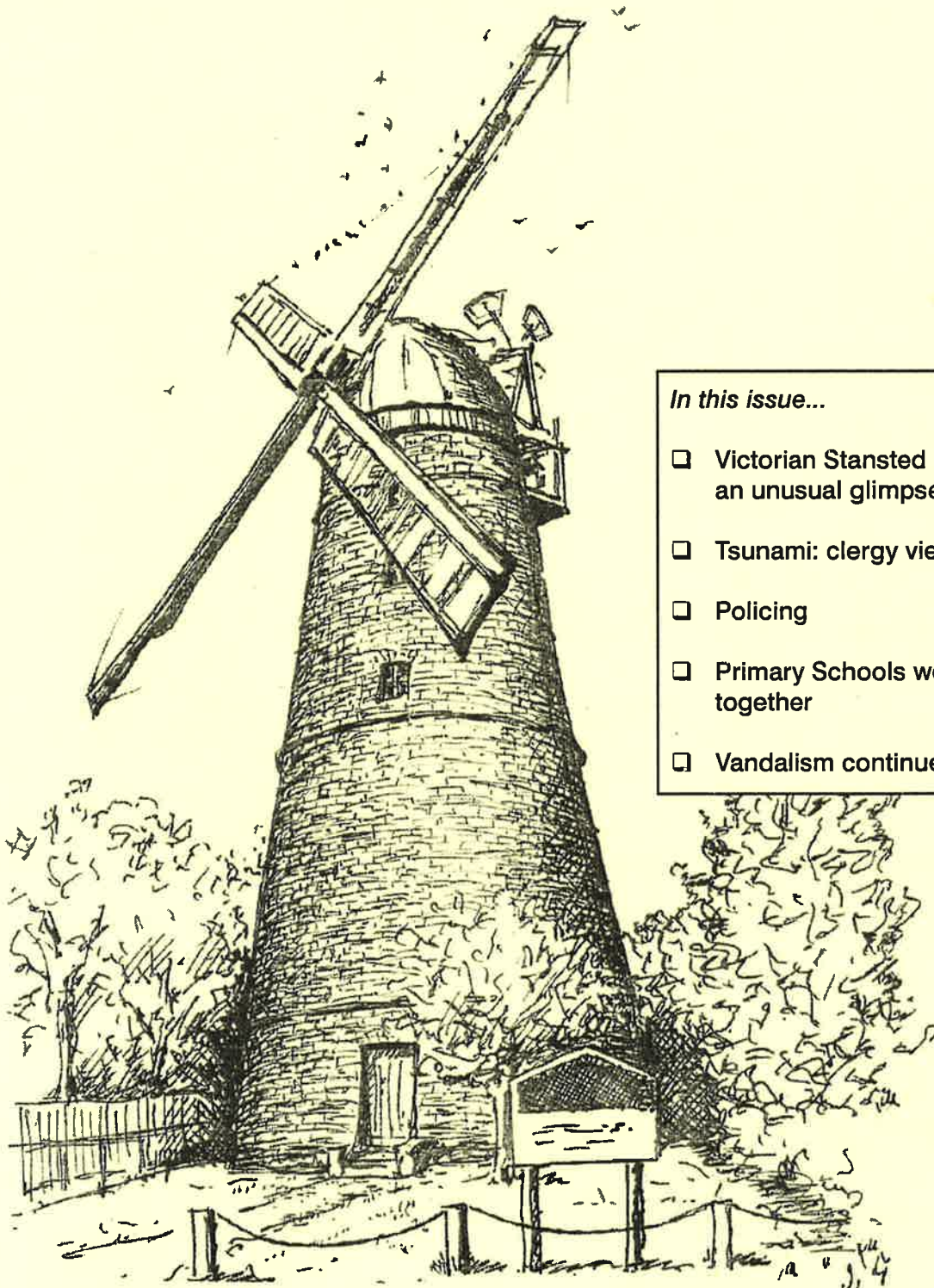


Stansted Mountfitchet

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# 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

## Tricky territory

Once again the issue of householders' rights to defend themselves against burglars is in the news. Driving home the other week, I listened to a heated debate on Radio 4 as the Government announced that no change in the current law was necessary. The public needed to be more aware of how the law already protects them and what is really meant by 'reasonable force' when used in self defence. Listeners e-mailed in with their own views. Of course, burglars still have rights even when they deny the rights of others. Not so, said another listener. Burglars give up their rights as soon as they cross the threshold. The sender thought that an intruder who was surprised by a factory owner lying in wait got all he deserved when he was stripped and beaten before being dumped in a ditch and set alight.

The Director of Public Prosecutions gave a staunch defence of the law and the protection it gives householders. Of course they can defend themselves, and the law will not touch them if their reaction to an intruder is 'instinctive'.

All this left me wondering what I really felt. The Quaker Peace Testimony is often considered in relation to major international conflict. Yet central to the Testimony is conflict within ourselves and with others we meet, and the way we deal with fear and intimidation in our own personal lives.

I have no idea what my 'instinctive' reaction would be in the unlikely event of being surprised by an intruder in my home. The very word 'instinctive' rules out a balanced consideration of the pros and cons of any particular response.

Quakers often come back to a central thread of their faith and practice – a recognition of 'that of God' in everyone. The Peace Testimony underscores this. The challenge for all of us, perhaps, is to strive to recognise 'that of God' in every human being, however threatening or objectionable they may be. This is very difficult territory and a powerful challenge to our personal fears and understandable reaction to people we cannot easily comprehend, especially when they pose an immediate physical threat to ourselves or those we love. We have to tread this uncertain path as we journey through life. The signposts may not always be easy to read but a willingness to think about what it means to be truly human in and through our contact and relationships with others, however fraught or dangerous they may be, could provide some illumination along the way.

Jonathan Morrell

Margaret Whitelaw

It is with great sadness that we have to give the news of Margaret's death on Friday 14th January. As her friends all know she had been suffering from cancer for the last month and she died peacefully at St Clare's Hospice.

A Memorial Meeting was held for Margaret on Friday 28th January.

A tribute to Margaret will appear in the March issue.

## ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux  
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Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am

### Confessions

Saturday 10.00am  
and by appointment

### Baptisms

By appointment

I hope your Christmas went smoothly and according to plan and that you and your family had a truly blessed and merry Christmas. May the New Year be filled with abundant peace, love, happiness and good health. 2004 went so swiftly: for some of us it was a roller coaster year – a mixture of good and sad times. With God's grace and blessing may 2005 be happy, healthy and promising for all our readers; may our lives be enriched with His mercy and love. It is wonderful to be able to write these words and that you could read them.

I have borrowed the undermentioned poem: I think it is quite lovely. Hope you like it too.

Master, where shall I work today?  
And my love flowed warm and free.  
He pointed out a tiny plot  
And He said: Tend that for me.

But I answered quickly, Oh, not there,  
There no-one could see  
No matter how well my task was done –  
Not that little place for me.

His voice when He spoke – it was not stern –  
For He answered me tenderly,  
Disciple, search that heart of thine.  
Are you working for them or for Me?  
Nazareth was just such a little place,  
And so was Galilee.

Wendy Moss

# 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](mailto:methodists@stansted.net)

All services start at 9.30am unless otherwise stated

Services and preachers for February

6th	9.30am	Betty Kime
13th	9.30am	Rev'd Hilary Cheng Holy Communion
20th	10.30am at URC	Rev'd David Simpson
27th	10.30am at URC	Ken Mark

There will be a church fellowship meeting at 8pm on Thursday 24th February at 7 Blythwood Gardens.

The following letter was sent to The Times and The Daily Telegraph by the Rev'd Ronald Rawlings of Thaxted following the tsunami tragedy.

"Dear Editor

At the beginning of this Year of Grace, 2005, I have to say that for more than 65 years I have been consciously upheld by the Christian Faith. At a time when so many are speaking of that Faith in a disparaging fashion it is necessary for someone to say that it has brought them security, joy and discipline and that is not a bad basis for living. Within a framework which is historical, symbolic and pragmatic, it has met the great questions of life in at least as intellectual a way as the modern secularist challenges can do. Reality, Truth and Love are at the heart of the Christian Gospel, but Love is what expresses it best, so long as Love is understood in its Pauline meaning as expressed in 1 Corinthians 13.

One letter following the terrible tsunami catastrophe expressed the view that 'if there was or is a God it must be now malevolent, mad or dead'. One sympathises with those who feel the savage impact upon reason when the Gospel of Love is confronted with terrible events like this. Indeed the greatest fear I have ever had in life is that the totality of things is 'malevolent' or evil! This precisely is where the Christian Gospel and most of the other great world religious systems have a pragmatic answer where the Atheist and 'Rationalist' philosophy does not. Providence, God, Christ (the second Person of the Trinity) certainly must take responsibility for all that is in Creation. But that Power is here in it with us, suffering with us, offering loving assistance in events, re-enacting the Christian Passion again and again. And above all, the Supreme Creator is in His creation so that Science (which is part of believing in Him – not at all contrary to belief) can be used in the most effective and most loving ways possible. Love and caring is called forth in the midst of it all. Somehow, despite these re-enactments of the Passion, we grow.

Stoicism is a noble creed for many, no doubt, and I admire those who can work it out successfully in their own way especially as Atheists and 'Rationalists'. But it does not smack of Reality or Truth to me, making, as it does, a kind of 'Nothingness' as the basis of things. Certainly if that creed prevailed then the result would be "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die". As the very dangerous expressions of absence of faith grow, we see today the cult of eating and drinking and being merry all around us. I write symbolically, of course, of drugs, drunkenness, murder by knives and bullets, bullying, etc. If faith in a righteous God were to be lost altogether we should soon see even greater mayhem.

Yours sincerely,"



## Lent Groups

This year's course is based on a series devised by Scottish churches and relates to the Third World, entitled 'Voices from the South'. All the following meetings will take place in the United Reformed Church vestibule at 8.00pm:

Wednesday 16th February	Tuesday 1st March
Friday 25th February	Wednesday 9th March
	Tuesday 15th March

There will also be an Agape on Sunday 20th March at 6.30pm.

**Christian Aid**  
We believe in life before death

The response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster has shown great generosity from people all over the world. Christian Aid is one of the Disaster Emergency Committee members, but because it works through partner organisations it was able to respond immediately using its own resources to bring shelter and provisions to many who lost everything in the flood.

In focusing quite rightly on one area of the world, we must also not forget that Christian Aid works all year round to alleviate the suffering of the poorest people all over the globe. So that it can do this and also respond quickly to emergency situations, it needs regular donations. Of course, a great deal of money is collected in May in Christian Aid Week and once again I make a plea for volunteers to deliver and collect envelopes in Stansted. But another way of ensuring that Christian Aid has a regular income is by setting up a monthly direct debit. As little as £2 per month can make a difference.

If anyone is interested in donating regularly or can help in Christian Aid Week (14th- 21st May), please let me know.

Thank you.

Catherine Dean  
813579



SHALOM

On 14th February there will be an evening of the very popular playlets at the Friends Meeting House.

On 28th February we will be playing a Christian Aid game, also at the Meeting House.

All meetings start at 8.00pm and are open to everyone. You will find a warm welcome.

Catherine Dean  
813579

## 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 February

6th	2.30 pm	Rev'd David Simpson
13th	10.30 am	Dr Pamela Cressey
20th	10.30 am	Rev'd David Simpson – Joint Communion with Methodists
27th	10.30 am	Mr Ken Mark – Joint with Methodists

### Dates for your Diary

6th February	3.30 pm	Afternoon teas begin again. For lifts telephone 814850 or 812593
7th February	6.00 pm	Pilots for children 5-13 years. For information telephone 813433
21st February	2.30 pm	Monday Club, open to all. For information telephone 815137
21st February	6.00 pm	Pilots for children 5-13 years

Over the last few weeks we have all been moved and shocked by the terrible pictures on our televisions and in the newspapers following the South East Asia tsunami. I am sure most of us in our quiet moments, in our hearts have asked the question "why?". Whilst listening to the radio the other morning I heard a Baptist Minister from Essex saying how, when he was arranging a service in memory of the victims and their families, he found it very difficult to find any suitable hymns. So although never having written a hymn

before he felt compelled to pick up his pen and write one. He was asked to just read the first verse; then after a silence, the interviewer asked him to continue, and he said he was sure many people would have been helped by these words, as indeed he was. The Minister gave permission for the words to be reproduced and used freely, so as many of us take part in the fund raising efforts for the many charities who are helping in the disaster areas, may these words (as printed below) help our understanding too.

Oh Lord, our world is grieving  
For those whose lives are lost.  
In scale it overwhelms us,  
We cannot count its cost.  
As day by day new stories  
Of dreadful pain are heard,  
We turn to You for comfort  
And wait to hear Your word.

Some now are dumb with anguish  
While others cry out "Why? –  
Where is this God of mercy? –  
Or is His love a lie?"  
We who have claimed to know You  
Can't answer Why or Where.  
But come now humbly trusting  
The God we know is there.

Lord Jesus, Man of Sorrows.  
You've lived a life of pain.  
And when the weakest suffer,  
You suffer yet again.  
So as we come to tell You  
Of homelessness and loss,  
Disease and death and illness,  
You point us to Your Cross.

God's ways may be mysterious,  
We may say "Where's His grace?"  
But then we look on Jesus,  
Our God with human face.  
His cross and resurrection  
Show death is not the end;  
One day we'll have our answers,  
When we meet God, our Friend.

But until then He calls us  
To care for those in need.  
Give shelter to the homeless,  
The hungry help to feed.  
Provide the sick with healing,  
And hope where they despair.  
And those who know not Jesus  
May meet Him through our care.

Janet Townsend





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

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

(01279) 815243  
 church.office@stansted.net

*Administrator*  
**Mrs Elizabeth Jennings**

The Bishop of Colchester  
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## Letters of reference

**When I was a medical chaplain I worked with a rabbi, who would stop by my office and tell me a Jewish joke on the way to a meeting.** "What is the only thing two Jews can ever agree on?" he would say, "what a third should give to charity" I'm sure I could come up with a Christian version, that the only thing two Christians can agree on is who a third should be sleeping with. The depressing thing about the press is that when the church is mentioned at all, it is usually about the mating habits of Christians, a subject about which the gospels say very little.

What will be of no interest to the press is what Christians can agree on. When I came back from my post-Christmas break I learned that my congregation had had a retiring collection for victims of the Asian tsunami, raising almost £250, even after they'd already given to the church collection. I thought it was fantastic. Two aid agencies, which I know about, raised phenomenal amounts in a matter of days, and this on top of their existing programmes for aid in various parts of the world.

You don't have to be a Christian to have been moved by the devastation of the Asian tsunami. What is interesting about the response is that there was no question about it: there was an earthquake, a freak wave, communities destroyed, lives lost and help needed, and we responded, immediately.

It was only later on that I began to wonder why many thousands more people continue to die through disease and malnutrition, in countries for which development is impossible

because of crippling debt, and trade rules which favour us, the rich West. Are we slower to come to their aid because, deep down, we know that their suffering is a result of a world whose resources are distributed in ways which are always in our favour. A tsunami is ethically neutral, African farmers undercut by cheap European produce is not. It's easier to give to one than the other because, with a natural disaster we can ask why? without being in danger of finding that the answer might have something to do with changing the way we live.

While we were still making sense of the news footage from Sri Lanka and Phuket, the New Years' Day episode of the *Vicar of Dibley* took the 20th anniversary of Live Aid as its theme. The programme included the characters wearing a white armband as a way of introducing the Make Poverty History campaign.

Make Poverty History is a coalition of all the non-governmental aid agencies in the United Kingdom including Christian ones like the Church of England, Cafod and Christian Aid. It is borne of a widely-held conviction, both among the religious, and among those who are not, that the human race can no longer live in conditions whereby three-fifths of our species barely lives. The hope of the campaign is that 2005 is the year when we finally come to grips with the problem, both while we have the presidency of the G8 countries, and while we have a Chancellor who is passionately committed to ending poverty.

This is something which Christians should be able to agree on. While sex has a bit-part in the Bible, looking after the poor is a central theme. I discovered this week that one in sixteen verses in the Bible is about poverty; one out of nine in the first three gospels.

Last Advent, when he preached on the Last Judgement, James Forbes of New York's Riverside Church, was talking about the parable of the sheep and the goats, where those who are not destined for paradise are asked what they did for the needy? Forbes went on to say that, according to this parable, "nobody gets to heaven without a letter of reference from the poor". AS

[www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org)

## Diary

**Sundays**  
 8:00am Holy Communion  
 9:30am Parish Communion with Sunday School

**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 Church Office for details of meetings.

**Housegroups** There is a reading group studying Philip Yancey's *What's so Amazing About Grace?* at 5 Bentfield Gardens each Wednesday, contact Andy at 813003; and *The Bluffers Guide to the Bible* at the Rectory on alternate Tuesdays, Contact Andrew 812203 or the Church Office for details.

**Rector**  
**Revd Andrew Spurr**  
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 St. John's Road  
 Stansted Mountfitchet  
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 church.music@stansted.net

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**Mrs Joy Lambe**  
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 joy@stansted.net

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

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

**Housegroups**

**The Rector**  
 (01279) 812203

(continued)

Our former curate, Revd Andrew Proud, was on the Radio 4 'Sunday' programme on 16th January, speaking from Ethiopia where he has been for over two years. It seems that the Anglican Church in the west of the country has grown from two to 26 local churches in the past few years. It is so encouraging that the Church can and does grow, even though it may not be apparent in this country.

Editor

### WANTED A WARDEN

*With the Church elections approaching, it is timely to catch a glimpse of one in a bygone era. Any illusion we may have of Victorian clergy being straitlaced, decorous in language and lacking in humour is challenged by this 'poem' discovered in some church records. We are indebted to Peter Sanders who established that Mr Woodley retired as Warden in 1858. The only Thomas in the clergy of that time was the Revd Thomas Luard, who was inducted in 1851. Of course, it could be a spoof by a contemporary satirist! Either way it casts a light on the issues of those days.*

Editor

### 'WANTED A WARDEN'

(19<sup>th</sup> century)

A Warden is wanted he must be a fool  
 For Master and I want a pliable tool  
Whatever I preach he must swallow as true  
Whatever I order he'll carefully do.  
 He will down with the Pulpit and down with the Pews  
 And down with the Church too if so I should choose  
 Will down with Steeple, oh, yes that he will  
 And leave you ratepayers to settle the bill  
 Not a bill of reform at three months after date  
 But a bill at which unreformed payers will late  
 A Warden is wanted who cannot do wrong  
 But will to the crew of 'predestined' belong  
 Vote against Woodley and all of his mates  
 Too leery to swallow my Calvinist baits  
 Whose moral is this 'let those who win laugh  
We are birds rather old to be caught with such chaff'  
 Vote against Woodley too long has been  
 The honest Churchwarden of Stansted I mean  
 Your money he'd save but the man I intend  
 Would in one month consume what in twelve that would  
 spend  
 But I leave it with you and must ask you in re-  
 To intend and to act as you think will be best  
 But be sure that you act good intentions you know  
 Pave the way to place where we don't want to go  
 And mind this above all, imperturbable Mat  
 Is a man we no longer can have sat  
 For in him twas a sin thus your money to save  
 And a folly the wrath of your Vicar to brave  
 With Sacrament Alms I have hitherto bought

The scandal with which all this village is fraught  
 But I'll pay the doctors, tho' great the offence  
 Who vote against Woodley, with Sacrament pence  
 Come vote against Woodley, oh say why should he  
 With such a proud Vicar as I disagree  
 For where in the neighbourhood round could you find  
 A Pastor so jealous conceitedly blind  
 Wanted a Warden with conscience that's small  
 Or better than that with no conscience at all  
 For a man with a conscience is sometimes so bold  
 As to argue the point and not do what he's told  
 The man that we want must his Vicar obey  
 Regardless of risk 'for no peril no pay'  
 To his Minister's wishes, he must always pander  
 The rich he must toady, the poor he must slander  
 And the man thus endowed with pre-eminent grace  
 Will doubtless an ornament be to the place -  
 Your votes I canvass, pray give them and rest in  
 The hope that I will all you voters predestine  
 For this I declare and believe me tis true  
 Tho' to some I'm a bully, a brick I'm to you  
 And I beg you, 'predestined' remember that I  
 While a shot's in the locker will never say die  
 All those who to me and my notions succumb  
 Will in me find a friend, to their faults I'll be dumb  
 But I'll into all recreant malcontents pitch it  
 And astonish the natives of Stansted Mountfitchet  
 It will not be long ere again you hear from me  
 With best love  
 Yours ever most faithfully  
 Tommy



Royal British Legion  
 Stansted & District  
 Branch

### POPPY APPEAL 2004

I am delighted to report another record year for the Poppy Appeal in Stansted and District. May I say how grateful I am to all the collectors and to all who gave so generously to the Appeal.

Stansted raised £2114.99. The House to House collection raised 52% of this sum. I know collecting door to door is hard work and I extend a special thank you to all who help in this way, but the figures speak for themselves. Regrettably, we are unable to cover every street as we need more volunteers in some areas. Although it is impossible to call at a time when everyone is at home, the collections made in the shops, public houses and on the streets tell me that most people were able to donate if they wished.

Overall the District has collected £11917.13 to date (£10333.87 in 2003), a wonderful achievement. The funds are desperately needed for our benevolent work. We are still suffering from the deaths and injuries to our servicemen serving overseas.

Thank you again for your most generous support.

John L Segar  
 Hon. Poppy Appeal Organiser  
 Stansted and District





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## VILLAGE EVENTS

### February

2	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm Day Centre 8 pm
3	Thu	Bookstart Local History Society	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm Day Centre 8 pm
6	Sun	Green waste, metal & wood Afternoon Tea (after service)	Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm UR Church 3.30 - 5 pm
10	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
12	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
14	Mon	Shalom Group	Quaker Meeting House 8 pm
16	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Lent Group	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm United Reformed Church 8 pm
17	Thu	Hindu Talk	St Mary's Sch, B. Stortford 8 pm
20	Sun	Green waste, metal & wood	Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm
25	Fri	Lib Dem Supper Club Lent Group	Day Centre 7.30 pm United Reformed Church 8 pm
26	Sat	HEAL Quiz	Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm
28	Mon	Shalom Group	Quaker Meeting House 8 pm

### March

1	Tue	Lent Group	United Reformed Church 8 pm
2	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm Day Centre 8 pm
3	Thu	Bookstart Local History Society	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm Day Centre 8 pm
4	Fri	Women's World Day of Prayer WI Flog It Sale	United Reformed Church 2 pm St John's Hall 7.30 pm
5	Sat	Green waste, metal & wood Casino Night Village Music Club	Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm Bentfield School 8 pm St John's Church 8 pm
6	Sun	Green waste, metal & wood Afternoon Tea (after service)	Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm U R Church 3.30 - 5 pm
9	Wed	Lent Group	United Reformed Church 8 pm
10	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
12	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
15	Tue	Millers' AGM Lent Group	Day Centre 8 pm United Reformed Church 8 pm
16	Wed	Annual Parish Council Meeting	United Reformed Church 8 pm



## QUIZ NIGHT

7.30 for 8 pm Sat 26th Feb  
Day Centre  
Tables of 6  
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## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

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## Stansted Evening WI FLOG - IT SALE

7.30 pm Fri 4th March  
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## A FUN EVENING



## Revised 2005 Skip Dates

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9 am - 3 pm

Sun 6th February  
Sun 20th February  
Sat 5th & Sun 6th March  
Sat 19th & Sun 20th March



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As spring waits round the corner it's time to reflect on the Autumn Term which was, as always, a fun filled, busy time of year, as we got ready for the festivities.

We had a wonderful visit from the Skipping Workshop, who have represented Great Britain in international skipping events and have also appeared on 'Record Breakers' and 'Blue Peter'. The team coach worked with a small group of older children who then did a presentation to the whole school. We are sure it will have whetted their appetite for this energetic form of fun exercise.

Our Year 6's took part in the Annual Primary Maths Challenge, tackling some very hard questions indeed. Three of the children managed to attain a gold certificate. Well done!

The Chess Club had a difficult match against Rodings School in which we were the eventual victors by 6 games to 5. We are sure the return match will be just as hard fought!

To kick-start the festive season the nursery had a glitter morning, making all manner of sparkly things, and on the same day the rest of the school had a Christmas activity afternoon making snowmen, snowflakes, stars and the like. The choir was again invited to sing to the residents of Hargrave House and gave a very polished performance, which was very well received.

Classes 1 and 2 worked hard to put on their winter play 'Christmas Around the World' and our Nursery and Reception classes also took to the stage with their nativity, 'Humph the Camel'. Both productions were enjoyed by parents, family members and the rest of the school, a real seasonal treat!

The whole school were treated to a brilliant puppet show from Puppets Galore, a local group, who retold the Christmas story.

Christmas dinners, Christmas parties, the end of term Carol Service, and of course, the never to be missed Staff Christmas Pantomime, all made sure that by the end of term all the children were extremely excited for the big day - with still another week to go!!

The Spring term is now well under way with the children full of anticipation for the year ahead. If you have young children have you been to our Messy Play? This is great fun and runs in the Nursery on Mondays from 1.45pm to 3.00pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you would like to come, contact the school, or just turn up.

If you are interested in either a Nursery or Reception place in September 2005 and would like to visit the school, please give us a ring and we would be very pleased to arrange one for you.

As the Spring term gets underway the PTA is busy, once again, planning lots of fundraising activities to keep both the children and their parents happy. The children will be marking Valentine's Day early with a disco on Friday 11th February then on Saturday 5th March it will be the adults'

turn to get dressed up with the return, by popular demand, of our very own Bentfield Casino Night. Once again we'll be transforming the hall into a Las Vegas Casino for the evening! Come along for a night of gambling (just for fun!) and glamour. Whether you pit your wits against the Roulette Wheel, or try your luck against the cards in Blackjack, a fun night is guaranteed. The 'punter' with the most chips left at the end of the evening will win a prize, so there's no chance of losing (or winning!) your life savings. If you fancy trying out your skill and luck in the Casino do come along. Tickets are available from the school or by ringing 647650.

Our final event before the Easter holidays will be a Spring Fashion show on 5th April. Pupils, parents and staff will have the opportunity of modelling some of the latest fashions and then, of course, there'll be plenty of time to buy lots of fantastic clothes at bargain prices. We'll have more details in the next edition, but for now do make a note of the date.

Marnie Tait



We welcomed back the children on 10th January and we were all very pleased to see our friends again. The children have all enjoyed talking about what they had been doing during the Christmas holidays and some have even brought in their presents to show us. Luckily some of the noisier items had an off switch!!!

At the end of last term Rainbow underwent an OFSTED inspection. The inspector spent three days with us and we received a very good report. The pre-school was particularly praised for its high staff ratio, the broad range of activities on offer and the high level of staff interaction. It noted that the children were happy in their surroundings and accessed the activities available to them in and out of doors with confidence and growing independence. Our use of the outside area as an exciting and stimulating extension of the classroom was highlighted as an aspect of outstanding practice. We were particularly pleased with this as it was only a year ago that our outdoor shelter was officially opened.

The theme this term is shapes, and the children in the older group have looked at the importance of different shapes in different contexts, visiting both Thomas Cook in Bishops Stortford and the Airport.

Our Christmas fund-raising was very successful with raffles and sweet tombolas raising over £200 for funds. Our next event is a Chinese Auction on Saturday 19th March. This promises to be a fun evening and we hope you will support us.

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

Vicki Brice



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One of the special things about St Mary's is its sense of community. We make that community explicit in our vision statement and aims; it is promoted every day in the way in which we operate as a school – and identified by visitors. We recognise the importance of all our community members and the support they provide: whether it is a volunteer coming in to help, or our wonderful PTFA, who continue to raise large amounts of money, enabling us to buy new resources. (Our next big spend is another interactive whiteboard!)

We know that we learn better with others – and encourage children to talk about their learning to each other. As a staff we also find that we can learn more when we share our learning. At the end of last term, the staff worked on developing our learning and teaching, through being more aware of the learning process and helping children to take greater responsibility for their learning.

We are currently developing our wider community links, by working with other schools in Stansted and Saffron Walden, sharing the huge amount of expertise which exists in this part of Essex. Within Stansted, one of our teachers has been working with a teacher from Bentfield Primary School, which has helped both of them to develop maths within school. Their work culminated in the production of a parent workshop for Year 2 and Year 3 parents in both schools, to give parents a better understanding of how they can help their child to learn.

You may have read in the press about our newly opened Breakfast Club, which is a really exciting venture for us as a school. There are well-defined aims for this activity, but the potential social gains are some of the most important, as it will provide a special time for children of different ages to meet together. Of course we naturally expect a big impact on children's learning!

By the time this article is printed, our Education Sunday service will already have taken place. The theme for this year is 'A More Excellent Way', which is providing children with an opportunity to think about their gifts and how they can be used to help others. That is what it is all about in school – teachers are people who share their gifts daily, always trying to find the best way to help every child to learn: academically but also in terms of life skills. In a primary school, it is our privilege – and challenge – to develop a love and understanding of learning in children that will equip them for their future.

A quick reminder to parents of children who will become five years old between 1st September 2005 and 31st August 2006: you will need to submit an application form for your child to join this school community – or any other – by 31st March 2005.

Wendy Wood  
Headteacher

We started off the year with a rousing New Year party. The tables laid with red cloths, green napkins, nightlights in glass containers and a glass of wine on arrival made a warm welcome to those members who braved the cold January evening. To begin we raised the roof with two verses of Jerusalem with the help of Ray Spiller's recording of choir and organ. We may well have rivalled the choir practice going on next door in the church! Members had asked if we could donate the raffle proceeds to the Tsunami Disaster Fund but on learning that it was winding down from that day, having realised such an immense amount of money, it was agreed to send it to the Cumbrian Flood Relief Fund instead.

Rosemary Minshull offered to attend the AGM at the Albert Hall in June this year as our delegate, when we celebrate the 90th year of the WI movement. It is hoped that Her Majesty the Queen will attend; she is a member of the WI in Norfolk. Several other members are hoping to go along too as visitors.

We are planning a celebration of our own in July as we were formed 45 years ago. Our present President was a founder member and we still have others in the Institute as well.

Other plans are a fund-raising evening in St John's Hall on 4th March at 7.30pm, when we are having a 'Flog It' event. All the items to be auctioned will be donated and will include some home-baked items as well as anything else saleable! It is a fun evening and everyone is welcome to come and buy, as well as bring their unwanted items for sale if they like.

Ray Spiller, our guest for the evening, started his entertainment with some examples of number one hits which have been included in some peoples' lists of the worst record ever made! He then played some records made by comedians and others made by people long ago forgotten by most of us and we had to try and guess who they were. A buffet supper was served, prepared by the Committee members, and more wine and coffee was available, after which Ray played many hits of the 60s at which point many members could contain themselves no longer and got up and danced - encouraged by the rest with handclaps and singing. It was quite sad to have to bring it all to a close. Ray was thanked by Janet Hilde for giving such a great evening and a good start to the year 2005.

Judy Colliver  
812470





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## Memorial Gardens

We have received some very complimentary remarks about the work which has been undertaken in the Gardens - it has certainly made a huge difference and opened up the views of the Church. The Open Spaces committee has discussed re-planting of the borders, but the ground will be left fallow for about a year to 18 months to see what develops. It is possible that long-buried seeds may start to grow, and these need to be dealt with before any new planting takes place. It will also give us time to kill off and clear more of the ivy which has been so intrusive. Restoration of the front boundary railings is well in hand, and these are due to be replaced in the spring.

## Vandalism

Many of you will be aware of a spate of vandalism in the village prior to Christmas - play equipment and street lights on the Mountfitchet Estate were damaged, as was the fencing around the play area on the Recreation Ground. The heavy floral troughs at Blythwood Gardens were also overturned. Incidents of stone-throwing at trains, possibly from the black bridge, were also being investigated by the Police. We believe now that arrests have been made in relation to the stone-throwing and hope that the perpetrators will be brought to book. It is possible that the same trouble-makers have been causing our vandalism.

If you see damage being caused, please report it to the Police and also to the Parish Council at the earliest opportunity.

## Police Levels

We were sorry to see PC Richard Williams retire at the end of December and send him all good wishes for the future. We were not so pleased to realise that no replacement officer has yet been identified to work with Neil Russell and Niki O'Mahoney. Our Support Officer, Sharon Cooper, seems to have settled in well and has been very active, and we now welcome another Support Officer, although he is technically allocated to cover the villages.

It appears that the Response Unit has been moved out of Stansted, although we were told that this would not happen again as Stansted has a greater number of incidents than Dunmow. A police spokesperson was quoted in the local press as saying that "Stansted has never had it so good" in terms of policing - it is not that many years ago that we were told our establishment should be 15 officers. Cllr Catherine Dean, our Chairman, has written to Chief Supt Sue Harrison at Braintree Police Station to express our dissatisfaction with policing levels. If you feel inclined to support our view, please write to Ch Supt Sue Harrison, Police Station, Blyth's Meadow, Braintree CM7 3DJ.

## Parking

The survey of airport fly-parking is on-going, so if you see a vehicle which you believe should be parked up at the Airport and not on our streets, please report it on 0800 731 2385. This does not mean that the vehicle is removed, but it does ensure that those compiling the figures get a true picture! The parking attendants employed by Uttlesford District Council seem to be doing a good job in keeping cars off the yellow lines during the day. However, we are aware that there are hot-spots during the evening, particularly in Lower Street, so have requested random evening visits to cure these problems.

Ruth Clifford  
Parish Clerk  
Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council  
<[ruth.clifford@stansted.net](mailto:ruth.clifford@stansted.net)>  
(01279) 813214



## STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

Friday the seventh day of January dawned with a fair wind from the south-west. Thus alerted, sundry artisans from the Stansted Millers company cast aside other tasks which they and their womenfolk had prepared for the day and gathered at the windmill to make ready the sails for turning. This they achieved with great accomplishment and the sails turned to their satisfaction for some three hours until unfinished work demanded the return of the artisans to their homes. Travelers in the many motorised vehicles on the Newmarket Road were astounded at a sight which none had hitherto seen on this highway. Many of the populace also neglected their daily duties and assembled with much acclamation to witness the event. One resident from a nearby demesne came with a device of the very latest cinematographic art and so was enabled to produce many visual impressions which the lady, for such it was, offered to the artisans for the future delight of a greater number in a public meeting room. Such generosity surely aids our community in its diverse needs.

Several of the burgesses of Stansted Mountfitchet later commended the artisans on their skills, and there was a cheerful recounting of the occasion in the various alehouses when the menfolk returned after their day's work in the field, workshop or counting house.

We hear that there is talk of mechanical adjustments to the mechanism to further aid the turning, while on all sides there are calls for this happy occasion to be repeated. We must, however, heed the words of an artisan who said, whilst viewing the spectacle, that it is only through Providence that a benign wind can blow.

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## IN MEMORIAM

### JOE WATSON 1907-2004

One of Stansted's oldest residents who lived in the village for all of his 97 years died peacefully at his home at Church Hill Corner just after Christmas.

Born in Burton End into a farm worker's family, he was seven years old when the First World War broke out, and the lack of local men to work the fields enabled Joe to sit on the lead horse of a ploughing team to make sure they pulled in a straight line. He went to the village school in Lower Street but was allowed time off at busy times to help with the ploughing and the harvest.

One of Joe's earliest jobs was to man the horse and trap which collected what is delicately called 'night soil' with his brother, Duke, in Stoney Common. They did this round for a number of years as their first cart had wooden wheels and metal rims and, by the time they gave it up, they had moved through rubber wheels to pneumatic tyres, which must have been easier on local ears.

But it is as an agricultural worker that Joe is best remembered. First in the farms where he developed a natural affinity with horses. His way with horses saved a good few of them when a fire broke out at a farmhouse and the brigade had not been able to save the stables - Joe went in and coaxed the horses out to safety.

He knew the land, and those who owned it, and was able to arrange meetings of local farmers to broker land deals when the parties had not been hitherto acquainted. During the Second World War he went on shoots throughout the area and kept not a few Stansted households in rabbit meat during those austere days.

Joe worked for many years at Rochford's Nurseries and in the 1940s prisoners of war were used as labourers there under Joe's supervision. Only a few years ago, one of those prisoners made a special visit to Stansted, visited Joe, whom he said he had always remembered, and thanked him for the many kindnesses he had shown to him and his fellow prisoners.

For many years, the Burton End residents relied on Joe for their newspaper deliveries - and sometimes freshly laid eggs! He enjoyed his 'paper round' and particularly liked the tea and toast provided for him by one of his regulars.

Joe continued to work well into retirement - you couldn't stop him. Until he was over 90 he worked, initially with his brother Duke, at The Mountfitchet School, looking after the animals, and tending the greenhouses and vegetable garden. He used to sell tomato plants for the school and those lucky enough to get them knew they were in for a good crop. Joe, amazingly, also found the time to look after the large garden at his home, and all who saw his fine flowers, his vegetables and his greenhouse will know that he was a master at his craft of husbandry. Friends who called to see him often left laden!

Joe was lucky in life and he was lucky in love. His sister Vi had gone into domestic service in Lancashire and one time brought back her fiancé's sister, Fanny. Fan used to tell the story that she took one look at Joe and decided that if she couldn't have him, she wouldn't have anyone else! They were married for over 60 years!

Fan died in 1997 and this was a loss that Joe would never come to terms with. She had been his best friend, and he often felt her presence long after she had gone. He treasured a picture of her and 'spoke to her' every morning. That picture was by his side when he died.

Joe was a one-off; a gentle, generous Christian soul who enjoyed the gift, which he knew it to be, of life. He is now in the care of the God he knew. He leaves his son, John, and granddaughters, Claire and Fiona and their families. Joe will be missed by them and by all who knew him.

Alan Corbishley

### DORIS SHERVINGTON 1908-2005

Doris Shervington died in Addenbrookes on New Year's Day and was buried with her husband Douglas from St Mary's one week after Joe Watson's funeral. Joe was a good friend and took great pride in tending Douglas's grave, a place of constant reflection for Doris. She was 96 and her last six 'twilight' years were spent in nursing homes in Saffron Walden. Born in Highams Park and educated in London she became a secretary in the City before marrying Douglas in 1935. Making their home in Woodford Green they had three children. This was a happy time in spite of Douglas's overseas service, other tribulations of the war, and post-war austerity.

Daughter Janet married John Hollis in 1960 and moved to Stansted. Richard and Inga Shervington followed in 1962, whilst Patrick, Vicki and family saw the world with the Army. Doris and Douglas moved to the Campions in Stansted in 1982 with sister Hilda moving to Dove Close a month later. Doris was an enthusiastic member of the Church, a keen flower arranger and one of the first helpers at the Day Centre. She worked in the WRVS hospital shop and with 'meals on wheels' but had to slow her charitable work as Alzheimer's claimed her.

She loved being with her family, especially the grandchildren and performed valiantly as baby sitter and dog minder. Her garden was often full of children and her life-long love of tennis helped her to pass on a few tricks at the Tennis Club. She was quite a shy person with no ambitions for herself although the hardships of the 1940s had developed a resilience and strength of character which stood her in good stead when Douglas died in 1985. She never got over his death but did not let it affect her contribution to her beloved family and the community. She, Douglas and Hilda are fondly remembered.

Richard Shervington

# UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Back to work

The Christmas and New Year break gave a much needed opportunity to recharge my batteries and see something of my long suffering family. The first meetings of the year have been held and committees are considering their budgets for the next financial year. They have all been asked to find savings in order to keep council tax increases as low as possible.

## Local Plan

At our last full council meeting we adopted a new Local Plan which will control housing and other development in Uttlesford for at least the next three years. It will force developers to provide at least 40% of low cost homes to buy and affordable rented homes in any project of 15 or more homes. Until now the limit has been 25 homes. This is good news for those people trying to get on the housing ladder.

## Upgrading of CCTV

Stansted has benefited from CCTV cameras for some time now. They were installed with the intention of deterring crime and promotion of Secured Car Park Status. The Council has decided they will benefit from upgrading. Digital recording will now be used instead of the current analogue (video) system. This will be an improvement because:

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## Policing

Your councillors are concerned about the level of policing for Stansted and surrounding villages. Although we are pleased to have Community Support Officers and accept they have a valuable role to play - they should not be seen as a substitute for regular officers. They do not have the same powers and have not received the same training. We will be asking the Council's scrutiny committee to investigate the whole issue of policing and whether resources are adequate for a growing community.

## Community Achievement Award

Congratulations to Mr David Challis and Mrs Brenda Ryan who will receive the District Council award at a ceremony in February 2005. The Parish Council nominated Mr Challis for his service to the elderly and Mrs Ryan for service to the local community.

Cllr. Geoffrey Sell



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## STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

After all the excitement of the Christmas season I think that it was with a slight feeling of relief that members arrived at our first meeting of the New Year. At least, everyone seemed happy to be back and, as usual, we started the year with our Members' Evening. On this occasion, four 'volunteers' had been persuaded to speak for a few minutes on any topic of their choice and coincidentally, they had all decided to tell us something of their own early memories.

To open the proceedings, Derek Francis told us of his first job after leaving school in 1945, when he started work at the Co-op store. The store had originally been built in 1904 as Galloping Horse Villa by the owners of Thurston's Fairs, and was converted to a shop in the 1930s when it was acquired by the Co-op. Derek's arrival was during the last year of World War II when the store was run by Mr and Mrs Clark. This was the time of rationing, shortages and price controls. Goods were unpriced on the shelves but prices were memorised by the staff (and the customers); there was little pre-packing as items like cheese and butter were delivered in 56lb slabs and had to be cut up in the shop. In addition to the full range of groceries, the Co-op also sold petrol – once the radio comedian Richard Murdoch stopped at the pumps, an experience which was discussed in the village for days! One vital aspect of the Co-op was the Dividend and the periodic arrival of the details of the customers' 'divvy' due was eagerly awaited. Derek's jobs included polishing the brass rail outside the shop every Monday morning, sweeping and scrubbing the floors, making deliveries to customers on the shop bike and doing all the odd jobs. All was very different from today's shops, and Derek often wonders what the shopkeepers of 1945 would make of the present supermarkets.

Clare Francis then took us back to her up-bringing in Forest Hill in London and held us fascinated with a great variety of memories – of travelling on open-topped buses, steam trains, trams and the Woolwich Ferry (the engine room was the attraction here!); of visiting the Crystal Palace with all its wonders and seeing the fabulous firework displays there; going to the Horniman's Museum with its clock with moving figures at certain times of days (still to be seen); taking the bus to Croydon to see the planes at the Airport. She also told us of the street traders who came round – coalmen, rag-and-bone men, muffin men and organ grinders. Clare saw her first television at a demonstration at the Ideal Home Exhibition in 1928 and recalls the romance of the silent pictures. Clare considered that she had been fortunate to live through such an exciting period when so many things were being developed and experienced, and many of us with memories of around the same time agreed with her.

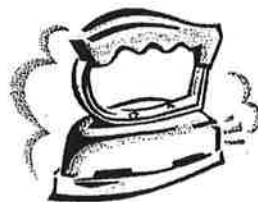
Following on, Frances Lyons told us of life in a girls' boarding school in Eastbourne in the 1950s. She was the youngest of three sisters to attend and she gave us a most interesting

description of life there at the time. The principle rule seemed to be NO BOYS but apart from this, the discipline was not too heavy, although there was a firm routine to be followed. Girls were allowed three baths a week, hair washers attended fortnightly, there was Church on Sundays, Morning Prayers and Grace at meal times, and an ex-Army Matron dispensed two basic remedies for all ills – aspirin and syrup of figs! Silent Hour on Sunday afternoon was the time to write home, although distance meant that parental visits were not frequent. The girls, of course, got up to all sorts of mischief but were generally well-behaved. Frances had pleasant memories of walks on the South Downs, visiting the town on prescribed routes set to avoid the boys of Eastbourne Grammar, and toasting muffins by gas fires.

Finally, David Harrison told us of his early life in Benfleet, Essex. Born in 1933 he and his elder brother lived with their parents on a relatively new estate and he recalled much of what Clare Francis had been speaking of earlier, including the burning down of the Crystal Palace in 1936. His pre-war memories included family visits in the way that many of us recall, outings to Dunstable Downs, and his impression is that it was always sunny. He went to Benfleet School at the age of five, then when war broke out all changed. Initially evacuated to his Aunt Ann's at Bletchley, he was not very happy, especially with the school meals. Although outside London, Benfleet saw quite a bit of enemy action as the raiders passed overhead on their way to their targets. One Heinkel 111 jettisoned its bombs while trying to dodge British fighters and one landed in the garden of his home causing considerable blast damage. As a result, his father found a cottage to rent for his wife and family to stay until the house was repaired while he continued his work with the Cambridge University Press and as a Captain in the local Home Guard. David saw many dog-fights and raced to visit crash sites for mementoes but even he now thinks rescuing a number of live cannon shells was a bit too much. He gave us other recollections of war time and of his time in the Scouts before time overtook him – we are now looking forward to his next instalment at the same time next year!

In the meantime, we shall be meeting next month on 3rd February. We shall be hearing from Roger and Rosalind Peck about 'The Professors of Stansted' – the story of TB research at Stansted in 1902-1911. We hope you will be able to join us.

Ian Seavers



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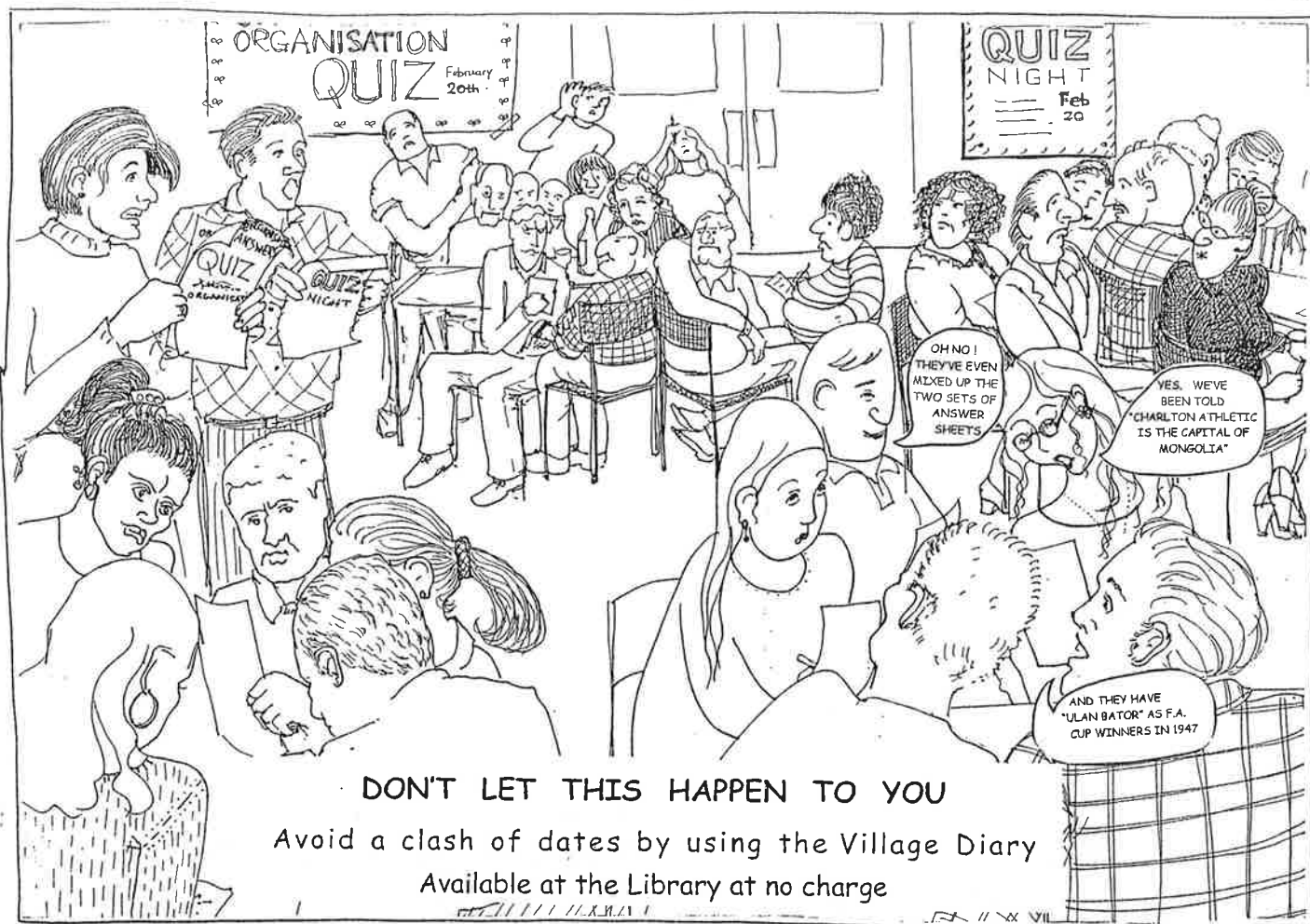
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## Huw Johnson Club

Although it seems a long time ago, we would still like to say a big thank you to everyone who came to our Christmas Concert. As an audience you were wonderful, reacting so well with the members of the cast making it a very memorable evening. We would also like to say how much we appreciated your generosity which added over £550 to our coach fund for this year's holiday.

On 13th January we all went bowling in Bishop's Stortford. We gave our members the choice between bowling or a pantomime and bowling won. This is not surprising as we get such a welcoming reception from the staff there.

On 28th January we had our New Year Party with Gary King entertaining us with his ever popular disco. This term we shall also be putting our new equipment to good use with curling, bingo and table football.

Our drivers list suffered a lot last year with the death of two of our most faithful drivers and the illness of two more. We would be so grateful if you could offer your services. It would involve either driving to Saffron Walden at 6.30 pm or returning members to Saffron Walden at 9.00 pm once a month. Please help if you can. Ring 812284 for further information.

Marion G Johnson

## SNIPPETS

One encouraging feature of the times is the generosity and support given to worthy causes. In addition to the impressive sums raised for the Tsunami Appeal, we hear of £300 plus being realised at January's Interfaith Quiz and over £1000 at the Jazz Evening held in aid of St. John's Hall refurbishment. The hard-pressed Alzheimers Society received over £300 from Carol Singing and the Celebration of Christmas, while the school Christmas Fairs and the Huw Johnson Club have also attracted generous incomes. This is the sort of news that we want to hear.

On the reverse side of the coin we have vandalism and an unsafe society. In all the present very real concern over vandalism we must recognise that our small local police team is doing what it can and achieving some success. Theirs is a difficult, constrained and often dangerous job that few of us would wish or be able to do. Thank you Neil, Niki and Sharon.

A closely related matter that is causing much anxiety is the future of the Police Station. The official replies to the Parish Council's enquiries just do not reassure us. With the population shortly to soar by another 2000 there is no case for its closure; on the contrary it should be as open and staffed with available officers as it used to be - not as now. This needs to be stressed by all of us. So send your concerns to the address in the Parish Council's article on p.13 and also let our MP be aware of your feelings. If there are enough of them local voices are heeded but there needs to be a consistently loud chorus. This may be one of the sad reflections of the present day but unfortunately reason itself is not enough.

The Editor

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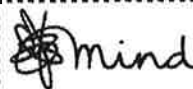
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### PROGRAMME

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Meetings take place on the first and third Wednesday of each month. At one meeting games will be played and on the other Wednesday talks, entertainments or outings have been arranged as follows:

2nd February	Quiz
16th February	Music
2nd March	Games – Grand National Money In
16th March	Games – Grand National Draw
6th April	Half Day Outing or Guest Speaker
20th April	Games
4th May	Half Day Outing
18th May	Games – Clothes Show
1st June	Games
15th June	Full Day Outing
6th July	Peggy Entertains
20th July	Games
3rd August	L. Markham (Speaker)
17th August	Games
7th September	Full Day Outing
21st September	Games
5th October	Games
15th October	Autumn Sale
19th October	Half Day Outing
2nd November	Games – Clothes Show
16th November	AGM
7th December	Christmas Music
21st December	Christmas Party

## PANCAKES

In the February 2003 issue of the Link, suggestions were given for Shrove Tuesday recipes. Browsing through an old Household Encyclopedia recently, the following were found, in addition to the standard and savoury ones. How about trying some on 8th February (early this year!)

**"Irish pancakes** are made with 4 yolks and 2 whites of egg to each ½ pt. (284ml) milk. To make them, melt in the milk 1½ oz. (42g) butter and 1½ oz. castor sugar. Whip the eggs well and stir them into the milk, then beat to them by degrees a small teacupful of flour. Fry these pancakes without turning them, and use a very thin layer of batter. They should be piled, when dished, one on top of the other and served with sugar and whipped cream.

The **French pancake** differs in method, as the yolks and whites of the eggs are whipped separately. For a dish of French pancakes, take 5 eggs; separate the yolks and beat them up with 3 oz. (85g) castor sugar and the same quantity of very fine sifted flour; add the juice of ½ a lemon and ¼ of the peel grated. By degrees beat in ¾ pint (426ml) of milk. Now fold in lightly the whipped whites of the eggs. Half fill buttered saucers with the mixture. Bake in a quick oven 15-20 min. Turn out on to sugared paper, put a spoonful of jam in the middle, and fold.

**Yeast pancakes** are made from the same mixture as doughnuts and cooked in the same way, but are rolled into small, round, flat cakes about ½ in. thick. Jam is put on one piece and another piece put on top and the two pressed well together before frying."

Peggy Honour

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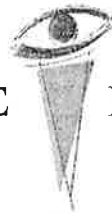
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## STANSTED BOWLING CLUB

As the gale force winds and cold weather of January took hold it was all too easy to batten down the hatches and stay indoors in the warm. With Christmas long gone and the children back at school, spring still seems a long way off but perhaps now is the time to shake off that stupor and get out to meet some new people. The National Childbirth Trust (or NCT) is a charity offering information and support in pregnancy, childbirth and early parenthood. It achieves this through running antenatal classes, having enquiry/advice lines and organising activities for mums and children. The Stansted and District branch which covers Stansted, Elsenham and Henham as well as other surrounding villages currently has around 70 members and we are always looking out for new people to join us.

Events in the NCT diary for **February** and **March** include a walk and duck-feeding trip to St Michaels Mead, an Open House morning at the Quaker Hall in Stansted, a trip to the Coconuts soft play centre in Dunmow and a walk in Hatfield Forest. As well as our usual coffee groups listed below, there are monthly nights out for the dads and the mums (separately!) and a special get-together over coffee and cakes called Bumps and Babes which is an informal gathering for mums to be and those with small babies and which is an extension of the usual Tiddlers and Tums.

Our **coffee groups** are held on the following weekly basis: 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.

Watch out for the diary sheets which are pinned on the village notice boards or, if you would like to receive a free listing of all branch events being held during the next few months, please email [StanstedNCT@skygod.demon.co.uk](mailto:StanstedNCT@skygod.demon.co.uk) or phone the branch enquiry line on 0870 4211508. If you would like to book for our popular antenatal classes, please call our bookings clerk (early in your pregnancy) on 0870 7656284. If you would like to become involved in the running of your local branch of the NCT, we always welcome new committee members and helpers: the committee meets once a month to plan forthcoming events and deal with branch matters.

Vanessa Gibbons

I would like to begin this newsletter by introducing myself, Doreen Scraggs, as the new Club Secretary at Stansted Bowling Club. Many thanks to Rex Turner for all his previous hard work and all the help he has given me in my new role.

We are now two months away from the start of the season and looking forward to getting out on the green.

We held our Presentation Dinner on Saturday 20th November 2004, which went very well and all who were present had a lovely meal thanks to Peter Howes and his team.

The Club AGM was held on 2nd December 2004 and was very well attended. We are now hoping to start on the Club refurbishment and would once again ask if there are any companies or individuals who can offer any building materials etc. please get in touch.

On Saturday 9th April 2005 we are holding a 'MUSIC QUIZ EVENING' organised by the legendary Doug Sanders which will help to raise funds for the Club. If you would like to come along it will be teams of four - please contact below for further details.

Tuition sessions will be advertised in good time and we look forward to welcoming lots of new faces.

Doreen Scraggs Secretary

Tel: 01279 815036

Email: [doreenscraggs@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:doreenscraggs@tiscali.co.uk)

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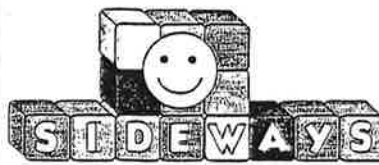
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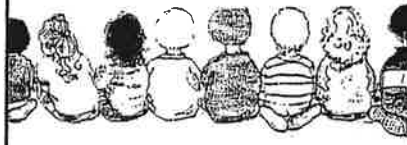
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Our final concert this season will be on Saturday, 5th March, when one of Britain's top young string quartets, The Carducci String Quartet will be coming to Stansted. Their programme of music includes Haydn's String Quartet Op.20 No 4 in D, the Ravel String Quartet in F and Smetana String Quartet No.1 in E minor - 'From my life'.

The Carducci String Quartet was formed in 1993. As prize-winning graduates of the Royal College and the Royal Academy of Music, they are well known for their performances throughout the UK. They were major prize-winners at the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition in Japan in 2003 and at the 'Charles Hennen' International Competition in Holland.

They have studied with members of many leading quartets including the Amadeus, Alberni and Chilingrian. In 1997 they were awarded the Gold Award at the Castagnetto-Carducci festival in Italy and adopted the name 'Carducci' with the blessing of the Mayor!

Tours abroad have taken them to Greece, Germany, Italy and Belgium, and for the last two years they have been artists in residence at the Beaumont Festival in France.

The concert, in St John's Church, Stansted, will start at 7.30pm. Tickets are £9, Concessions £7, Children £3, and children of members £1 available from:

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 Nockolds Solicitors, Market Square, Bishop's Stortford  
 Options Hairdressers, Elsenham  
 Sonia Levy, 31 Chapel Hill, Stansted. (01279 815282)  
 or at the door.

Although this is the final concert in our current season, 2005 is the year for our bi-annual 'Summer Soiree'. This will be on Saturday 9th July at 6.00pm with supper and jazz in the interval in the grounds of St John's Church. Full details will follow nearer the time, but please note the date in your diaries now.

Alan Corbishley



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## STANSTED & DISTRICT LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Our next ploughman's lunches will be on Saturday 12th February and Saturday 12th March, 12 noon to 2.00pm, at the Stansted Day Centre. All are welcome.

We will be holding a Supper Club on Friday 25th February, 7.30 for 8.00pm at the Stansted Day Centre. The speaker will be Richard Harris. For tickets and further information, please ring 814222 or 813432.

Ruth Rawlinson

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# ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

Readers will recall in the report of October 2004 mention was made of five themes for study by the County Council during the coming months. In subsequent reports mention has been made of these themes, mainly in passing, as work is still ongoing.

In the case of theme four - Resistance to Proposals for Additional Housing in the Eastern Region - this proposition has, now, not been accepted by Eastern Region. The result of this decision now rests with Mr John Prescott, and what will happen remains to be seen.

Theme one - Budget Proposals - are nearing completion and the result will be reported in March. Presently it would appear the increase in Council Tax for the County is likely to be in the region of 4 1/2% to 5%. Whilst most would hope it will be less, at this figure it will be better than in 2004. This can't be bad.

Theme five - A Second Runway at Stansted - is still in the Courts, and a result cannot be expected for a month or so yet. Presently it would seem the decision would go either way. Readers should therefore watch this space.

Theme three - Better Provision of Education Services - again work is ongoing in this area. The County LEA has recently undergone an Ofsted Inspection which graded the LEA as highly satisfactory, a result which is not yet good enough but gives grounds for improvement in the coming years. Again, readers cannot but agree that there are distinct signs of improvement in our schools with secondary and primary. This depends on the competence and dedication of the schools' staffs but also in the efforts of an improving LEA.

The final second theme - Better Provision of Highways Services - is as always ongoing and depends on good organisation and cash provision. Reorganisations in 2004 are now complete and in place. 2005 should therefore see visible improvements in the local area.

Finally and for the information of all, outlined below are details of changes which have been made towards the better and more effective running of the county civic amenities sites. The changes are as follows:

- Height barriers will be raised to 1.95m [6'5"] which will enable drivers of almost all 4x4 and people carrier type vehicles to drive into the sites. The barriers will still exclude larger vans; and other measures will be introduced to limit the amount of trade waste illegally deposited.
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- The restriction will be removed on trailers [currently only single axle and unbraked trailers are allowed in]. Access to sites will now be allowed for all trailers carrying household waste, subject to health and safety considerations.

It is to be hoped that these changes will help all those DIY and gardeners who, otherwise, are forced into other ways of disposing of their waste.

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

Richard Wallace  
County Councillor,

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*Thank you for your help*

## STOP PRESS

Peter Baker and his Crusty Jazzers entertained around 160 in St. John's Church, Stansted, on 14th January. (See Snippets on p.19). Stansted, unlike many comparably sized villages, still has a vibrant heart and soul and this was powerfully demonstrated. Huge support came from many local businesses who contributed raffle prizes which alone raised £300, 30% of the total. A truly magnificent example of local community and commerce pulling together in support of a local institution; so a huge *Thank you* to the Community of Stansted and to the contributors of a range of interesting and exciting raffle prizes.

Alastair Richardson

Congratulations are also due to the Village Music Club on the January concert featuring Catrin Finch. It was an outstanding performance by a nationally known Harpist, thoroughly justifying the good attendance. Ed.

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