultants.



On the whole he works alone but, when a job arises which involves felling large trees, he has qualified assistance that he can call on. His work, which is mainly with private individuals, involves crown reduction or removal of trees, planting appropriate trees and shrubs in their care; some of his time is spent in advisory work – when and how to prune, which trees will be suitable for particular situations, checking for disease and advising on treatment. In the advising on safety of trees he has to be careful – as do all advisory agents – of litigation.

He also has one or two contracts for landscaping and maintenance of communal grounds for blocks of flats or estates in North London. He does a certain amount of work advising developers planning new estates: he hopes that this side of his work, and work for councils, will increase when he is on the list of recognised consultants, although he still wants to keep his contacts with private work. He sets great store on personal relationships with his customers and feels this is a very important aspect of his work.

His wife, who worked in the City and supported the family during Jeremy's training, does the financial side of the business. They have two young daughters of ten and five, and working as he does now enables him to see much more of his children and share in their upbringing.

This series has so far covered caring for people, caring for crops, and this time caring for trees – what will it be next month?!

Katharine Hurford



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REMEMBER

The Link needs your news and observations so don't be reluctant to send them in - you never know who may be interested.

IN MEMORIAM

Percy Heal 1918-2004

Stansted lost a highly respected, much loved character with the passing of Percival Archibald George 'Percy' Heal on 21st March 2004, aged 85.

Percy, son of Percival Archibald Heal and local girl Dorothy Snow, was born in Woodfields, Stansted in 1918. Percy was raised in the same house in Woodfields by his mother, and uncle, George Snow. He left school at 14 to work at a printer's office in Bishops Stortford, played football and cricket for Stansted, and was due to embark on a professional football career when duty called in 1939.

Percy served in the Essex Regiment for the duration of the Second World War, spending time in the Middle East, Europe and Burma. He was demobbed in 1945 at the Rank of Sergeant. In 1946 Percy married Margaret 'Jean' Bowers.

Directly after the War, Percy was based in Germany with the Foreign Office Control Commission. He returned to Stansted in 1951 and worked with the Ministry of Supply until he was transferred to the UK Atomic Energy Authority where he assumed responsibility for procurement of travel and accommodation, a role he continued to perform with distinction until he retired in 1984. Percy was a member of the Institute of Travel Managers, was elected National Chairman of the ITM in 1981 and in 1987 was made a Vice President for Life. Upon his retirement in 1984, he was appointed Honorary Treasurer of the ITM.

Upon his return to Stansted after the War, Percy continued to play both cricket and football for the local clubs. During and after his playing career, he spent many hours as a committee member of each club. Before being named President of both clubs, Percy was elected and served as Secretary of the Stansted Football and Cricket Clubs from early in the 1970s until 1990, after which time he continued on as Honorary President of both. He was the longest serving official of any club in the Essex Senior League.

Percy was renowned for his unflappability and determination – he always stuck to his principles and would not be swayed from that which he believed in.

Percy will be sorely missed by everyone fortunate enough to have known him and will be warmly remembered for his cheerful demeanour and that distinctive 'twinkle in his eye'.

Percy is survived by his wife Jean and sons Simon, Peter and Calvin.



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AIRPORT WOULD MATCH CENTRAL LONDON IN LAND GRAB

BAA's staggering 'countryside land grab' for a second Stansted runway would make the airport site itself as large as London's City and West End combined, according to a new SSE map.

In total, BAA wants to take control of 16.5km² of land at Stansted compared to the current 9.5 km². As the new map shows, this is an area roughly equivalent to that bordered by the Underground Circle line in central London, encompassing most of Kensington, Chelsea, Westminster and the City.

Questions are now being raised about the true reasons behind such a massively extended perimeter. The new boundary being proposed for Stansted is almost identical to that rejected at the last Public Inquiry when the Government's Inspector described the proposals as "a catastrophe in environmental terms" and a "wholly unprecedented environmental and visual disaster".

The sheer scale of the proposed land take has forced the inevitable conclusion amongst many people locally that the ulterior motive of the airport operator is a three or even four runway airport in the years to come.

SSE also accuses BAA of conspiring to acquire surplus land for commercial development on the cheap. Stansted loses money as an airport but makes huge profits from its shopping malls, property developments and car parking operations.

Norman Mead, Chairman of SSE commented: "It would be disgraceful if BAA were allowed to use compulsory purchase powers to acquire land from local farmers and others at agricultural values and was then able to put this to commercial use at up to 1000 times its agricultural value – developing shopping mall style terminals and hotel sites as well as vast expanses of lucrative car parking."

"BAA must not be allowed to finance its expansion of Stansted by exploiting local property owners in this way," said Mr Mead. "It's outrageous that BAA is contemplating such a massive land grab and seems intent upon acquiring this prime land for a fraction of its true value. While BAA keeps trying to hide behind the policy outlined in the Government's White Paper, the scale of the Stansted expansion fits too closely for comfort with its own long-held agenda of a four runway Stansted combined with massive commercial development within the airport perimeter."

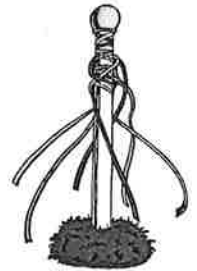
The land grab has already been dubbed 'excessive' by Essex County Council leader Lord Hanningfield and also condemned by Braintree MP Alan Hurst in the House of Commons.

www.stopstanstedexpansion.com

MAY

This is the month of the goddess Maia. In Roman mythology her son was Mercurius, or Mercury. According to the Greeks her son was Hermes. In either case it seems he was a messenger to the Gods. Also according to the Greeks, Maia was the eldest of seven daughters of Atlas, who, upon their deaths, were turned into a group of stars known as the Pleiades and can be seen in the constellation Taurus.

The first of May is now an international holiday in honour of workers, but the ancient pagan festival of Beltane is also celebrated on this day. Children dancing round a Maypole, weaving patterns with ribbons seems to be a Victorian idea, but the origin of the custom of erecting a pole or tree and decorating it with flowers and garlands is lost in the mists of time.



'The Darling Buds of May', used as a title of a book and then a television series, is a quote from the Shakespeare sonnet:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate;
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May
And Summer's lease hath all too short a date."

If you overlooked Mothering Sunday, give mum something on the second Sunday in May and tell her you have an American calendar – that is when they celebrate Mother's Day!

And don't forget to "cast not a clout 'til May be out!" (The month or the flower?)

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STANSTED FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The first few months of this year have again proved eventful for the crew at W83 Stansted Fire Station, with the usual range of calls from serious fires and accidents down to a dog trapped in a river!

A serious house fire in Great Canfield saw Stansted's crew assisting the crew from Great Dunmow for most of a Saturday night/Sunday morning in March. An elderly lady living in an old house with open fires suffered the loss of the entire first floor and attic, when live coals fell from a bedroom fireplace and set surrounding material alight. Fire crews battled to contain the severe fire to the upstairs area, and were largely successful, although in the process a great deal of property was destroyed by fire, smoke and water.

The fire had burnt through into the attic area, and firefighters had to climb on the roof in the dark to ventilate the attic by removing slates. Fire became deep seated in the roof joists and purlins, and is often difficult to detect in these circumstances, often necessitating the use of a thermal imaging camera to detect 'hot spots'.

It is often difficult for fire crews to determine just how much water to use on a fire; so much depends on the location of the fire in a building, access to the fire, natural draughting around the seat of the fire and so on. Every effort is made to keep water usage to the absolute minimum, because water can cause as much damage as the fire itself. The general perception of firefighters entering a building and spraying gallons of water in all directions (as often seen in television dramas!) is quite wrong. When entering a house or other property on fire, firefighters are normally wearing full protective clothing and breathing apparatus, and carrying a hosereel jet with which to fight the fire. Until recent changes in personal protection, firefighters could rely on their ears to 'feel' the heat, and detect where the seat of the fire was – they could then work towards it and start to extinguish it. This was because the ears were the only exposed area of the body, and are very sensitive to temperature changes. Also, inside a building on fire absolutely nothing can be seen because of the thick smoke. However, new protective clothing means that nothing is exposed any longer, and consequently detecting the heat is more difficult. When wearing fire kit, which has very good thermal insulation properties, the general heat of a fire can be felt, but not the specific rise in temperature as the seat of the fire is approached. Like many advances in modern life, it is a case of two steps forward and one step back! Water is directed at the base of a fire, and extinguishes it by reducing the temperature. Every effort is made to ensure that water does not go where it is not wanted, not least because it is such a valuable resource and cannot be wasted. Each fire appliance carries 400 gallons of water, but this can be gone in less than 30 seconds, if not used wisely, as the fire appliance's pump can deliver 1000 gallons per minute.

When arriving at a serious fire, firefighters initially attack the fire with hosereels; high-pressure jets which can be run off a drum on either side of the fire appliance. These are instantly available and deliver a limited amount of water at

high pressure, thus conserving the tank supply long enough for water to be drawn from a convenient hydrant. When the hydrant supply becomes available, the main jets, which deliver much more water at a lower pressure can be run out and used.

Smoke damage in a building is perhaps the worst aspect of a fire, as it penetrates every crevice, nook and cranny, and takes for ever to clean up. Buildings which have become smoke-logged will reek of smoke for weeks afterwards! Because of the way that fires develop, the smoke naturally rises with the heat, settles at ceiling level and gradually turns downwards towards the floor, in the same way a mushroom cloud develops after a nuclear explosion. Consequently, smoke damage is worse at the top of a wall than at the bottom, and it is not uncommon in a property after a serious fire to see a 'tide-mark' of smoke around the walls, where below the line everything is fairly normal, whilst above it, all is blackened. The smoke is composed of exceptionally hot gases and particles, so it is not unusual to see plastic fittings such as handles and lightswitches melted when they have been nowhere near the fire itself.

W83 recently attended two house fires where the smoke damage was markedly in contrast. Both were kitchen fires, and in both cases there was no-one at home. In the first, a house in Stansted, a smoke alarm was fitted and working and was set off by a fire in a pan left on a gas stove. Neighbours heard the alarm and dialled 999, whereupon a swift attendance by the crew ensured a speedy and satisfactory result. The second, at a bungalow at Broxton, resulted in severe smoke damage to the entire property from a fire in a tumble dryer and a completely burnt-out kitchen. The fire service was only called when smoke was seen billowing from the property, by which time much damage had already occurred.

It will be seen that the smoke alarm is therefore invaluable, but only if it is working and correctly sited. If an alarm is heard going off in an apparently unoccupied building, please don't hesitate to dial 999. It will not only prevent unnecessary damage to the property, but may also prevent avoidable risks to the firefighters who arrive to deal with the fire. So many alarms are heard these days, especially car alarms, and generally people take little or no notice of them. Please don't ignore a smoke alarm – someone's life may be at stake!

On a lighter note, please don't forget to support our annual plant sale at the fire station on Chapel Hill on Saturday 8th May. As always we sell out very quickly, so do come early! Proceeds from the sale go the Fire Services National Benevolent Fund.

More from us in the July issue: keep safe!



Philip Hastings



The National Childbirth Trust

Education for Parenthood

Many thanks to everyone who came along to our Nearly New Sale last month. As usual it was a lot of hard work for those involved behind the scenes, but a great fundraiser for our organisation.

This month we would like to invite all of you with under 5s to join us at our Open House at the United Reformed Church Hall in Stansted on Monday 24th May at 10.00am. There will be toys to occupy the children, and the parents can have a drink and a chat. Other events and activities that we have lined up for May and June include a playground visit, a walk in Hatfield Forest, a pub lunch, a picnic tea, our popular monthly music time and a girls' night out. There's even a dads' night out too.

Our three coffee groups continue to meet regularly: tiddlers and tums for pregnant mums and those with babies or children who are not yet walking; toddlers for mums with children who are walking confidently; and pre-school for the older children. We ask for donations of 50p per family for these coffee events and many of the other activities are only £1 per child.

You do not have to be a member to come along to any of our events, so do feel free to come along and join in. You will find we are a friendly bunch of parents who enjoy a chat and having a wide range of activities laid on to entertain our children.

If you would like to receive a free listing of events being held in the future or if you want any further information about the NCT or our branch, please email: mail@stansted-nct.freeserve.co.uk or phone the branch enquiry line on 07020 936552. If you would like to book for our popular antenatal classes, call Rachel (early in your pregnancy) on 08707 656284.



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Do you have surplus clothes?

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NEWPORT CROQUET CLUB

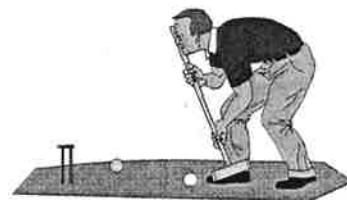
Not many people know that on our doorstep is a club with some of the best croquet lawns in Essex! The Newport club was formed in 1983 by a few very keen players, who invested much money and effort to create the club. The grounds and Club House can be found in the Newport sports complex in Frambury Lane.

Croquet has been played since 1850 when it was brought over from Ireland. It has always been a true amateur game, which is part of the reason it does not get much publicity. There is an Association for the game and it should not be confused with the garden croquet sets sold by some sports shops!

There are two games played using the same lawns and equipment, Standard Croquet (or just croquet) and Golf Croquet. The object of the games is to get your ball or balls through all six hoops in both directions before your opponent. The main difference between the two games is that in golf each player has one go each, but in croquet one can earn bonus turns. It is normal for beginners to start playing Golf Croquet and then progress to Croquet after they have learnt the skills with the mallet. Both games can be very enjoyable and demanding; some players never move on to croquet but stay with golf. One of the advantages of the game is that male, female, young and old, all play on an equal basis. It's just skill that wins. Another is the friendliness.

We run various tournaments and matches throughout the season using a handicap system recognised by the Croquet Association. As an example, our first tournament this year will have several world class players competing for the honour of winning (no prize!). Club fees are reduced for first and second year members, so you could join for little more than the price of a couple of evening meals, and once in, you can play any time except when there is a match on. Free tuition is given to all members as required.

The club is holding an open day on 12th June. Tea and coffee will be available: we look forward to seeing you. All equipment is supplied, just wear flat shoes so that the lawns are not damaged. Anyone interested in learning a bit more about the game or wishing to have a go are welcome to come along or contact me, David Manley on 01279 812564, Jim Potter on 01223 891211, Tony Marks on 01799 502316, or Mike Gates on 01279 812419.



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