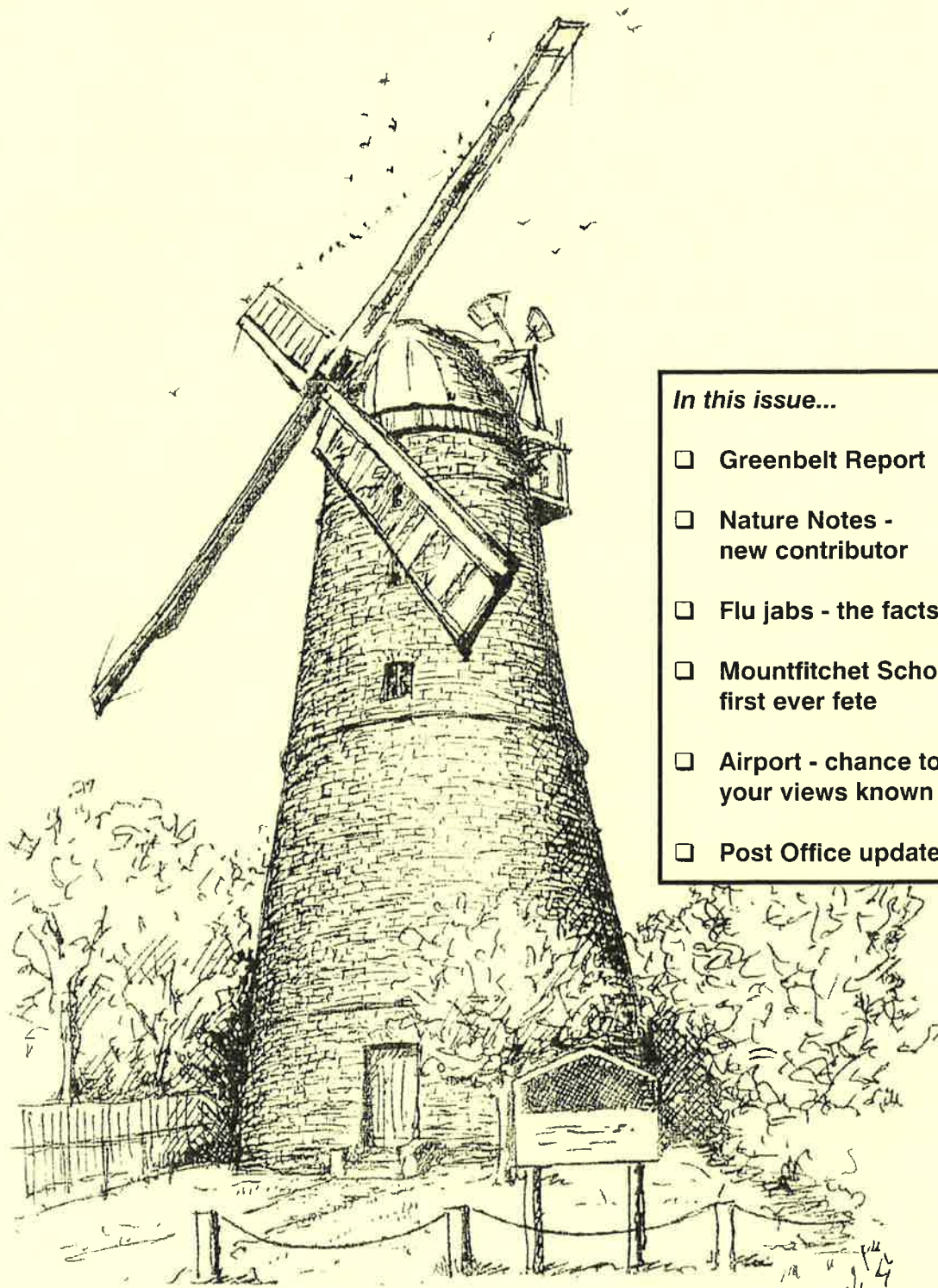


Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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By 10th November for publication on 26th November

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Loss and transformation

Red, gold and brown leaves blowing and falling . . . shiny conkers. October is a month of beauty and transition – from long to short days, for example. For some years now, it has been associated for me with the theme of loss. This is primarily because every October I teach a course about grief and loss as part of my job. One of the exercises that I do with students uses the image of falling leaves as a starting point. On the day when we do this exercise together, I drive home from work – as I do every day – past Wandlebury, outside Cambridge, where the falling leaves reinforce the work done in class. The theme of loss is also present at All Souls tide at the end of the month, when we have a service of remembrance in Church – an opportunity to remember together loved ones who have died.

I have recently been challenged to think differently about loss and grief. The challenge came at Greenbelt from a speaker called Fr Richard Rohr – a Franciscan priest. He sees the experience of grief and pain as centrally

important for our spiritual development. For much of the first part of our lives, we are busy establishing who we are and gaining control over our lives, seeking order, structure and clarity. This is how it should be. But then – at a point in time that is different for each of us – we meet something we can't control or fix or even understand. Most often this is a loss of some kind. Fr Rohr suggests that, if we let it, the suffering that results can transform us.

At the social level, we have seen – relatively recently – changes in the way in which grief and pain are expressed collectively. Perhaps the death of Princess Diana was the first occasion when spontaneous shared public expressions of grief were seen on a large scale, at least in England. Some suggest that we have become less reticent about our grief. Yet modern society still tends to see 'untimely' pain and grief as things that should not happen. We expect to be able to fix things – just this week the news headlines concern developments in research that seek to eliminate certain genetic diseases through genetic engineering. Control and fixing things

contact us

all enquiries

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Director of Music

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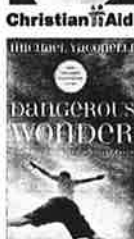
website

www.stansted.net/stjohns

In and around St John's



- **Harvest Festival Service** October 2nd 9:30am. *Preacher:* Marj Carter from Christian Aid. Marj will be at the 11:00am Open Door service which will include a discussion of the work of Christian Aid and its 2005 Harvest project. www.christianaid.org.uk



- **St John's Book Group** this autumn will be reading *Dangerous Wonder: The adventure of childlike faith* by Mike Yaconelli. The group will be meeting at Andy Thornton's in Bentfield Gardens. Call Andy on 813003, or the Church Office on 815243 for details.

- **Living the Questions**, a course in Christian faith over twelve weeks. Using video clips from a number of eminent Christian thinkers and social activists. A new session will begin this month at the Rectory.

- **All Souls Remembrance of the Departed.** Anyone who would like us to remember a departed loved one by name at our All Souls Service at 6:30pm on October 30th is invited to submit that name to the Church Office before Friday 28th October.

All of the above events are open to any who are not members of the St John's community.



ROMAN CATHOLIC

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High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane
Stansted
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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

Faith - A Personal View

Faith in God requires a leap into the unknown without proof. A child will trust his parents to feed and clothe him; not because he has proved to himself that they are worthy, but from instinct. Having faith in God is different; usually learnt over a lifetime, and it can be somewhat difficult to sustain.

It is much easier to have faith in a person if we know and love them. The great thing Jesus taught us by his example is love for God and love for each other. If we seek God's presence just in emotion or reasoning, our gain would be small and fragile and it would let us down at the first stumbling block. Instead, by seeking God's presence in faith, that is belief without proof, we can be sustained in our belief. We need to want to touch God in hope and feel the depths of his light, love and charity.

However, this is not a magic spell and we are, after all, only human. None of us can help doubting our faith, when we are faced with awful disasters, both personal and global. It is as well to remember that although we do stray from God, he does not stray from us and of this there is, to my mind, irrefutable proof.

I know many people who have told me that they have lost their faith or have never believed in God. Yet they continue to do God's work on earth, caring for and visiting the sick and lonely, fighting for people's rights and endlessly fundraising for a good cause.

Faith is still a two way relationship, and these people may feel they have no faith, but they are full of goodness and do God's work on earth whether they recognise it or not. God is goodness. He has faith in them and will not let them go. Their faith is in serving mankind, as Jesus said "whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers, you do for me".

"Faith is not a series of idle remarks. By doing things as Jesus would do them, as God would do them, you free God from the veils of invisibility and make him visible on man's journey." - Carlo Carretto - Italian Theologian.

Mary Warnett

are aspects of our collective mentality, and loss challenges these. We try, as far as possible, to eliminate suffering. Of course this is good, but it also means that our society is not good at accepting pain and darkness and working with them. Indeed, one of the great achievements of the early hospice movement was to reject medicine's view of death as failure, in order to free up the possibility of positive care for those who are terminally ill.

For those of us faced, not with our own death, but with living through the death or loss of someone we care about, grieving is often seen as a process to be endured, perhaps worked through, before we can gain some semblance of control over life again. Of course, we would all agree that life can never be the same after a major loss. Rohr would go further – he argues that we need such experience to grow in a spiritual sense. This growth is not automatic, but it comes from accepting rather than rejecting the pain, and being open to the deep changes that are happening within us. It is evident in a different approach to life – not as something to be fixed or sorted out, but as gift. These dark times are, he suggests, the times when God can reach us, and when we can learn wisdom. Times not just of transition, but of transformation.

CMC

From the Registers

Baptisms:

24th July - Sophie Grace Williams
William James Morriss-Wells

Marriages:

2nd July Duncan Easley to Jessica Ellis
16th July Andrew Thorpe to Charlotte Ingram
20th August Daniel Rosewarne to Charlotte Boucher

Funerals:

1st July Florence Dorothy Wake age 77 at
Parndon Wood Crematorium
7th July Amy Christine Peachey age 81 at
St Mary's, Stansted
13th July Matilda Mary Dixon age 80 at
Parndon Wood Crematorium
22nd July Bernard Frederick Crowson age 74 at
St John's Parish Church Stansted
2nd August Pamela Georgina Moore age 75 at
St Mary's, Stansted
9th August Lilian Louise Deeks age 74 at
Parndon Wood Crematorium

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 October 2005

2nd 2.30pm Rev'd David Simpson - Harvest
Joint with Methodists, followed
by a harvest tea and social

9th 10.30am Mr G Doyle

6th 10.30am Rev'd David Simpson and Rev'd
Keith Page - Communion
Joint with Methodists

23rd 10.30am Miss Jean Hay
Joint with Methodists

30th 10.30am Rev'd David Simpson

Dates for your diary

2nd 3.30pm Harvest tea and social

3rd 6.00pm Pilots
For information telephone 813433

17th 2.30pm Monday Club, open to all
For information telephone 815137

17th 6.00pm Pilots
For information telephone 813433

31st 6.00pm Pilots
For information telephone 813433

Operation Christmas Child

The shoe box packing coffee evening will be on 8th November in the Lecture Hall from 7.00pm. Come and join in the fun and help pack a box or two, and put a smile on the faces of children who will receive them.

Empty shoe boxes are needed (covered if possible), and if you are unable to complete a box and not able to come on 8th November, items for the boxes can be left at 58 Chapel Hill.

- Please remember -

No glass containers or fragile items.
No liquid, blow bubbles, shampoos, bubble bath.
No biscuits.
No chocolate.
No books with words.
More details from Janet on 812593

Janet Townsend

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 October

2nd 2.30pm at the URC, Harvest Festival Service led
by Rev'd David Simpson, followed by a harvest tea
and social

9th 9.30am at the Friends Meeting House
- Geoff Grundy

16th 10.30am at the URC, Holy Communion service led
by Rev'd David Simpson and Rev'd Keith Page

23rd 10.30am at URC - Jean Hay

30th 9.30am at the Friends Meeting House - Ken Mark

On Thursday 20th October the Annual Church Council will meet at 8.00pm at 7 Blythwood Gardens.

Over the past year, representatives from the United Reformed and Methodist Churches in Stansted have been developing the new constitution for our proposed joint church. The resulting document was formally agreed by both local churches on 15th September. The constitution now has to be approved by the relevant church governing bodies. This may take a long time, but we pray that approval will be given in time for us to come together as one church in September 2006.

Marion Dyer



SHALOM

On Wednesday 12th October, Leo Cheng will give a talk and presentation about his time on board a Mercy Ship as a surgeon. This meeting will be at 7 Blythwood Gardens. Please note the change of day.

On Monday 24th October at the Quaker Meeting House, Richard Lavender will talk about tracing a family tree.

Our meetings start at 8.00pm and all are most welcome to attend.

Catherine Dean 813579

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

Driving to work the other day, I heard a 'think piece' on BBC Radio Kent by a representative of the local Racial Equality Council. She spoke about her shame and upset as a child when she realised she was being judged by others because of her different features and skin-colour. She spoke movingly about the fraternity of humankind rooted in the equality of all people.

Her words made me think about how ignorance, fear and a lack of understanding of oneself as well as others can foster prejudice, both visible and concealed. It can sometimes be only too easy to condemn prejudice in others without recognising it in oneself. I was then reminded of the following passages from Advices and Queries, which form part of the Quaker book of Christian discipline, Quaker Faith & Practice:

'Bring into God's light those emotions, attitudes and prejudices in yourself that lie at the root of destructive conflict, acknowledging your need for forgiveness and grace. In what ways are you involved in the work of reconciliation between individuals, groups and nations?'

Perhaps by asking this question, we can be drawn into thinking about what is really required of us to make a positive contribution to reconciliation, whether it is with those we know personally in our daily lives, or on the bigger national or international stage.

Jonathan Morrell

STANSTED RAP (Regular Aid to the Poor)

Do we dare to think about New Orleans? I'm sure the good people of Orleans, France, must feel even more than you do for the agony of the poor descendants of the slaves kept there by good King Louis' settlers.

What we can think about is the small help we can afford to keep the Disasters Emergency Committee in funds. Back in February, I thanked RAP contributors for their constant help, taking a little share of the responsibility which launched, not 1,000 ships, but one Red Cross supply plane from Stansted for the Far East Tsunami relief. Since then the DEC has declared publicly that they would make no national appeal for NIGER relief as the money had been needed **in advance**.

That is what RAP does in forwarding its collection each quarter to Red Cross, Oxfam and Save the Children – ready **in advance** for relief. Please think of a monthly subscription by anonymous envelope or standing order. Contact David and Rita Morson tel. 850209.

Phyllis Harrison
Chair of RAP

HELPLINE

STANSTED'S COMMUNITY CARE SCHEME

As mentioned in our last report, we have been experiencing considerable operational problems with our pager and, despite several changes of model, the problems have persisted. We have therefore taken the decision to change our system to a mobile phone which we hope will eradicate all the difficulties we have experienced (the most problematic being the fact that some calls are not getting through to us) and have the added advantage of allowing callers to talk directly to our volunteers in the first instance, rather than having to leave a message with the paging service. The 'down side' to this is, of course, that our contact number has had to change. In future, any calls for assistance to Helpline should be made to:-

07704 553727

New cards with this number are to be distributed to all households next month and we hope that everyone will keep the card safe in case of need.

Another important issue to report this month is that the Committee has felt it necessary to review the charges for petrol reimbursement to our volunteers. As the charges have remained the same for more than three years whilst the cost of petrol has steadily risen (and is set to rise further), we hope our clients will appreciate the necessity for these increases to ensure that our volunteers are not out of pocket as a result of their generous community spirit.

Finally, if anyone feels they could volunteer their services as a Helpline driver on an occasional basis, we would, of course, be very pleased to hear from you.

Francine Cope
Chairman



STANSTED FUN RUN

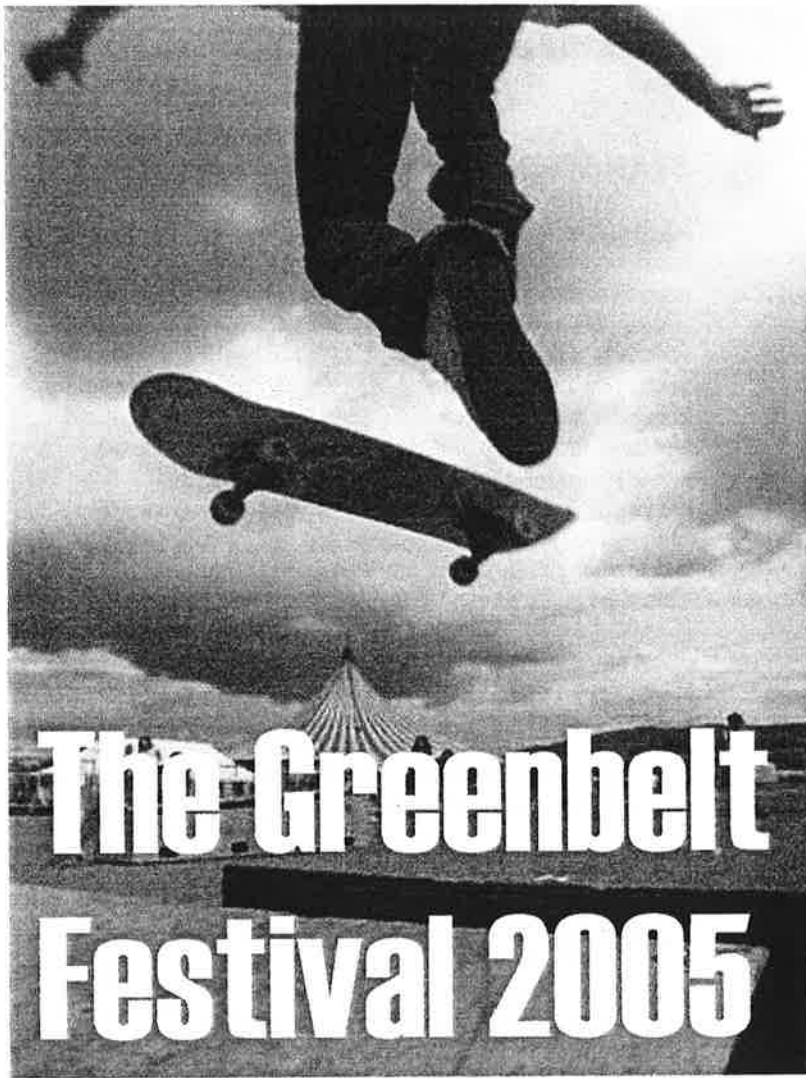
Fun Run & Walk

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

The next Fun Run will be in the Summer of 2006, and the committee will be meeting soon to decide the date.

Although the date chosen will partly depend on the availability of our loyal band of helpers, we would like to avoid clashing with other village events if possible. Therefore if you are organising a weekend event during June or July, please could you let me know by the end of October. Many thanks.

Marion Dyer 814059



and banners waved festively. Music of different kinds came bubbling and murmuring from this way and that. On the more practical side, there was parking for thousands of cars, a massive area for camping, and portaloos were clustered helpfully in all areas. There were covered areas with tables and seating for picnicking. But the main activity areas of the site were filled with circus type big tops, huge marquees, and performance stages and screens, along with hundreds of stalls selling all types of commodity that could be useful or interesting to Christians on holiday. Food and drink of all kinds of course, interesting clothing and hats that you wouldn't find in the shops, jewellery of many descriptions, percussion type musical instruments, picture frames and pictures, there was a fairy shop, selling fairy

wings and other fairy related things for sale in all sizes, and there was an enormous book shop. I am sure to have forgotten loads of the things that were for sale, but there was so much that it was difficult to take it all in or remember it.

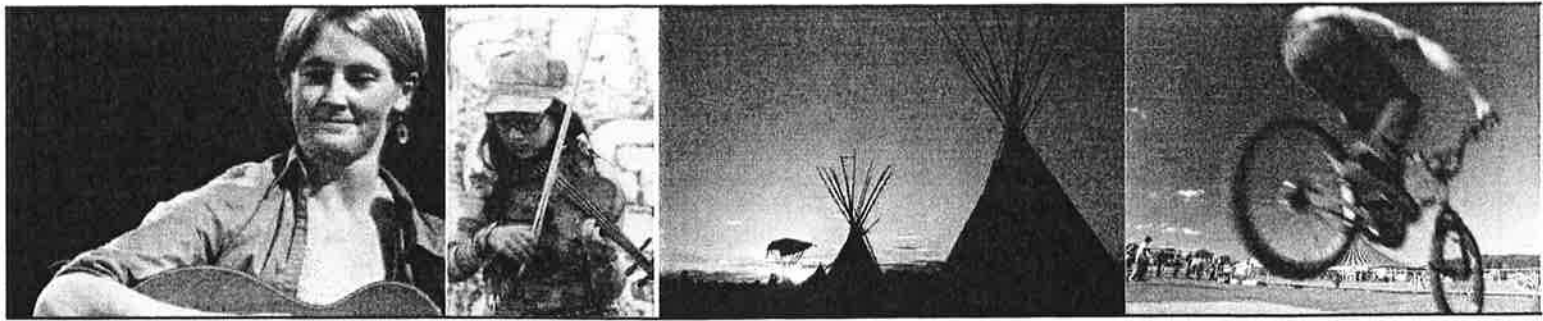
After a while it became obvious that at Greenbelt it is crucial to allow upto 15 minutes to walk from one of the main areas to another. A Greenbelt Diary purchased from the site is also essential; it lists all the venues, and their timetables. There are over 20 venues, each having up to 16 events per day, the choice becomes challenging: each time a decision is made to attend a particular activity; the other 19 plus choices are necessarily sacrificed.

2005 activities included music of various kinds, either to listen to or to participate in, films to suit many ages, speakers on numerous subjects, comedy acts, family activities, media events, art & craft, literature, performing arts, dance, and of course worship, even speed dating and rock climbing were available. *Christian Aid* had there own area and activities, and the YMCA catering venue which was open 24 hours each day was situated in a 'big top'

Greenbelt 05? Is this something to do with saving green spaces and stopping our towns and villages from turning into urban sprawl? Actually, no. Greenbelt is the name of a Christian music and arts festival held at Cheltenham Racecourse, on August bank holiday weekend each year. St John's youth group, Lazer camped at Greenbelt again this year. As I had had heard so much about it, I too wanted to attend, however, I am no longer keen on camping and booked a room at one of the many hotels and bed & breakfasts in the area.

On arriving at the site, we each attached our entrance tickets in the form of bands to our wrists which we waved obediently in response to the stewards waves. We met Father Andrew who showed us where the Lazer group were camping, so that Richard and I could deliver the luggage that we had transported for the youth group.

Back at the main area, I felt so excited! There was so much to attract my attention. Chinese type vertical flags of many different plain bright colours festooned the area, and many other patterned flags



tent, There were exhibitions, bedtime stories for children, Vespers, interviews, karaoke, animation workshop, circus skills, Compline, contemporary dance, song writing, folk club, web page workshop, magic, these were among many others. Our own Andy Thornton, together with Cara Winter & guest were performing under the name of

in first and second halves of life, 9/11 & 7/7, Injustice in Jerusalem and Palestine and finally in my list, Meditation. These were all excellent talks, I found the ideas interesting, challenging, and they certainly made me think. There was time after most of the sessions where one was able to voice questions.



The days rushed on and soon it was Sunday when a communion service was to be held. After parking the car for the day, we made our way towards the North Stage where perhaps around 10,000 people were gathered. "Carole" I heard, I turned and saw Liz, Caroline, Alan and Jane, other members of the Stansted contingent. "Come and join us" they invited. It wasn't long before Lazer leaders, Gary, Debbie, Judith, and

'Restless Horizon'. I really can't do justice to the number and variety of things to do without copying the Greenbelt diary itself.

Perhaps I should have dipped into more different types of activity myself, but because I enjoyed the talks so much, and because I especially wanted to hear several of the speakers, I mainly concentrated on listening to the talks. The speakers I heard were Maggie Dawn, Prabhu Gupta (twice), Clive Stafford-Smith, Colin Tudge, Richard Rohr (twice), John Bell, Naim Ateek and Fr Laurence Freeman, their subjects included, The relevance of church, Why some areas of the world are poor, Why Christianity hasn't revolutionised economics, politics & society, 'Death Row' in The United States, World Trade, Qualities needed

Rob, along with the seven Lazer youngsters, were spotted searching for a big enough gap in the crowd, they too were absorbed into the Stansted throng. During the service, we were requested to write something to be thankful for and something that concerned us on the front and back of red luggage type labels, these were then handed forward to be eventually tied, like leaves or fruit, on to a large white tree sculpture. We broke and shared bread and wine for the communion along with coke and crisps biscuits sweets and biscuits for a communal picnic. Then time for a few more seminars.

Now I can't wait for Greenbelt 06.

Carole Crosby



Nature Notes

SEASON OF MISTS AND MELLOW FRUITFULNESS

In Pennington Lane, which runs from the corner of Bentfield Lower Green, plants struggle under overhanging trees and bushes, and spoil heaps on the wider verges are smothered with stingers, thistles and burrs. Add to this the need to be alert for occasional cars and it does not seem an inviting place for a nature walk.

At this time of the year, however, the lane is resplendent with autumn fruits. One will soon come across those old favourites: conkers, blackberries, twirling sycamore seeds, rosehips, bright red haws, fat acorns, sagging elderberries and clouds of old man's beard.

A closer look reveals a lot more. The guelder rose likes moist places and its red berries can be seen high up on the far side of the muddy spring. The pink and orange fruits of the spindle tree are always a pleasure. The small black berries of the dogwood were once used to produce lamp oil, which is apparent if you squash them between your fingers. Some blackthorn bushes bear a good crop of sloes with a blue bloom covering their shiny black skins. There are also damsons and crab apples.

Compare the different methods used by the climbing plants to gain a hold. The hop stems are covered with masses of small barbs, a bit like velcro. The white bryony uses twisting tendrils to grip, and now that its leaves have withered, has left necklaces of red berries - as also has the black bryony, so named because of the black dye obtained from its roots. The red honeysuckle berries are a favourite with the birds and will soon disappear. The clinging ivy is now coming into flower, providing a late source of nectar for the last wasps and other insects.

There is a wayfaring tree sprouting after recent hedge trimming and its few red berries will soon turn black. Hazel bushes abound but it does not seem to be a good year for nuts. Beech, hornbeam and holly are also without fruit in the lane and the fluffy seeds of the sallow and poplar have dispersed on the wind, but the field maple, ash and laburnum all have winged seeds a bit like the sycamore. The poor elm suckers succumb to Dutch elm disease long before they are mature enough to flower. There are several osiers growing in the hollows and their shoots may have been used in basket weaving. In fact, almost every species

mentioned above would have been harvested or utilised for some purpose in the past.

So, there is much to see in Pennington Lane, but I must add the health warning. Remember that most wild berries are poisonous and in some cases a handful can be fatal for a child. Enjoy your walk.

Felix



**STANSTED & DISTRICT
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Our next ploughman's lunch will be on Saturday 8th October at the Stansted Day Centre, 12 noon to 2.00pm. All are welcome.

The Branch AGM will be held at 11.30am on Saturday 12th November at the Stansted Day Centre, followed by the usual ploughman's lunch, 12 noon to 2.00pm.

We are holding a Quiz at the Stansted Day Centre on Saturday 22nd October, 7.00pm for 7.30pm. The Quizmaster will be David Morson, and the cost of £5 includes light refreshments. There will also be a bar and raffle. Tables of up to six maximum. Please ring 814222 or 813432 for tickets and further information.

Ruth Rawlinson



Afternoon Tea

in aid of of BLISS
Premature Baby Charity

Monday 3rd Oct
Stansted Day Centre
3.30 pm



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CHURCHES
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United Reformed Church Hall
7 for 7.30 pm Tue 11th Oct

followed by

The Interfaith Diversity Game
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Fashion Show

and Prize Raffle

6.30 for 7 pm Wed 12th Oct

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VILLAGE EVENTS

October

1 Sat / 2 Sun Green waste, metal & wood

2 Sun Windmill Open
Afternoon Tea (after service)

3 Mon Afternoon tea for Bliss

5 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
Mountfitchet Garden Club

6 Thu Local History Society

8 Sat Lib Dem Ploughmans

11 Tue Churches Together AGM

12 Wed Fashion Show
Shalom Group (change of day)

13 Thu WI

15 Sat NCT Sale
Mountfitchet Seniors Sale
Music Quiz

15 Sat / 16 Sun Green waste, metal & wood

18 Tue HEAL Coffee Morning

19 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors Day Outing

22 Sat Lib Dem Quiz
HEAL Concert

24 Mon Shalom Group

29 Sat Village Music Club

29 Sat / 30 Sun Green waste, metal & wood

Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm
2 - 6 pm

United Reformed Ch 3.30 - 5 pm

Day Centre 3.30 pm

Day Centre 2 - 4 pm

Day Centre 8 pm

Day Centre 8 pm

Day Centre noon - 2 pm

U R Church Hall 7 for 7.30 pm

St Mary's School 6.30 for 7 pm

7 Blythwood Gdns 8 pm

St John's Hall 7.45 pm

St John's Hall 3 - 4.30 pm

Day Centre

Bentfield School 7.30 for 8 pm

Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm

49 St John's Rd 10 am - noon

Day Centre 7 for 7.30 pm

United Reformed Church 7.30 pm

Quaker Meeting House

St John's Church 7.30 pm

Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm

November

2 Wed Mountfitchet Seniors
Mountfitchet Garden Club

3 Thu Local History Society

10 Thu WI

12 Sat Lib Dem Ploughmans

13 Sun Act of Remembrance

12 Sat / 13 Sun Green waste, metal & wood

Day Centre 2 - 4 pm

Day Centre 8 pm

Day Centre 8 pm

St John's Hall 7.45 pm

Day Centre noon - 2 pm

Memorial Garden 10.45 am

Lower Street car park 9 am - 3 pm

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Stansted & District Liberal Democrats

QUIZ EVENING

7 for 7.30 pm

Saturday 22nd October

Day Centre

Tickets £5 incl light refreshments

Please tel 814222 or 813432

Tables of 6 ~ Bar ~ Raffle



Stansted & District
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St John's Church Hall

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Sat 15th October

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Tuesday 18th October

10 am - noon

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IN MEMORIAM

David Stephan Martin 1936-2005

To say that David Martin, who died earlier this year, was a character would be an understatement. He was a fun loving, gregarious chap who loved life, loved Stansted and loved his family and the many friends he had in and around the village. He had an enthusiasm for everything in which he was involved and threw himself wholeheartedly into many aspects of village life.

Born in London, David, with his brothers Tony and Michael, was evacuated during the war to Stansted and stayed with Millie Turner ('Auntie Millie') in Brook Road. Millie's maiden name was Watson and she was sister to the well-known brothers in the village, Joe and Duke Watson. David used to speak affectionately of them both and was particularly saddened when 'Uncle Joe' himself died at the beginning of this year, aged 97. David attended the village school where contemporaries included Peter Patmore and Jean Fuller.

When the war ended, David returned to London. His career in London started in the newspaper world – from an office boy on the 'Empire News' he rose to become a junior executive at the 'Daily Express' where he looked after all the commercial aspects, promotions and advertising of the film world. In 1966 he was persuaded by a British film mogul to enter the movie world, but David soon realised that the reality was not living up to the promises and looked for new challenges.

David married and had two sons, Ben and Thomas, but it was not until 1987 that he revisited Stansted with Wilma who was shortly to become his new wife. At the time, it was intended purely out of curiosity and nostalgia. Are any people I knew still there? Will they remember me? Is Stansted still as I remember it? Respectively, there were, they did, and it was! And so was rekindled David's love affair with Stansted and Stansted folk!

Wilma and David married in 1988 and the same year bought their cottage in Millside. Acquaintances were renewed and memorable in the early period was Auntie Millie's 90th birthday. He loved the feeling that he had lived here as a child and loved the smell of the cow parsley in early summer. An avid reader, he enjoyed books and going to the literature classes; he was interested in antiques and a regular at Sworders auctions; he liked to keep himself fit and trim and went to yoga classes; and he tried to coerce many of his friends into joining him at Weightwatchers!

David liked to travel. To Normandy where he had a particular interest in the events and aftermath of WW2; to the South of France where for many years he had a house; to Australia to see Ben; and more recently cruises to the Caribbean and on the QE2 and QM2 to New York.

In August 2003 David became ill and told very few people about the shadow that had been cast over him. He remained outwardly his normal cheerful self, continuing with his literacy class, his Weightwatchers, his regular walks around the village and popping into his favourite haunts. In September last year he threw a party at the Social Club, where he was a member, for around 100 of his friends and it was then that he told everyone of his condition.

Determination kept him going for several months longer, but his illness finally took its toll and he went into hospital on 10th May where he died on the 28th. Wilma, Ben and Thomas lost a wonderful husband and a loving father; we all lost a best friend. The attendance at David's funeral spoke volumes for the man – there was standing room only!

Alan Corbishley



Royal British Legion Stansted & District Branch

POPPY APPEAL 2005

The Legion's work is never done and we have lost two more of our soldiers in Iraq just recently.

The Poppy Appeal house-to-house collections this year will take place from 30th October to 13th November. May I please ask you to give generously? It is impossible to cover every house in the district at times when someone is at home but all the pubs, many shops and other outlets will have poppies available. Please support our benevolent work.

We are short of collectors south of the railway line. If you can spare an hour or so collecting in your street please contact me.

John L Segar, Hon Poppy Appeal Organiser
Tel: 813289



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FROM THE SURGERY



This is the first of what we hope will be a number of articles of interest or concern to our readers. If you appreciate them please don't hesitate to tell the surgery when you next call in.
Ed.

Working as a Practice Nurse in a busy GP surgery is stimulating to the mind and tiring on the body, with every season bringing its own work priority.

As autumn approaches we are awaiting the arrival of our flu vaccine and hoping that there will be room in the vaccine fridge to accommodate the copious number of boxes that will arrive during the middle of September. Each year I wonder - is it achievable? How do we deal with the enormous amount of extra work? This very thought sent me thinking about all the for and againsts from you, the patient's point of view, and below I have listed just some of my musings:-

Advantages of having a flu jab

1. A high chance of having a flu-free winter, keeping well and active.
2. Possibly reducing the need for a visit to the surgery for a doctor appointment or visit.
3. The award of a 'bravery sticker' to display on your coat (age not important!).
4. Hopefully not feeling unwell during that much awaited joyful family gathering at Christmas or the firm's party due to a bad bout of flu.

Diadvantages of having a flu jab

1. Having one second of minor discomfort in the upper arm.
2. Taking time out of your work/home life to visit the surgery.

If needle phobia is a problem for you, do not fear! We will treat you gently and talk you through the simple procedure. One of the many things PN's are good at is talking! Children can always bring their favourite soft toy to cuddle!

But to be serious, flu can be painful, distressing, debilitating and a major setback or risk factor to those with chronic medical conditions. The flu vaccine is offered free of charge to such patients and to all those aged 65 and over. By simply having a tiny injection each autumn your risk can be greatly reduced and, despite 'the old wives tale' to the contrary, it cannot give you flu. We also strongly recommend that the same group of patients take advantage of the now available pneumonia vaccination which will protect for life, in the majority of cases, against one of the commonest causes of pneumonia.

We endeavour to be polite and friendly. We always enjoy the good relationship we have with our patients, many of whom are really more like longstanding friends. This is why we try our utmost to offer sincere advice.

Please feel free to browse our website: www.thestanstedsurgey.co.uk or call in for a practice booklet. If you have any queries please contact us by email: practicenurse@gp-f81053.nhs.uk or by letter, or alternatively contact the Practice Manager.

Nurse Carole



UGLEY WOMEN' INSTITUTE

On 17th August we met as usual at 2.30pm at Ugley Village Hall and were very interested and entertained by Mr D Johnson's talk about smuggling on the Essex and Suffolk coasts. I guess we have all known that a lot of smuggling went on round our coasts but we learned a lot more, as we were told of the many tricks people got up to and the reasons why it was profitable if you could get away with it! He did not talk about the 21st century but we must all know that it still goes on even if the methods are rather changed!

On Wednesday 21st September Mr Paul Stevens was with us to talk about the History and Life of Romany Gypsies.

Our next meeting is on 19th October, when Frances Spalding will be showing slides of her holiday in Kenya. Do come along and join us - Ugley Village Hall at 2.30pm on the third Wednesday of each month.

Frances Spalding

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Huw Johnson Club



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Well done Garry, Vicky and Ben for braving the torrential rain and completing their London to Cambridge cycle ride, raising over £800 towards the Club's Holiday Fund. Garry is a great favourite at the Club and his discos and quizzes are greeted with great enthusiasm. We say thank you to them all and to all who have raised money for the holiday.



We had a lovely time at Porthcawl in South Wales with sunshine every day, great food at the hotel and a very friendly helpful coach driver. The coach with its wheelchair friendly lift was a great asset and all our chair bound passengers and a few others with walking difficulties enjoyed the excitement of slowly ascending and descending on the lift. Thank goodness for modern inventions!

All the members thoroughly enjoyed Singleton Park in Swansea with boat rides and games of crazy golf and the 'hands on' science museum Techniquest, followed by a visit to Harry Ramsden's at Cardiff Bay, which also proved very popular. There were several sad faces on Saturday as we waved goodbye to the hotel staff and, in spite of a broken hotel lift and a flooded bathroom (not our fault), a great time was had by all our members, so thank you again for all your support.

Marion G Johnson

The Society's new season opened on Thursday 1st September where the assembled company of members and guests were given a warm welcome. The programme for 2005-6 was to be given a special 'take off' as our guest speaker for this evening was Mr Jack Livesey who was to tell of the history and events of Duxford Aerodrome from 1918. His talk was illuminated with slides which included some rare views of buildings, hangers, aircraft (of which some were to make undignified and unplanned landings), their legendary fliers, pilots, air aces and essential ground crews and all personnel required to operate the aerodrome.

From the very early days of 1918 through the later world war years Duxford was to play a very important and major operational role. Many exploits and heroics were to be recalled by our speaker carefully noting landmarks and features which may very well work given good visibility and daylight, but beware of inclement weather and dark overcast nights.

Our speaker and assistant, Bridget Pollard, were, through their vast working knowledge of Duxford, past and present, able to provide answers to the many and varied questions raised by members, ranging from: the RAF personnel stationed there including Wing Commander Douglas Bader and his famous wing; other squadrons; specific aircraft from the Bristol Fighter to the Spitfire, from the Thunderbolt to the Mustang; aircraft construction and capabilities; aircraft restoration; the arrival of the USAF; the museum; military vehicles etc. A wide range of artefacts and photographs associated with the aerodrome was on display for members to see and wonder at.

It would be impossible within this short report to do any justice to or make detailed reference to individual aircraft or the famous personnel, but all is not lost, because Duxford, now home to The Imperial War Museum where you can get close to history, is still a living and working museum with over 50 working historic aircraft where many regularly take to the sky. Visitors are also treated to air shows and many other special events. Duxford is also one of the largest centres for aircraft restoration. Along with the aircraft, a fine collection of military vehicles and artillery pieces are displayed in battlefield scenes.

Our next meeting is on 6th October when Mr Robert Barltrop will be speaking on 'The Muvver Tongue'.

Peter Brown

St Mary's CE Foundation Primary School



by Wendy Wood, Head Teacher

The beginning of a school year means a fresh start for everyone, with children and staff returning, hopefully refreshed and ready for the next step in the learning process. This September has felt particularly like a new beginning for St Mary's, following our Ofsted inspection in June. For the last two years we have been working hard on improvements in many areas of school life, to make sure that all children achieve as much as possible in their learning. We were thrilled with the inspection findings that the "school has made a good degree of improvement", which has now given us the confidence to continue. Personally, I felt huge relief that the amazing efforts of my wonderful team had finally paid off and we were able to start the school year Ofsted-free and with brand-new plans for the future... watch this space!

You may be aware that a new Ofsted inspection framework for schools has now been adopted: it has been widely publicised that there is very little notice given, but it also includes a much greater emphasis on pupils' personal development and well-being, following on from the Government's Green Paper, 'Every Child Matters'. There are challenging aspects to this, such as how much our children adopt healthy lifestyles and how well they prepare for their future economic well-being.

Another part of the new framework concerns how well children make a positive contribution to the community. In St Mary's, we try hard to develop children's sense of responsibility through involving them in meaningful discussions and, as in most schools, we run a School Council, which discusses and acts on issues important to the children. So within our school community we encourage children to be active, involved members, but we would like to improve our contribution to the wider community of Stansted. Many residents and businesses in Stansted have helped the school in the past, through visits, helping with Maths Week, financial contributions and many more. Now we would like to put something back into the community. If you have ideas about possible projects that St Mary's could be involved in, please phone to talk to me (our school phone number is 812212). We would love to hear from you.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Magazine Man, (dictated)

Whilst gnawing my bone the other day, my eye lit on a page of your paper opened at an article by Ilsa Pedder, who must be a doctor. It was interesting to read about the things we dogs chew. Of course, it took a humans-eye view and missed what is obvious to us. My Labrador friend Titus is always boring me with stories of how his grandfather loved chewing all-woollen socks. It seems they had a wholesome animal flavour and were vastly superior to modern synthetic materials. Small wonder, Ilsa, that some of us swallow them in disgust.

The bone reminds me that my human puts some goo from a tube on her teeth with a thing like a small dogs brush. If only she and all her friends could spend their evening gnawing bones like us while they watch their picture-boxes. That would give them all good white teeth. It goes to show how sensible we are - they seem to have forgotten all we ever taught them.

"Bonzo"

Ballet Success

The summer term at the 'Wendy Mitchell School of Dance' ended with celebrations for one lucky pupil.

Clare Agnew received confirmation that she has been accepted for a second year as a Cecchetti Junior Associate at the London Arts Educational School. Clare has been attending on Saturdays for the past year where, together with other talented dancers, she has been learning a wide range of dance styles including Modern, Jazz, Character and Tap dancing while developing her Ballet skills further.

The Autumn Term began in September with new pupils and old rehearsing for their show in October and dance exams later in the term.



Brownies*

Good news!! 2nd Stansted Brownies has re-opened under the leadership of Rachel Warwick, who has experience as an Assistant Brownie Guider.

Fridays 6.15 - 7.45pm
United Reformed Church Hall

If your daughter would like to join,
or for further information,
please phone Rachel on 815851 or
Glynis, District Administrator, on 814145



BENTFIELD SCHOOL



The National Childbirth Trust
Education for Parenthood

Beautiful sunshine heralded the start of our new school year. Everyone has returned rested and ready for the term ahead. We welcome all the children (and parents) who are new to us this year.

Year 6 attended the excellent Crucial Crew, run by Uttlesford District Council at Thaxted. They learnt about various areas of danger (for example fire, drugs, railways), how to be aware of the threat, and how to cope with it. It was a very worthwhile and thought provoking afternoon.

By the time you read this Classes 5 and 6 will have returned from their residential visit to Torquay. Reports from the children will appear in next month's issue!!

Our KS2 children have been offered a total of nine varied clubs this term including chess, hockey and, new for this term, tag rugby and band – what a choice!

Our school offers both a Breakfast Club (from 7.45am) and an After School Kids Club (until 6.00pm).

If you are interested in either a Nursery or Reception place in September 2006, and would like to visit the school, please give us a ring and we would be very pleased to arrange one for you.

Our wonderful Messy Play started again on 26th September. This is great fun, and runs in the Nursery on Mondays from 1.30pm to 3.00pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you are interested contact the school or just turn up!

The PTA begins the new school year with a favourite event – the now famous MUSIC QUIZ on 15th October. We're hoping that once again the school hall will be packed with those pitting their musical wits against each other, and having lots of fun as they do so. Tickets are just £7.50, which includes a chilli supper. Ring 01279 647650 now to ensure your table.

Before we launch into another busy and hectic fundraising year, we on the PTA would like to thank all the parents, staff, pupils and friends who have helped us last year. In total we raised just short of £10,000, which is an amazing achievement and obviously would not have been possible without continued support. During the last few weeks of term alone the children raised £1,000 with their sponsored sign and the whole village contributed to the success of Music in the Park, which raised nearly £3,000.

We're hoping we can equal, or better that amount this year and are already busy planning lots of fun and exciting things for the year ahead.

Marnie Tait
PTFA Member

An important date for your diaries this month: the twice-yearly **Nearly New Sale** is being held on Saturday 15th October in St John's Church Hall, Stansted, starting at 3.00pm. If you want to sell your children's toys, books, videos, equipment or clothes, please call our sale co-ordinator, Melanie, on 01279 817015 as soon as possible. If you want to buy, come early to avoid disappointment!

Other events for October include a Saturday morning cinema trip, a scavenger hunt in Hatfield Forest, a biscuit bake, a pub lunch, a visit to Coconuts Soft Play Centre in Dunmow and a Halloween-themed messy play morning. We will also be holding a monthly Tea and Toys morning (in Henham this month), aimed particularly at the younger ones who may not want to (or be able to) join in with some of the other activities listed above!

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.

If you would like to receive a free listing of events being held during the next few months or if you want any further information about the NCT or our branch, please email 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, call Sandra (early in your pregnancy) on 0870 7656284.

Vanessa Gibbons

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DAYS OF THE WEEK 6 THURSDAY

Roman dies Jovis - the day of Jove otherwise known as Jupiter, the Thunder God.
In French Jeudi. Jove was equivalent to the Greek god Zeus; also to the German god Donar, hence Old German Donarestag and modern German Donnerstag (Thunder day)

Our Thursday is the Old English Thursdaeg - the day of Thor from the Norse Thursdagr. Thor was the son of Odin. He was known as The Hurler and in Anglo-Saxon Thunor also as Taranis. He was a sky god who controlled the winds and weather and made thunder by hitting the earth with his hammer, Mjolnir, which also caused lightning. He was the strongest of the gods and their protector. In stories about him much is made of his appetite for food and drink.



Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter. There is some dispute as to why it is so called. Perhaps from the Latin 'mandatum' the first word of an anthem traditionally sung on that day or from the French maundiant, a beggar, maundier, to beg. It is also known as Share, Sheer or Chare Thursday. One theory has it that this comes from men clipping, or shearing, their hair and beards so that they looked neat for Easter Sunday. The custom of giving to the poor on this day dates back to at least 1210 when King John gave out food and clothing. Distribution of Maundy Money, to selected senior citizens, by the sovereign, dates back to Edward I. The last monarch to wash their feet also was James II.



In the Russian tradition, 'Thursday Fire' (the candle held during the reading of the Gospels on Holy Thursday night) is carried home to light the lamp in the family's Icon Corner where it burns the whole year.

The fourth Thursday in November is American Thanksgiving Day. Although not known as such at the time, thanksgiving was first celebrated in 1621. In 1789 George Washington proclaimed the last Thursday in November as National Thanksgiving Day and in 1863 Abraham Lincoln declared it a National Holiday. In 1941 it was officially changed to the fourth Thursday in November.

There is a Thursday Island off the north coast of Cape York Peninsula, Queensland, Australia. Presumably it was discovered on that day.

A traditional meal eaten on Thursdays in Sweden and Finland is pea soup and pancakes. The soup should be thick, probably contain pieces of pork and with mustard an essential ingredient. The custom was said to originate in pre-Reformation times as preparation for the Friday fast. In Finland conscripts in the army are still served pea soup with pancakes for dessert for dinner every Thursday. Everyone to his taste!

Peggy Honour



Ten years old this year!

The Club opens its Tenth Season this month with a concert given by Jack Liebeck (violin), Timothy Hugh ('cello) and Charles Owen (piano) at 7.30pm on Saturday 29th October in St John's Church.

Jack Liebeck, one of the country's finest young violinists, makes a welcome return to Stansted. With pianist Charles Owen and 'cellist Tim Hugh he will be giving a recital of duos and trios. He will play Richard Strauss' virtuoso sonata and Tim Hugh will perform Martinu's Variations on a theme of Rossini. The players will join forces after the interval for Schubert's great Trio in Bb.

Tickets are £10, children £3, and children of members £1.
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It is still not too late to join the Club for the whole season of four concerts. Future dates and times are:
Sunday 4th December at 3pm Morgan Szymanski - Guitar
Sunday 29th January at 3pm Bernard Roberts - Piano Recital
Saturday 25th March at 7.30pm The Coull String Quartet.
Full-season membership costs £30, concessions (pensioners over 60 and university and college students) £28. Becoming a member means that (in supermarket language) 'Pay for three and get one free!!' Apply please to The Membership Secretary, The Village Music Club, c/o Little Fosters, Cambridge Road, Stansted CM24 8BY.

January 2006 will be the Tenth Anniversary of the Club's inauguration in 1995 and we shall be making the occasion of Bernard Roberts' visit on the afternoon of Sunday 29th January somewhat special! Some may recall that Bernard has been to the Club before, and his playing and interpretation is an absolute delight to the ear. At 4.00pm on the previous day, Saturday 28th January, Bernard will be holding a Piano Masterclass for invited young piano students. To watch the master at work putting pupils through their paces is quite an education, and exciting to see.

Alan Corbishley



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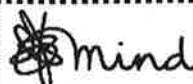
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The Stansted Millers

The sun shone brilliantly, the crowds turned out and there was a delightful 'villagey' atmosphere at the Stansted Windmill Fete on August Bank Holiday Monday. Many sideshows were of a traditional variety, including coconut shy, cakes, refreshments, plants, bric-a-brac, books, also children's stalls, although the more modern addition of a Bouncy Castle was provided for them too. Also updated was Bowling for a Pig to Bowling for a Breakfast as sties in back gardens are in short supply in Stansted nowadays. People generously gave prizes for the Tombola and Raffle and items for other stalls. Altogether £1400 was raised and more than 200 people visited the mill over the weekend. Unfortunately the wind was not right for turning the sails but then we would have complained if it had been too windy and things blew off the stalls!!

Hoorah for the Queens Head! Jane and Nick have adopted the Windmill as the Lower Street pub's charity of the year. They hold a popular quiz on the first Tuesday of the month which Ann, David, Peggy and Derek from the Millers attended in September. A good sum was donated from the tables and the grand total will be given to the Millers later. Additionally their football team known as Queens Park which is sponsored by Poultons will be playing throughout the season on a charity basis.

All this makes cheering news and deserves our - that is the whole village's - support. If you could help to make up a table of four for the quizzes please give 647213 or the pub a call - our hosts would be glad to see you and you are assured of a good evening.

The mill sails are turned occasionally when the wind is sufficient, in the right direction and when at least two volunteers are available. They need painting, brickwork needs repointing and there are other jobs to be done. Scaffolding costs thousands of pounds to put round a mill. It is a listed Ancient Monument and as such all work on it has to be agreed by English Heritage and carried out by contractors approved by them. Also they require an architect to oversee the works so his fees have to be paid from the Mill Fund. The costs soon mount up. The Parish Council's Appeal Fund is steadily mounting and we understand that some very generous donations have come in. The position is nowhere near as bleak as the local press reported in July so please give it a thought and then, unless you have already done so, turn the thought into a donation. There have been encouraging noises coming from English Heritage and other grant-making bodies so together with our own efforts such as the Fete and now the Queens Head we aim to reach the target without resorting to a large sum from a Council precept.

The last regular opening of the season is on Sunday 2nd October 2.00pm-6.00pm. If you have a group of, say, a dozen or more, the Millers would try to arrange a special opening and conducted tour. There is usually a Christmas Stall in aid of the Mill at the beginning of December so look out for notices about that. Items such as tea towels depicting the mill are available from us all the year round.

Derek and Peggy Honour
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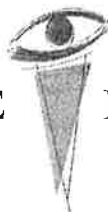
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THE SEASONS TURN

Well that's it then, the summer's gone again. I hope you all had good holidays, enjoyed the sunny weather/torrential rain/anxiety of GCSE or A level results (delete as appropriate) and are now buckling back down to work, school or university.

It's funny isn't it this annual cycle of events? Easter brings chocolate, closely followed by diets and revision timetables; May and June bring exam fever and planning of summer holidays; you spend July looking forward to your week at the seaside and the week at the seaside you spend dodging the showers and eating as much ice cream as possible. (At least that's what our family does!)

Veterinary medicine goes through an annual cycle as well. We tend to see certain conditions at certain times of the year. For us, rather than the first cuckoo, the first sign of summer is the grass seed stuck in a dog's ear or paw. It usually happens sometime at the beginning of June; a dog either comes back from a walk holding its head on one side and yelping when it tries to scratch its ear, or starts to lick at a paw and after a few hours a telltale little swelling, a bit like a blister appears between two toes. I'm afraid it always means a visit to a vet as grass seeds are cleverly designed like little arrows and once they've gone in they don't come out. Also, if grass seeds are left in feet, for example, they can start to travel up the leg and cause problems elsewhere in the body. Some dogs are amazingly patient and will sit still while you extract a grass seed from an ear, but a lot of dogs will need some sort of sedative. This year seems to have been a bumper year for grass seeds. I have removed them from eyes, ears, noses, paws and one that had started to travel into the anus of a dog! The record so far is five grass seeds from one ear. That was from a springer spaniel, which seem to be a breed particularly prone to grass seed problems. One owner this year was in despair after her springer had its fourth grass seed of the month removed and decided the only course of action was to put baby socks on each foot and a hair net over the dog's ears every time it went out for a walk. It certainly solved the problem but she's taken to going out late at night so the dog doesn't get embarrassed! Seriously though, it's good practice to check your dog's feet every time it comes back from a walk, and remove any grass seeds before they become a problem.

Just as grass seed problems decline, August sees the start of harvest mite problems. These are tiny little mites that live in arable crops and once the fields have been harvested, these little mites stick to paws and ears often causing intense irritation. They look like tiny orange dots and can be very difficult to see. Some animals are not bothered by them at all, while other animals are driven mad by them. They don't cause any harm but often the animal needs treating for the irritation and Frontline spray used on the feet and ears is usually enough to get rid of the mites.

Once the fields are ploughed, the harvest mites disappear for another year and we usually just have a last burst of flea problems before the weather gets colder and we start seeing Christmas cards in the shops.

I must just mention one final thing this month. We have been a veterinary nurse training centre for over 20 years, so we have our fair share of revision panic and exam fever. On behalf of all the practice, I would like to say congratulations to Hannah, Emma and Sarah who all passed their nursing exams in August. They all worked extremely hard and thoroughly deserve their success. There, I hope I haven't embarrassed them too much!

Ilse Pedler

Partner, Mercer & Hughes, Veterinary Surgeons

THE LOCAL TALKING NEWSPAPER

"Airport workers in chemical alert"
"War book author's battle to get heroes' names on Memorial"
"Man, 82, dies of heart attack in Tesco's"
"HGV plans for Park and Ride".

These were headlines from our local newspaper, which I recently read in a recording studio in the Herts and Essex Community Hospital; creating tapes that are sent by mail to local blind and partially sighted residents. I refer, of course, to the Bishop's Stortford and District Talking Newspaper.

Each Thursday morning editors meet to select the more interesting news items from the Herts & Essex Observer. Then in the evening four readers (two male, two female) sit down and record those items for distribution to listeners who receive the tapes by post at the weekend. The local Talking Newspaper celebrated 25 years in 2004 and continues to operate in a very professional way, all by volunteers.

As a reader I enjoy the experience although I have been known to forget my own glasses and had to borrow another reader's! New listeners are always welcome and can be included in the weekly distribution with minimum fuss. If you know of someone who would benefit from this service please contact our Chairman, David Smith on 01279 657400. New readers are also needed to step in when regular volunteers are unavailable.

Peter Thomson



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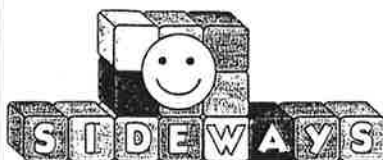
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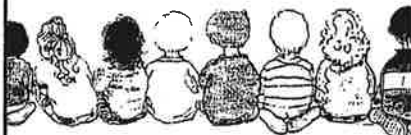
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Stansted Evening Women's Institute

We used to think that August was the month when fewer than usual members turned out for the monthly meeting; what with holidays, children at home and warm summer evenings to laze in the garden. Perhaps these days we take holidays at different times, the children are off doing their own thing and well - 'the warm summer evenings' don't seem so frequent! So this August the Hall was as full as ever, the evening was fine and although sadly the advertised speaker - Paul Stevens (who had been going to tell us of Romany life in New Zealand) had cancelled a couple of weeks before - we were able to offer a substitute. Mrs Molly Tring came along to tell us of her experiences as a Driving Instructor for 12 years. Someone asked her why she had taken it up in later life and we were all rather surprised when she said it was a less stressful occupation than teaching which had been her career. I'm not sure that the teachers amongst us would agree. She said that many women and girls found it more relaxing to be with a lady instructor and she was quite proud of the fact that some people passed after several failures. We were also surprised and maybe alarmed to find out that you can pass a driving test - even now when a written test is required - if you cannot read! This was Mrs Tring's first talk to a WI having recently been put in our Panel of Speakers Book and I think she was quite daunted at the number of people facing her.

At the end of July, 29 of us, including some husbands, went on a coach trip to Bardfield Vineyard. This proved to be a wonderful day out; we were met by the owner Alan Jordan, who welcomed us to his beautiful 17th century red brick farmhouse and invited us to explore it from top to bottom after enjoying a cup of coffee in the tasting room overlooking the gardens. He then took us through the walled garden to the vineyard itself where he explained the wine-growing process. The vineyard was planted in 1990 and is one hectare in size. South facing, the soil and the climate resemble the Alsace region of France and produce a soft fragrant fruit. They send the picked grapes, mostly Bacchus and Reichensteiner, to Cambridge to be pressed and bottled. We also saw the tiled grade 1 listed barn built by Anne of Cleves and still in use today. After the wine-tasting - four wines including a fairly newly produced Rosé - a ploughman's lunch was served at large tables in the kitchen. More wine was drunk and enjoyed and the level of conversation rose - noise - I can't vouch for the quality! We were able to purchase bottles of wine, which were not expensive and came away feeling privileged to have been allowed to explore such a beautiful place.

Plans are afoot for an afternoon line-dancing class to be held early next year in St John's Hall; we are hoping to get a grant from County to subsidise this. Members were asked if they would like to have a trip to Bishop's Stortford Musical Society's production of 'Oklahoma' this November. This is to be staged at Harlow Theatre again following their success last year with 'The Sound of Music'. A Christmas Shopping trip is being organised once again by Linda Gurr to Peterborough on Saturday 26th November.

New members or visitors are always welcome; you can be sure of a good evening and you are bound to find someone there you know!

Judy Colliver

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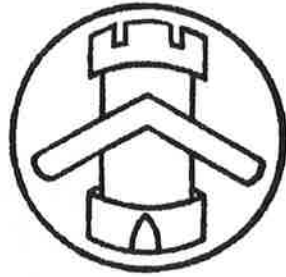
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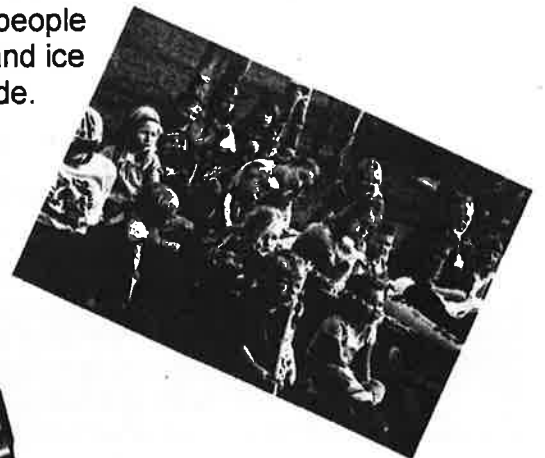
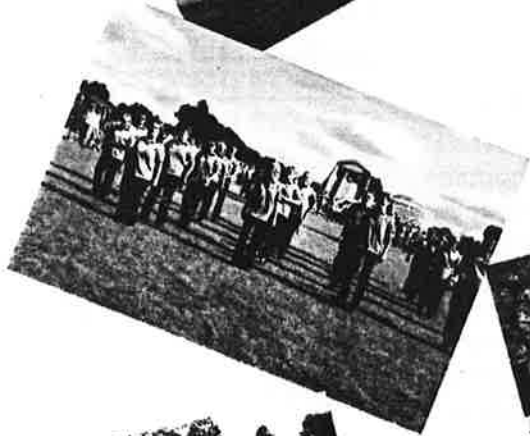
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THE HIGH SCHOOL'S BIG DAY



The sun smiled on Mountfichet High School for their first Grand Fete. Ade Adepitan MBE who is a presenter on BBC's daily X-Change programme and an accomplished sportsman representing Great Britain at the Olympics both in 2000 and 2004 opened the proceedings. He pleased many people by signing autographs. There were line dancing displays in the arena and music groups from the school performed to the crowd. Face painting, tombolas, guess the name of the teddy, lucky dip, bouncy castles and Punch and Judy were among the stalls available for people to enjoy. The BBQ, beer tent and ice cream van all did a roaring trade.





COST OF AIRPORT BLIGHT NOW EXCEEDS £600 MILLION

The cost of airport-related housing blight resulting from plans to expand Stansted since they were first announced in July 2002 now averages £30,216 for each Uttlesford homeowner and totals £635 million across Uttlesford District as a whole according to analysis taken from the latest Government Land Registry house price statistics. House prices in Uttlesford have lagged well behind the rest of the market over the past three years and the owners of all kinds of homes have lost out. Overall, Uttlesford values have risen 24.6% since July 2002 whereas for Essex as a whole the increase has been 38.5%. Detached homes have been worst affected, with an average shortfall of £44,025 per property. For the owners of semi-detached homes the average shortfall is £17,279. For terraced homes the shortfall is £14,190 and for flats and maisonettes £12,453.

The significance of these comparisons with the Land Registry house price index for Essex from July 2002 is underlined because this is the basis used by BAA, the operator of Stansted Airport, for calculating homeowner compensation when offering to buy properties near the airport.

However, BAA is only prepared to consider compensation for about 500 homes in the immediate vicinity of the airport despite the clear and continuing evidence from the Land Registry that the number of homes affected is far higher than this, at around the 12,000 mark. The Government's Air Transport White Paper placed an obligation upon BAA to compensate homeowners for the impact of generalised blight.

Not all homes in the district are affected to the same degree. While house prices in the northern part of the district (those with CB postcodes) have just about kept pace with the market over the past three years, it is a different picture across the southern part of Uttlesford where prices have generally suffered worse than Uttlesford's average. The 12,000 homes adversely affected by airport-related blight are mostly in the six CM postcode areas around the airport in the southern part of Uttlesford but a limited number of properties in adjacent postcode areas, including some in East Herts District, are also affected.

We hear so many claims from BAA about the economic benefits of the airport but here we have a clear economic cost of £635 million to local homeowners. Coming on top of the report earlier this month that air travel cost the UK economy a £15 billion balance of payments deficit last year, one begins to wonder whether there is any net economic benefit, other than to BAA itself.

Consultation on the Draft Interim Masterplan

We are all urged to make our views known via the local authorities or our MP. Note that full use of the existing runway would allow Stansted to become twice as big as today and could be the first step to a second runway.

The main comments should come under these headings:

1. The long-term effects of additional passenger numbers on the existing runway are not spelled out. Disregarding the effect now will ease BAA's application for a second runway.
2. The present runway **could** take 50m passengers per annum. The present throughput is 21m. BAA is aiming for an interim increase to 35m, leading to the second runway application. An environmental assessment is needed **now**, as even 35m would almost double present housing and transport demands.
3. BAA's "annoying" noise level of 57 decibels is widely condemned as inadequate especially by the World Health Organisation.
4. Almost unbelievably, global warming is ignored although this is now almost universally seen as our greatest challenge.
5. In social, environmental and economic terms expansion is *not sustainable*. Cheap flights, Stansted's present mainstay, worsen our balance of payments deficit. The Regional Assembly says that full use of the present runway is unsustainable.

The consultation period ends on 31st October, so write **now** to:

Uttlesford District Council, London Road, Saffron Walden, CB11 4ER or
Sir Alan Haselhurst MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

Further information and comment is available from:

Peter Sanders, Chairman 01799 520411
Carol Barbone, Campaign Director 07775 523091



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Street Cleaning

Do Stansted's central streets look any cleaner this autumn? Too often in the past areas like Station Road and Chapel Hill have not been up to scratch, especially behind the wheels of parked cars. During the summer I organised a couple of walkabouts with Uttlesford officers and established that Stansted is not getting as good a street cleaning service from the District Council as Dunmow and Saffron Walden. A purge of existing litter, weeds and even – I am sorry to say – last autumn's leaves took place. We will now get a full litter clearance on Mondays in the central area, including the skateboard park. On Fridays there will be a further litter clean, accompanied by the mechanical sweeper. In particular, hand sweeping in corners and behind vehicles will hopefully ensure that rubbish is not missed where machines never reach. If you are ever unhappy with the state of cleanliness of our streets, please call the environmental services people on 01799 510342. Please note that the above comments relate to the streets, not the pavements and other pedestrian areas, which are the responsibility of the Parish Council.

Post Office

There was a meeting with the Post Office in mid-September to push again for the return of our counter service. There now seems to be greater hope because the PO is now saying that the counter does not necessarily have to be co-located with the sorting office, which until recently had been a requirement. This means that the sorting office may stay in Chapel Hill, where it has been for years. If a local shop then wants to take on the counter service only, we might be back in business. If you know anyone who is interested, please get them to phone the PO Agency Recruitment Team on 0845 601 6260. Details can be found on their website: www.postoffice.co.uk/subpostmaster. The closing date for applications is 28th October 2005.

Councillor Alan Dean

Tel: 813579 Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk

Refuse/Rubbish/Waste

Whatever one's description this represents the most visible service that the District Council provides. The existing refuse contract will come to an end in July 2006. Currently it is contracted out to a private firm and is being run at a loss. The council will shortly have to take a decision about whether to provide directly the refuse collection service or find another firm willing to undertake the contract. Should the march of the wheelie-bins continue into Uttlesford? Whatever decision we take, we know that it will cost us more.

We have an opportunity to bring together the recycling that the Council provides together with the refuse service. Many residents value the opportunities to recycle through their green and black boxes. The fact is that anything we cannot recycle or re-use has to be disposed of in one of two ways - incineration or tipping into a hole in the ground. Both methods are environmentally questionable and expensive. When asked if recycling is important, 90% of us say yes - but only 50% regularly engage in the practice. The Government estimates that 60% of all household waste could be recycled. Most of it just gets buried. Our nearest landfill site is in

Ugley, which will be full in a few years time. For Council tax payers it makes financial sense to recycle. If we are able to recycle we won't have to spend large sums of money dealing with waste.

Rochfords

The Rochfords site on Forest Hall represents the biggest housing development that the area has seen. It is split between Birchanger and Stansted parishes. Taylor Woodrow plc has planning permission for 315 houses. They have now received agreement from the Council over the design of the properties and location of the affordable housing. The other part of the site is owned by Croudace plc, who have planning permission for 285 houses. Croudace have still to submit details of design etc so it is likely that this part of the site will be developed later.

Before any houses can be built, Pesterford Bridge will need strengthening. Work on this should start late this year, but will take some time to complete. The best estimates so far that it is unlikely that houses will start being built before late 2006 or early 2007. Although development on this scale will cause increased pressure on our local infrastructure, it will bring some benefits. For the large number of people on our housing waiting list, Rochfords will present an opportunity to have their own home. Twenty five per cent of the development will be set aside for affordable housing. This will be provided through a housing association. There will be a primary school on the site. Additionally, a significant sum of money is set aside for highway improvements in Stansted/Birchanger. We are also looking to provide a cycle route from Rochford's into Bishop's Stortford.

Councillor Geoffrey Sell

Tel: 01279 815925 Email: cllrSELL@uttlesford.gov.uk



Royal British Legion

Women's Section

On Monday 8th August 19 of us spent a delightful warm sunny afternoon in Gill Reeve's lovely garden. Gill talked to us about her mother's and uncle's love of plants and flowers in her grandparents' beautiful garden at Moat Farm and later at her family home in Elsenham; and we saw photos.

She also organised some quizzes involving walking round the garden and recognising a number of garden plants and flowers; then giving the common name of others.

We were then refreshed with delicious biscuits and tea provided by Doris; and ended the afternoon by drawing prizes from a generous raffle – with Gill's two dogs, Sam and Henry, joining in the fun!

Pat Clower



**Are your volunteers adequately covered by insurance?
Care Network Update**

We have heard recently about a claim being made by a relative of an elderly lady who fell and subsequently tragically died while being assisted up her garden path by a volunteer; the nephew of this lady is suing the volunteer for £40,000. This brings home to us all how important it is that all organisations, however small, providing assistance in their local community are aware of the importance of adequate insurance cover for their volunteers in the current litigious climate of 'no win no fee'.

Uttlesford Care Network, the umbrella group for a number of village volunteer support services faced the prospect earlier this year of having its request for renewal of its insurance cover refused. This clearly was not acceptable. The Care Network Committee has been working hard over the last few months to develop procedures and policies to satisfy the requirements of our insurance company and I am pleased to say that we have now successfully concluded our negotiations with them. Our policy has now been renewed albeit at a much increased premium and with a clear undertaking that Care Network members will fully implement the newly agreed policies and procedures.

Care Network has developed a pack of procedures: this includes

- An application form for use when recruiting new volunteers
- An application form for registering existing volunteers
- A copy of the agreed Procedural Handbook
- Health & Safety assessments checklist
- Risk Assessment pro forma.

Complying with the new procedures is not as arduous as first it may appear. All the Care Network member groups are currently registering both new and existing volunteers. The Groups are also issuing copies of the Handbook to their volunteers and carrying out risk assessments in line with Health & Safety legislation.

Your organisation may just be run by one or two people with a few volunteers offering lifts to the doctor or hospital but if this is organised through a central contact point you may need to think about your insurance cover.

If you would like to discuss the implications for your group or would like a copy of the Care Network Policy and Procedure Pack please contact me at the CVSU office.

Sue Sumner
Chief Officer, CVS Uttlesford

Those who heard PC Barry Kaufmann-Wright, a Wildlife Officer with Essex Police and winner of the Wildlife Enforcement Officer of the Year Award for 2003, will never again go into a wood and see only the trees. Talking about Seasons of a Woodland, especially broad-leaved trees, he explained the 900 year life of the oak, 300 years growing, 300 years in maturity and 300 years declining. During its life it is likely to be attacked by caterpillars that devour the leaves, then are eaten by (amongst others) bluetits that in turn become food for predatory birds.

We learned that until the reign of Henry VIII Epping Forest reached down to Saffron Walden; that when Henry built up the Royal Navy he devastated the Royal Forests to build his ships. The Mary Rose accounted for 1000 trees. We saw pictures of the 80 acre West Wood near Thaxted, a triple site of scientific interest now maintained by English Heritage. The wood has now been coppiced, which opened up the floor and revealed plants such as wood anemones that will not grow under a canopy of trees. Coppicing is now done on a 10 year cycle and provides a good supply of walking sticks amongst other things.

On 7th September Ken Akens showed his enthusiasm for Northern Italy, its gardens, lakes and villas set amongst the European Alps. Many of the plants which grow there can be found in Britain, flowering several weeks earlier in Italy. He told us of his visits to this area to film a programme for Channel 4 which compared the Italian gardens with his garden near Dunmow. We enjoyed many shots taken from the lakes with a mountain back-drop, saw mosaics and statues in the gardens and admired the villas built alongside the lakes.

The next meeting will be at the Day Centre on Wednesday 5th October at 8.00pm when Mike Thurlow will describe Audley End Kitchen Garden through the eyes of William Cresswell. The competition will be three cooking apples. Visitors and new members are very welcome.

Sally Stockman

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TWO LOCAL SCENES

"Grippers" is one of those places which most people have heard of, many know where it is and have walked it, but of which little is known. Being privately owned it cannot be classed as public open space but as it is traversed by a public footpath the land either side has been used for free play or exercising of dogs for as long as can be remembered. This path is thought to have been the route taken by inhabitants of "The Street" and the Stoneyfield area to Bishops Stortford.

The name is believed to date from the days before the coming of the railway when the land and house now known as Brooklands on Pines Hill was owned by the family of Gripper. It then extended from Pines Hill across to Rochfords Nursery. The land west of the railway later became known as Brooklands because the then owner was a motor racing devotee and gave it the name of the famous racing circuit. The Gripper name has persisted for the land east of the railway and although associated with Stansted it is actually in the parish of Birchanger.

In the days when winter brought snow Grippers was the favourite place for tobaggans of all sorts. Once the "piste" had become hardened by use the young of Stansted and Birchanger met the challenge of a fast descent but not so fast that it would be abruptly terminated by a dip into Stansted Brook (which was not unknown!).

Grippers contributes significantly to the accessible green lands of the two parishes. It would be interesting to learn from any of our older residents if it was once grazed. The increase in scrub in the past few decades indicates period of transition, intentional or otherwise. The Link would welcome memories and anecdotes from those who knew it, know it today, or can fill in more of the history.

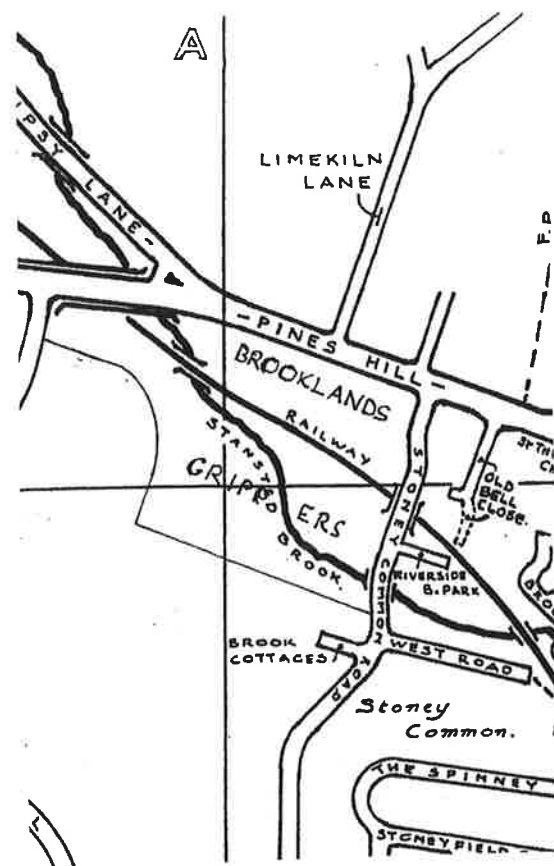


Photo: Mandy Honour

The gatehouse to Stansted Hall is a good example of Victorian architecture and appears to be contemporaneous with the present Hall. This was the principle entrance to Stansted Hall and, with fewer trees surrounding it, would have presented the imposing appearance expected of a country estate. Nowadays the approach to Stansted Hall is further up Church Road and the old drive is mainly used for access to the fields. Nevertheless the building remains a fine part of the village scene. The design is reminiscent of Caroe's work in other parts of Stansted; perhaps a reader can enlighten us.



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