

Stansted Mountfitchet

# The Link



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**EDITORIAL**



After a year of silence, the Primary Health chiefs are now pressing for the designated site at Rochfords to be used for Stansted's health centre. The Parish Council points out that it is far from central and probably too small, while other sites (none as well positioned as the denied Elms Farm) are being suggested. What is important is that the location is as near right as we can get, even if it takes longer to acquire. A year, or even two, is a short time when seen against the life of a public building. Please, Mr Primary Care, can we reverse the trend and put long-term considerations first?

Moving from things that most of us cannot do anything about to those we can, the 'Link' is pleased to include some new contributions. The night sky is always there and is a subject of unlimited interest, so despite urban glare we are glad to be guided. 'Wellbeing' is another intriguing subject. We are pleased to hear from our extended readership, so do send in any copy which you feel may deserve a wider audience, and let us worry about finding space.

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**DISCLAIMER**

Opinions expressed in this magazine are given freely and do not necessarily represent those of the editorial committee

## THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Lent, which starts early this year, is the time in the Christian church when we remember Christ's sojourn in the wilderness and traditionally this has been represented by fasting, abstinence and penitence - the time to give something up. In the wilderness Christ went without many things but his purpose was to think deeply about his destiny and to be in communion with God. Perhaps we too could use the period to review the way we live our lives and focus on a new insight into living more simply. The word simplicity has an attractive ring to it but it does raise some awkward and uncomfortable questions for us. What does it actually mean in practice and is the simple life possible or even desirable or relevant in today's technological society?

Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of Shrewsbury, said recently "One of the difficulties is that we want everyone else to change their lifestyles so that we can continue with ours. We need to pray for a consensus to emerge at global and national levels that we all need to live differently." Early Quakers' writings call simplicity 'plainness' and for them it was about returning to the truth. It cannot be summed up just as simple living, important though that may be. The American Quaker, Rufus Jones said "Unclouded honesty at the heart and centre of man is the true basis of simplicity." This is deeply challenging because it opens up for us the relationship between the inward and the outward, between what we believe and how we act. Outwardly, we must face difficult choices because of our material wealth. Inwardly, simplicity means being aware of personal clutter, getting to the heart of things and about the spirit in which things are done. It is about wholeheartedness and not being distracted or torn.

Can we make this Lent a time to reflect on our priorities and the ordering of our time and resources? Then if we give up some cherished habit or indulgence it will not be an empty gesture or merely an act of personal discipline, but a move towards viewing the world through a different lens and trying to make sure that those less fortunate than ourselves will benefit in some way from what we have to give to the world. Giving up could lead us on to simply giving.

Katharine Hurford and Anthea Lee

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24 Lea Close  
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Tel : 656707

**Meeting** Sunday, 10.30am

**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



# SHALOM

On 11th February, Rev'd Paul Wilkin will lead us in a Lenten Meditation. This meeting will be at 7 Blythwood Gardens. On 25th February, Stuart and Brenda Veitch will be showing pictures and telling us of their exciting trip to Australia and New Zealand. This meeting will be in the Free Church Hall. Meetings are open to all, and start at 8.00pm. Please join us - you will be warmly welcomed!

Marion Dyer  
Tel: 814059

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**Preachers for February**

3rd 10.30am All Age Worship  
 2.30pm Gordon Doyle  
 10th 10.30am Christine Heyhoe  
 17th 10.30am Rev'd Martin Cressey – Holy Communion  
 24th 10.30am Rev'd David Mullins

**Other Activities in February**

Sun 3rd 3.30pm Outreach tea in the foyer  
 Mon 4th 6.00pm Pilots  
 Mon 11th 8.00pm Shalom at 7 Blythwood Gardens  
 Rev'd Paul Wilkin – Lent  
 Meditation  
 Tue 12th 8.00pm Church meeting in the hall  
 Mon 18th 2.30pm Monday Club in the hall  
 6.00pm Pilots  
 Wed 20th 7.30pm CTS Lent discussion and Evensong  
 St John's Church  
 Mon 25th 8.00pm Shalom in the hall  
 Slides of Australia and  
 New Zealand  
 Thu 28th 7.30pm CTS Lent discussion and worship  
 in the church

**Pilots - an evening with Mission Aviation Fellowship**

Imagine living in a remote part of the world and being in desperate need of medical aid, hope for recovery and a better future. MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) is a Christian organisation that provides this hope, by flying their light aircraft to these otherwise inaccessible places. They give their expertise in providing the means to get medical care and missionaries to some of the world's most needy people, and sharing the message of the word of God with everyone they meet.



Recently the Pilot group was fortunate enough to be visited by Mr Kevin Crook and Capt. Bryan Pill from MAF. We learnt all about their life-changing work within these communities, and saw a presentation of their work in action. There was the chance for the young people to have a try at a flight simulator landing, which was judged by Capt. Pill. Other flight related activities were enjoyed by the children, which were linked to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

We were pleased to be supported by over 40 people including 20 children, some parents, friends from the church and friends from the Christian School Takeley. We will be keeping in close contact with MAF as a group and finding out more about what they are doing within the world and how the word of God is reaching people and giving them hope.

Our thanks go to all who supported the evening in any way, and we look forward to welcoming Kevin and his team again some time in the future.

Michelle King



**All enquiries:** The Church Office, St John's Hall,  
 St John's Road, Stansted CM24 8JP  
 Tel: 815243  
 Email: [st.johns.church@btinternet.com](mailto:st.johns.church@btinternet.com)  
 Office hours: 9.00am-12 noon, Monday,  
 Wednesday, Friday  
 Administrator: Mrs Elizabeth Jennings  
 Website: [www.stansted.net/stjohns](http://www.stansted.net/stjohns)

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**St John's Diary**

**Sunday**  
 8.00am Said Holy Communion There are services of Holy  
 9.30am Choral Eucharist Communion on the first  
 11.00am Open Door Service Tuesdays and Wednesdays  
 (all age worship) 3rd Sunday of the month in Norman  
 9.45pm Night Prayer Court, Hargrave House and  
 Broome End Nursing  
 Homes.

**Wednesday**  
 10.00am Said Holy Communion Junior Church meets each  
 7.30pm Ecumenical Prayer Group Sunday at 9.30am. (Children  
 return to church halfway  
 through the service.)  
 The Lazer youth group  
 meet on Sunday evenings at  
 7.30pm.

**From the Registers**

**November/December**

**Baptisms**

18th November Elizabeth Lucy Philips  
 Jazmin Destiny Child  
 Ryan Connor Child

**Funerals**

8th November Alice Vera Levey, age 89 - at  
 St John's  
 11th December Catherine Elizabeth Stone,  
 age 90 - at Parndon Wood



**Celebration of Christmas**

The annual afternoon of carols and readings at St Mary's Church has become an established part of the village calendar, and the 2007 event on the Saturday before Christmas proved to be one of the finest. The choir, largely drawn from St John's Church, but augmented by other local singers, was in splendid form, while the conductor Andrew Bruce reinforced his reputation as both musician and entertainer, particularly with his handling of the '12 days of Christmas'. There was enthusiastic audience participation with many a gyration and waving of arms. Bentfield and St Mary's Schools contributed delightful singing and instrumental support. The readings were seasonal and diverse, and on the whole clearly heard. It was good to have the Rector, Rev'd Paul Wilkin, and Free Church Minister, Rev'd David Mullins, to start and close the occasion, but above all it was encouraging to have a representative capacity Stansted audience drawn from all age groups.

The retiring collection raised over £300 which was divided equally between the charity Uttlesford Mind, and the Churches Conservation Trust, which is responsible for the maintenance of the building. The well-illuminated church set in unlit rural surroundings brought a whiff of Christmases past and made a fitting entry for a great Festival.

Be sure to come next December!

Derek Honour

**Carol Singing**

Once again a band of intrepid singers and flautists faced the elements (actually just a shower of rain!) on a couple of evenings just before Christmas, and shared some carols with unsuspecting residents.



We are grateful to those who took part and to those who answered our knocks and contributed so generously to our record collection of £300 for Uttlesford Mind. Our hostesses for refreshments were Catherine Dean and Gladys Dix, and we thank them warmly for their generous hospitality on the two occasions.

**The new-look CTS**

An excellent and constructive ecumenical forum took place at the Free Church Hall on Wednesday 9th January to review the status of CTS. A key change agreed by the good number

who attended is that CTS should meet quarterly as an open forum under a revised constitution. It was hoped that this would encourage wider participation in forthcoming ecumenical events, including the proposed visit to the Church of Cherubim and Seraphim in Birmingham on Sunday 11th May, a possible Songs of Praise in June or July and a resurrection of the Harvest Festival Service and Social later in the year. Discussion followed on the possible new format of the Forum. It was agreed that structures should be as loose as possible to enable maximum participation from all church members.

An important new project involves the production of an information pack to welcome new residents on the Rochfords housing estate. This will be co-ordinated by Catherine Dean in conjunction with the Parish Council. If anyone is interested in being on this working group please contact Catherine on 813579.

The next meeting of the CTS Forum is planned for 14th April in St John's Church at 7.30pm. All are welcome.

**Lenten Meetings**

This year for four weeks leading up to Easter we are joining together at each of the churches in Stansted for a short act of worship in the tradition of the host church and a discussion on a Lenten theme. Details are in the box below.

<b>CTS Lent Meetings at 7.30pm</b>	
Wednesday	20th February at St John's Church
Thursday	28th February at Stansted Free Church
Wednesday	5th March at Friends' Meeting House
Friday	14th March at St Theresa's Church
<b>Agape Supper at 6.30pm</b>	
Sunday	16th March at Friends' Meeting House
<i>All welcome - please join us</i>	

**Fairtrade Fortnight 24th February to 9th March**

Two events are taking place in Stansted: a coffee evening at 6 Wetherfield on Tuesday 19th February from 7.00pm-10.00pm, and a coffee morning and sale at Stansted Free Church on Wednesday 27th February from 10.30am-12.30pm. If you are not able to support these events, then remember that most supermarkets give 20% discount on their Fairtrade items during this time. Why not try a Fairtrade product that you have not tried before?

Brenda Veitch  
Tel: 815819



**STANSTED  
FUN RUN**

This year's event will be on Sunday 15th June at 11.00am. Please book the date and start training! More details to follow next month, or visit [www.stansted10k.org.uk](http://www.stansted10k.org.uk)

Marion Dyer  
Tel: 814059





## Afternoon Tea

Sun 3rd February in the  
Free Church foyer  
3.30 - 5 pm

Come along for tea, cakes & a chat  
You will find a very warm welcome

All proceeds go towards water  
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## Stansted Windmill



### Coffee Morning

10 - 11.30 am  
Wed 13th Feb  
Day Centre

Refreshments ~ Raffle ~ Stalls



Stansted & District  
Liberal Democrats

### QUIZ EVENING

7 for 7.30 pm Day Centre  
Saturday 16th February

Tickets £7.50  
(incl ploughman's)  
Tel 814222 or 813432  
Bar ~ Raffle

## VILLAGE EVENTS

### February

2 Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
3 Sun	Outreach Tea (after service)	Free Church 3.30 pm
6 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
7 Thu	Bookstart	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
11 Mon	Shalom	7 Blythwood Gdns 8 pm
13 Wed	Windmill Coffee Morning	Day Centre 10 - 11.30 am
14 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
16 Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
	Lib Dem Quiz	Day Centre 7 for 7.30 pm
19 Tue	Fairtrade Coffee Evening	6 Wetherfield 7 - 10 pm
20 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Quiz	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
23 Sat	Village Plan Open Day	Day Centre 10 am - 4 pm
25 Mon	Shalom	Free Church Hall 8 pm
27 Wed	Fairtrade Coffee Morning	Free Church 10.30 am - noon

### March

1 Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
2 Sun	Outreach Tea (after service)	Free Church 3.30 pm
5 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
6 Thu	Bookstart	Library 2.15 - 2.45 pm
	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
7 Fri	Women's World Day of Prayer	Free Church 2 pm
8 Sat	Village Music Club	St John's Church 7.30 pm
11 Tue	Stansted Millers AGM	Day Centre 7.45 pm
13 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
19 Wed	Annual Parish Meeting	Free Church 8 pm



Green Waste, Metal & Wood Skips  
Saturdays 9 am - 3 pm  
2nd & 16th February 1st & 15th March

## Annual Parish Meeting

8 pm Wed 19th March  
Stansted Free Church  
Come, listen & speak!  
All welcome



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St John's Church  
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Coffee Evening  
7 - 10 pm  
Tues 19 Feb  
6 Wetherfield

Coffee Morning  
10.30 am - noon  
Wed 27th Feb  
Stansted Free Church  
All are warmly invited



## Village Plan Open Day

10 am - 4 pm  
Saturday 23rd February  
Day Centre  
Come, listen & take part!  
All welcome

## WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER



2 pm Friday 7th March  
Stansted Free Church  
led by Brenda Veitch  
'God's Wisdom provides  
New Understanding'  
by the women of Guyana  
All welcome - Men & Women



Thomas Barber  
Oboe  
James Southall  
Piano

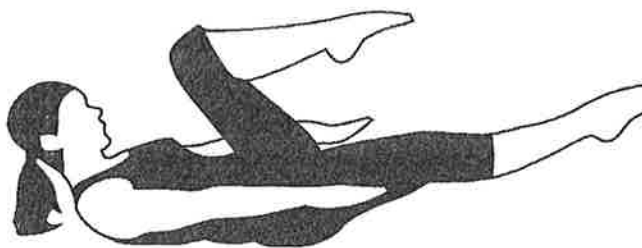
7.30 pm Sat 8th March  
St John's Church

includes music by Bach, Poulenc,  
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Tickets £10 adults, £3 children  
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\*Please note the free 20 minute assessment is by appointment only. Only one free assessment per patient. You have no further obligation to return for follow up treatment or advice. Hazel Williams reserves the right to remove or change this offer at any time without prior notification.



## WHY IS EASTER SO EARLY THIS YEAR?

Easter Sunday this year falls on 23rd March. Last year it was 8th April and even then it was regarded as being quite early on in the year. In 2003 it didn't happen until 20th April, nearly a month later than this year. So what's going on? Why does Easter move around so much? And will it keep getting earlier and earlier so that one day we'll be giving out the Easter eggs before Christmas?

Well the answer to the last question is no, it is not possible for Easter to fall before Christmas. Indeed it is not possible for Easter to happen very much earlier than it is happening this year. Easter Sunday can only fall on a date between 22nd March and 26th April. The last time it fell on the earliest possible date (22nd March) was the year 1818 and it will not fall on that date again until 2285. The last time it fell as early as this year (23rd March) was 1913 and the next time will be 2160. At the other extreme Easter last fell on its latest possible date (25th April) in 1943 and will next do so in 2038.

The date of Easter is calculated in a complex and confusing way. It is nearly (but not quite) true to say that Easter (in the Northern Hemisphere) always falls on the Sunday following the first full moon following the 20th March. I say that this is not quite true because the full moon is calculated using an ancient (and not always quite accurate) formula rather than by observation. The reason Easter is so early this year is that the first full moon after 20th March is 21st March (which is a Friday) and the Sunday after that is 23rd March. The full moon can fall as late as 18th April and since Easter Day is the Sunday after the full moon, if 18th were a Sunday, Easter would not happen until 25th.

How important is all this? Not very important at all. In fact it might be simpler if Easter was celebrated at a similar time each year. In 1928 Parliament passed the Easter Act, calling for Easter to be held on a fixed Sunday – the Sunday following the second Saturday in April. However, the Act stipulated that this should only be introduced with the unanimous agreement of the Christian churches, and such agreement has never been achieved.

The date of Easter is not important. What is important is the thing that is celebrated at Easter - that Jesus died on the cross and rose again for us and that he lives forever as our Lord and God; and that if we entrust ourselves to him we will share in his Eternal Life in this life and in the life beyond death.

Paul Wilkin



### Royal British Legion Stansted & District Branch

#### Poppy Appeal 2007

May I thank all the helpers who collected for the appeal last November. The total raised in Stansted so far has reached £2508.68. Our grateful thanks go to all who gave so generously.

John L Segar  
Hon. Poppy Appeal Organiser



### Stansted Evening Women's Institute

Stansted WI went theatrical for their first meeting of 2008. Traditionally a meeting in a party mood, we invited Chris Clarke, a theatrical make-up artist, to speak to us and to demonstrate some of her skills on our members. The results can be seen in the picture below. These transformations were done in a very short time and thoroughly enjoyed by all who watched as well as the victims! I wonder if you recognise the skeleton often seen cooking lunch at the Day Centre?!



Chris Clarke started off her training as a hairdresser in the '60s in London and after three years training joined the English National Opera Company where she learnt wig making and wig dressing. This she did for about nine years, giving her the grounding for a career which has taken her to Covent Garden Opera House, Stratford upon Avon, London Weekend Television and Granada TV, and where she has met many stars and well-known people in politics. While she was performing her magic on our volunteers she was able to tell us many interesting anecdotes of the people she has met. Two volunteers were treated as casualties and we learnt some of the tricks used in hospital and police dramas. It was a fascinating evening and a good start to our new WI year.

Members were told that we sent 21 parcels to the troops in Afghanistan and Iraq just before Christmas. These contained items of toiletries, flannels, soap, toothpaste, razors, sweets and biscuits, which we were told they would be grateful for. All these were sent by Royal Mail free of charge and we have been told that they will continue to send items free throughout the year. Parcels had to weigh less than 2 kilos and be within a certain size, which is why there were so many of them.

We are arranging a Table Top Sale for any organisations or individuals who have items to sell. The date is Saturday 5th April at 2.00pm in St John's Hall and entrance is 50p. For those wishing to book a table it is £5. There will be refreshments and a raffle - you can't have a WI event without one!

We have quite a few trips and special meetings planned as well as our art classes, which began at the end of January in Ugley Village Hall. We are joining up with Ugley WI for this and look forward to finding some hidden talent amongst us!

Our meetings are held in St John's Hall on the second Thursday of the month at 7.45pm and we are always pleased to see new members or welcome back any who have not been for some time. I am sure you will find something of interest.

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## Manuden Guides' trip to Disneyland Paris

As many of our Guides live in Stansted, we thought your readers might be interested to hear about our latest adventure - a trip to Disneyland Paris! Twenty-eight excited people climbed aboard the coach at 8.30am on 20th October to set off for our long-awaited trip. The coach was extremely comfortable, the coach driver pleasant and helpful, and the journey down to Dover went very smoothly. We shared the ferry crossing with hundreds of England rugby supporters on their way to the final that evening. This made for a most entertaining time, with many dressed up and everyone in good spirits. The journey through France went quickly, and it seemed as though we were at the Davy Crockett Ranch in no time! We were met by a Venture Abroad representative who gave us information and tickets, and made us feel welcome.

We all rushed to find our cabins and were pleased with what we found. There was time for a quick change before we set off for the Tavern for a meal. And what a meal! The manager greeted us profusely, making us feel very special. There was a buffet containing an enormous range of dishes: it was difficult to decide what to have. Some then went to watch the rugby on the large screen TV, some headed for the store for a first shopping opportunity, and some joined the Native Americans and Chip & Dale for some line dancing with a difference.

Everyone enjoyed the experience of collecting and then eating their continental breakfast back in the cabins before boarding the coach for a day at the Park. Excitement mounted from the first sighting of the Disney sign to arriving at the entrance. We all had a great time, fitting in as much as we could: the thrills of 'Thunder Mountain' vying with the magic of 'It's a small world', and the magnificence of the Parade. That evening we all cooked our own meals in our cabins, with varying degrees of success - what could go wrong with soup, spaghetti bolognese, sponge cake and custard?! Goofy (or was it Pluto?) came to visit.

The next day we were determined to fit in everything we had missed the day before, and re-visit our favourites. By this time we all had the headgear and smiles you only get at Disney! At 6.00pm we assembled for Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, and were given more headwear - a cowboy hat. What a spectacle! What skilled horsemanship! What fun! How did we have time to cheer, shout, wave our hats, and eat? One of our group was chosen to ride on the stage-coach, get tied up by bandits, and eventually rescued by Buffalo Bill himself.

A late departure had been planned for the last day so that we could swim in the wonderful swimming pool at the ranch, with slide and jacuzzi. On the way to the ferry, our coach was inspected, and we were told it was the cleanest one they had seen in a long time. Praise indeed! This was another wonderful international experience: we actually got to speak quite a lot of French! We all, young and old(er) alike, certainly 'lived the dream', and will never forget the fun and friendship of our trip to Disneyland Paris in 2007.

Glynis Prothero,  
Guide Guider

## December Meeting

Over 40 members attended the annual Bring & Share Christmas Party. A very lively game of *Beetle* was enjoyed by all. The first round was a very sedate affair as newcomers to the game learned the rules; but by the second round the competitive spirit was unleashed and all that could be heard around the hall were the 'oohs and ahhs' as the various parts of the beetle were built up. Fast and Furious is the only way to describe the rounds - disaster striking if the dice 'escaped' onto the floor and interrupted play!!! Although played in tables, with one pair moving after each game, each individual player earns points and the overall winner of the 2007 Christmas Beetle Drive was Mrs Lesley Hawkes.

## Members' Competition

During the summer members bought gourd plants to 'grow on' and take part in the December competition. The outright winners were Mr and Mrs David Harrison who brought a basket full of gourds of all shapes and sizes to the meeting. They obviously found just the right place in their garden for the plants to grow as the majority of members commented that although they had lots of flowers they failed to pollinate, and any gourds which did start to grow fell off when the weather turned cold and wet - unfortunately we never know what kind of summer Mother Nature is going to give us!

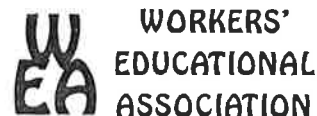
## The Year Ahead

The Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month at the Day Centre, Crafton Green (just off Chapel Hill, adjacent to the Library and car park), doors open at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start. As well as a full meetings programme, the club organises trips, shows and social events throughout the year - do come along, you will be very welcome.

## Some dates for your diary:

- 6th February Sink, Trough and Container Gardening - speaker Mr K Akers
- 5th March Cambridge University Botanic Garden - speaker Prof. J S Parker

Maralyn Harris



A recent Saturday morning talk on Dickens' *Christmas Carol*, given by Gwyn Bailey, described how the fiction reflected the times in which Scrooge was an allegorical figure.



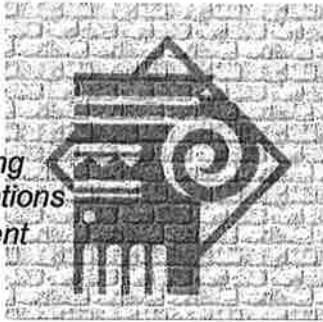
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## 494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

Welcome, to what is hoped will be a regular feature, where we aim to bring you all the news from 494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron ATC.

On 18th November the cadets celebrated victory in the Inter-Squadron Cross Country Championships, taking the trophy as overall winners of the competition, and also winning the junior girls and intermediate boys classes. The competition involved squadrons from all over the Essex Wing, with over 120 cadets taking part. The team was presented with the trophy by Wing Commander Glen Mayes, Essex Wing Commander.

After attending the village Remembrance Parade it was time for goodbyes as we said farewell to Flight Lieutenant Rob Hall, our former Commanding Officer. At a poignant ceremony presided over by Glen Mayes, command was handed to our new CO, Flight Lieutenant Ellie Chinnery. We dined Rob out at The Ash, Burton End where over 100 cadets, staff and friends enjoyed a three course meal and disco to say goodbye in style. Rob, who was leaving to serve full time in the RAF, was presented with a sword by the cadets in appreciation of all his hard work and dedication to the unit.

The cadets have continued with their academic studies, with many successfully passing their initial leading, senior and staff exams. The Squadron also enjoyed sporting success as overall winners of the Essex Wing Inter-Squadron Cross Country, with several cadets winning Wing Blues by going on to represent Essex in the Inter-Wing Competition. In early December, ten cadets completed their first Air Experience Flights at RAF Wyton, and an article written by one of the cadets will be included in the next issue.

As a pre-Christmas treat and as a thank you for collecting during Wings Week, the local RAF Association very kindly paid for the Squadron to go bowling in Bishop's Stortford. The week leading up to Christmas saw the cadets packing bags in the new Sainsbury's store in Bishop's Stortford where they raised over £2,000 for the unit.



Many things are on the cards for 2008, with an ongoing recruitment campaign, a basic skills camp, adventure training exercises, Duke of Edinburgh Awards Scheme, flying, shooting, visits to RAF Stations and a Battlefield Tour all planned. So if you are aged 13 to 18 and fancy a challenge, visit our website: [www.stanstedaircadets.org.uk](http://www.stanstedaircadets.org.uk).

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## BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL Tel: 813626

### PTA News

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped us to organise, set up, run and clear up after the **Christmas Fair** last term. We were particularly pleased with the number of new faces who gave up their time to support the event. Also, despite the decidedly dreadful weather and the nasty bugs that were hitting us all, a good crowd of people braved the elements to come along on the day to generate a lovely atmosphere and spend their lovely money! Between them, they helped us to raise a terrific £1400 for the school.

This year we had two new stalls, both of which proved very popular. Olly's donut stall did a roaring trade – those donuts are really addictive! Our **Present Planet**, which was set up in a quiet classroom away from the general hubbub and, most importantly, away from the eyes of the grown ups, was the perfect place for children to buy Christmas presents for the important grown-ups in their lives. There was a team of lovely helpers on hand to show them the range of gifts available and help them with their selection, and to give them as much help as they needed with the careful writing of gift tags before sticking them onto ready-wrapped presents. This service was immensely popular and one that we shall definitely be repeating. (I wonder how many presents are still hidden in their secret places waiting to be remembered or happened upon!!)

Now, of course, we are already busy plotting and scheming for more fund-raising and fun-raising! However, we do not like to spend all of the time raising money for the school. We also really enjoy spending it, and are currently consulting with the staff to decide which items or projects we will fund now and in the near future. Forthcoming events include a mid-term school disco and some activities with an Easter flavour towards the end of term. Looking ahead to the summer term, our Fair, which has traditionally been held in May, will, this year, take place on **Saturday 7th June**, followed in July by **Music in the Park**.

Alison Thompson  
PTA Co-Chairman

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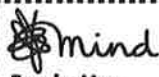
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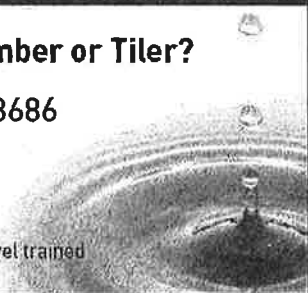
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## IN MEMORIAM

### ALICE VERA LEVEY

31st March 1918 - 26th October 2007

Alice 'Vera' Levey was born in Bishops Stortford but spent most of her life in Stansted. She met her husband-to-be, Aubrey, in March 1936 when she was introduced to him by a friend in Bishop's Stortford. Vera and Aubrey must have been intrigued when they discovered that they had the same surname. They found that they were distantly related since Aubrey's grandfather and Vera's great grandfather had been brothers. She and Aubrey were married just four days after VE day.

Vera worked for well over 30 years for the Bank of London & South America in London, travelling 1st class - of course! Vera was the first lady cashier the bank ever had. She was elegant, always beautifully dressed, vivacious and full of life. The house in Chapel Hill has been in the family since 1917. Vera had been a sportswoman who was captain of Bishop's Stortford Ladies Hockey Team and a keen tennis and badminton player. Together with Aubrey, the late and much-loved undertaker in Stansted, Vera made great contributions to village life. In 1969 she helped to found the local branch of the National Trust and was from its inception the Honorary Treasurer and was made an Honorary Life Member. She also was treasurer and served on the Committee of the Herts and Essex High School former pupils association and, in more recent times, was a member of the Mountfitchet Seniors Club.



Vera joined the Royal British Legion Women's Section, Stansted Branch, on 7th March 1947 at the age of 29. She was a faithful member for 60 years and was Treasurer for 50 years. Her banking experience was reflected in her meticulous book-keeping. Her good work and loyal service were recognised by the Royal British Legion National Gold Award. When the Women's Section closed recently a new group was formed to raise funds for the Poppy Appeal and the Gurkhas. Vera was a member and attended for the last time on 4th June.

Aubrey and Vera did not have children but lavished great love and care on a succession of large Basset hounds that were a familiar sight in the village. They had the military names of Trooper, Monty and Winston. It was well known

that Vera was not always the easiest of people to deal with but she was able to stay in her own home until a few weeks before her death, thanks to the devoted care of many people, who do not wish to be named. They cannot be thanked enough. They are the backbone and heart of Stansted.

The wonderful compassion of this village was demonstrated by the large congregation at Vera's funeral. People with the great character of Aubrey and Vera are sorely missed. Together they organised the local Poppy Collection for many years and Vera's funeral came at an appropriate time, close to Remembrance Sunday. There was a poppy wreath at the foot of her coffin. 'We will remember her.'

Janet Hollis  
Past Chairman of The Royal British Legion  
Women's Section, Stansted Branch



We had almost a full house for the visit by The Guildhall Strings in December, when an appreciative audience enjoyed a programme of music by Mozart, Dvorak, Janacek, Strauss and Tchaikovsky. At the time of writing this article our concert by The McLeod/Sturfalt Duo had not taken place but by now that too should have been counted as yet another of The Village Music Club's 'class act' successes!

Saturday 8th March the date, 7.30pm the time, and St John's Church the venue of the fourth and final concert of our 2007/8 season. It will feature another duo, oboist, Thomas Barber; and pianist, James Southall. As principal oboist with both the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain and the European Union Youth Orchestra, Thomas has already worked with some of the world's great conductors and appeared at many major concert venues. He is a graduate of Cambridge University and the Royal Academy of Music and has studied with a number of leading performers, including Nicholas Daniel. James, too, graduated from Cambridge, where he was Organ Scholar at Queens from 2001-2004. He is also a keen cellist and was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain for two years and principal cellist in the Cambridge University Orchestra. He regularly collaborates with fine musicians in performances around the country under the Countess of Munster Recital Scheme.

As well as sonatas by Bach and Poulenc, Thomas and James are also including in their programme work by the early 20th century English composer, Edmund Rubbra, plus Interlude by his contemporary, Gerald Finzi. An additional item will be False Lights, a composition by James Southall himself. To complete the evening's programme, James will be playing piano solos by Mozart and Schubert.

Tickets are adults £10, children £3 available from Stansted Carpets; Nockolds, Bishop's Stortford; Sonia Levy, 31 Chapel Hill (01279 815282) or at the door.

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## **NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS**

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### **FIND OUT ABOUT THE VILLAGE PLAN AT AN OPEN DAY**

Although the Parish Council has initiated the process, the successful creation of a Parish Plan is dependent upon the input from you.

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has been organised for  
Saturday, 23 February 2008  
10.00 am – 4.00 pm  
at the Day Centre,  
Crafton Green

Come along and find out more – ask questions and then take part in whatever area interests you. During a period in which the Parish is likely to undergo major change, it is essential to have direction and priorities.

### **Help to achieve this goal.**

### **LIGHTING THE PARISH – RESPONSE TO ECC**

Essex County Council has asked for views on its trial whereby lights are turned off between midnight and 5 am. Those affected have been encouraged to respond with about 75% of the responses (sent to us) opposing the blackout. The Parish Council has reiterated its stance that the choice should lie with the Parish.

The offer to pay for the additional energy cost has been reiterated as has the offer to take over those lights currently under the control of ECC. The Parish Council is reviewing its lighting policy to ensure that the targets of energy conservation and cost control are met. Before any changes (if any are proposed), the Council will consult. However, any policy should be fair to all who live in the Parish, not selective as at present.

### **FUNDING ANOTHER DEDICATED PCSO**

Although there are three Police Community Support Officers in the area, only one is dedicated to our Parish. The responsibilities of the other two are respectively Birchanger Services (which funds 75% of the cost) plus Birchanger and the rural parishes as far as the Eastons. PCSOs work an eight hour shift between the hours of 8.00 am and midnight.

The main role of a PCSO is to tackle anti-social behaviour and to patrol the village using different routes and getting to know the likely hotspots and hiding places. In addition they cold-call on residents and businesses to ask if they have any problems or issues to raise.

The Parish Council has decided that, subject to certain assurances being given, it will fund 50% of the cost of another PCSO with a review after one year (no on-going commitment).

This Officer would be dedicated to the village. As always the choice of a person is critical and the Council expects to have an input into the choice.



## AN UNCHANGED PRECEPT FOR 2008/09 IS GOOD NEWS

The Parish Council has decided to raise a precept of £129,000, the same amount as in the current year.

However, a number of new initiatives are planned:

- New swings will be installed on the play area at Bentfield Green. The cost is about £9,000.
- A dedicated PCSO will strengthen the on-street presence (subject to receiving satisfactory assurances on appointment, operational direction and existing staffing levels). The cost to the Parish Council is £14,500 in the first year but, if the appointment is unsuccessful, then there is no obligation to continue. As they say, the proof of the pudding .....
- An extra evening opening on Fridays at the Youth Club in Lower Street will be part-funded by the Parish Council at a cost of £2,500.
- The fountain and the surrounding area needs renovation and estimates are currently being sought.
- A welcome pack is to be assembled for delivery to the new houses and flats on Rochfords and elsewhere in the Parish.

The financial reserves are in good shape and money has been put aside for the work on the Windmill and the hoped for move of the Parish Offices to the ground floor of Crafton Green House once the new health centre is constructed!! Meanwhile, the Parish contribution relating to the Leisure Centre has been paid to the District Council.

## HIGHWAY ISSUES – WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The village faces many traffic problems and these are likely to worsen over coming years.

The Council will be holding meetings with Essex County Highways to discuss a variety of issues but it would be helpful to have your views and ideas especially on the following:

- The volume and type of traffic using High Lane, Lower Street, Chapel Hill and Church Road
- The problems surrounding the Fountain junction with Cambridge Road
- Speeding and safety issues in the Bentfield area
- The lack of a right-hand turn from the B1383 into New Farm Road

That there are problems is not in dispute but what are the realistic solutions which would lead to significant improvements?

The relevant authorities will also be pressed to remove surplus signs which will improve the environment.

## SUPPORT THE YOUTH CENTRE

The Youth Centre is becoming more popular particularly at the younger end of its age range. The Council believes that its success benefits the young and everyone in the community. As such it is considered worthwhile to fund 50% of the cost of opening on Friday evenings. This additional night commenced on 11 January. Along with the Skatepark and the proposed all weather area on the Mountfitchet Estate, this is an investment in our young people.

### PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Catherine Dean	813579	
Peter Deeks	813806	
Gaye Ellington	813933	
Jo Freeman	812524	
Bridget Gott	814440	
John Hudson	814489	
Peter Jones	813252	
Janice Loughlin	812346	
Ruth Rawlinson	814222	**
Jonathan Rich	813112	
John Salmon	814789	
Geoffrey Sell	815925	*
Valerie Trundle	813433	
Richard Wallace	812588	

\* Chairman

\*\* Vice Chairman

## CRAFTON GREEN ENTRANCE

The enhancement project to improve the entrance to the Crafton Green area is now almost complete.

One section has been turfed, and the front area planted with low maintenance shrubs which, once established, should provide year-round interest.



*Entrance to Crafton Green*

Unfortunately, two lavender plants were stolen from this area on New Year's Day evening, and two others up-rooted. A hawk-eyed parishioner spotted this and re-planted the two loose plants – our sincere thanks to him. Replacements for the stolen ones have also been planted as we do not intend to give in to 'light fingers'.

## DATES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

January 30	-	Finance & GP
February 6	-	Full Council
February 13	-	Open Spaces
February 20	-	Full Council
February 27	-	Finance & GP

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings, and may address the Council on any relevant issue at the start of Full Council meetings. Meetings are held in Crafton Green House at 7.45pm unless otherwise stated on the agenda. Agendas are posted on the Parish Council's website [www.stansted.net](http://www.stansted.net) under Publications.

## ESSEX COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Just after the last edition of The Link was published, we received an appeal from the Fire Service for the public to help act as their eyes and ears.

There have been a number of thefts from local fire stations in Essex, particularly of essential metal-cutting equipment as this has considerable second-hand value. Clearly, if this equipment is not available on fire appliances when they are called out, lives can be put at severe risk. If you pass by the Fire Station on a regular basis, please keep an eye out and note down any suspicious activity or vehicles and report them to the Fire Service on 01277 222531, ext. 2210. Many thanks.

## EMERGENCY PLAN

Our Civil Protection and Emergency Planning sub-committee has recently updated the village Emergency Plan. It can be read on our website ([www.stansted.net](http://www.stansted.net)) under "Publications" or in the Parish Council offices at Crafton Green. If you are a linguist, medic or have other skills which may be appropriate for inclusion, please do let us know and we can include your details.

## CYCLING ON PAVEMENTS

A parishioner has recently queried with Essex County Council the legality of bicycles being ridden on the pavements. Please note that there are no rights to use vehicles or bicycles on the pavements and the rights of pedestrians are protected. Cycling on the pavement is a fixed penalty offence.

## TALKING NEWSPAPER!

A FREE talking newspaper is produced by the Herts and Essex Observer each week on cassette tapes for those with visual impairment or reading difficulties. Further information from Richard Barnett on 01279 651270 or Christine Heyhoe 01279 653925.



## Local Development Framework Update

There was a well attended meeting of the South West Area Panel held at the Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College on 7th January.

Members of the public and councillors were able to question John Mitchell, Director of Development for the District Council. He reported that there had been a big response to the consultation which was due to finish on 11th January.

The responses will be analysed by officers and a recommendation will be made to the full council in March. If the recommendation is approved by councillors then the core strategy will be submitted to the Government. If the officers' recommendation is not approved, then there will be a need for fresh consultation. If this is not required, this autumn there will be a public examination of the Council's core strategy. This will be done by a planning inspector with the purpose of ascertaining whether the strategy is sound.

It remains my view that there has not been a sufficiently robust planning case for any of the options. Both the Government and the Council need to go back to the drawing board.

## Multi-Games Area Mountfitchet Green

The Council was successful in its application to the Big Lottery and was awarded £45,000 towards this project. The total cost of this exciting facility is £55,000. Other sources of funding are being explored to make up the shortfall. BAA will be approached. I understand a local pub has raised £1,000.

I am also pleased to report that Stansted Youth Centre was awarded nearly £10,000 towards various projects. This funding came from the Uttlesford Youth Forum.

Councillor Geoffrey Sell

Tel: 01279 815925 email: [cllrSELL@uttlesford.gov.uk](mailto:cllrSELL@uttlesford.gov.uk)



Essex County Council

## STANSTED LIBRARY

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### LIBRARY OPENING HOURS

Lots of new children's books have arrived at the Library recently, so it is well worth a visit!

Tues	9.00am	-	1.00pm
Wed	2.00pm	-	5.00pm
Thurs	2.00pm	-	6.00pm
Sat	9.30am	-	5.00pm

Bookstart is held on the first Thursday in the month at 2.15pm during term times. This is a delightful way of introducing small children to the pleasures of reading and includes Story and Rhyme time.

Another important role of the library is that it houses the Village Diary. Referring to this when booking events avoids clashing of dates and loss of support, as has again happened this month. Do please use it.



### Playing Politics and High Finance with People's Lives

It is now four years since the Government published its Air Transport White Paper (ATWP), calling for a new runway at Stansted by 2011/12 followed by another runway at Heathrow 'as soon as possible after 2015' provided this was compatible with meeting the statutory air quality standards around Heathrow. The ATWP also called for an end to uncertainty, which blighted people's homes and indeed their lives. However, there is now more uncertainty than ever. The Government has announced that it was satisfied that a third runway at Heathrow could be built without breaching air quality standards and it threw its full weight behind proposals for a new Heathrow runway, emphasising the importance of Heathrow to London's role as the world's leading financial centre and to the UK economy as a whole.

On 22nd November, the Secretary of State for Transport, Ruth Kelly, told 'The Times' that it was much more important to expand Heathrow than Stansted because of the economic benefits of adding capacity at Britain's only hub airport, which has flights to all the major countries. This appeared to be a reversal of Government policy, as stated in the ATWP, that Stansted should have a new runway before Heathrow. Ruth Kelly issued a partial correction in a letter to 'The Times' the following day, insisting that plans for a second runway at Stansted had not been scrapped but interestingly not insisting that Stansted should have a new runway before Heathrow.

Meanwhile, BAA is also engaging in doublespeak. The initial 2011/12 target date for completion of a second Stansted runway, as set down in the 2003 ATWP, has been repeatedly postponed. BAA claims that its current target date is 2015. The planning application is expected very soon but BAA is sending out strong signals that applying for planning permission should not be viewed as a declaration of intent by BAA to actually build a second runway at Stansted.

The Competition Commission is now actively considering a break-up of the company and, not surprisingly, the senior management exodus has continued. On the financial front, BAA is struggling to find a way of coping with a £12bn debt mountain whilst at the same time finding the cash to fund its £1bn a year investment programme. BAA failed in its attempts to re-finance its borrowings during 2007 and now faces an even more difficult financial climate in 2008.

BAA has still not submitted its planning application for a second runway at Stansted, more than four years after it was given Government policy support in the Air Transport White Paper. The planning application is expected soon but will be submitted on a speculative basis – a case of BAA keeping its options open and seeking to increase the value of Stansted Airport in the event that it has to be put up for sale. While BAA is insisting to the local community and the media that it is committed to a second Stansted runway, it is giving a very different message to its bankers and to the CAA. BAA has told its lenders that its investment plans represent 'an option to build, not a commitment' and it has told the CAA that a second Stansted runway would not be financially viable.

### Stansted posts slump in passengers as jobs fears mount

Figures published by BAA in December showed that Stansted Airport handled 1.55m passengers in November, down 6.3% on the same month the previous year. For the year to date, passenger numbers in 2007 show just a 1% increase over the previous year – evidence of a substantial slowdown compared to annual growth of 15% to 20% experienced in recent years.

Part of the reason for the slowdown is that Stansted's biggest customer, Ryanair, has withdrawn ten aircraft from service at Stansted blaming higher airport landing charges imposed by BAA earlier this year. Air Berlin, Stansted's third biggest customer, has also cut back on its Stansted operations. Meanwhile, Stansted's main transatlantic carrier, Maxjet, is understood to be in financial difficulties having recorded a loss of \$112m since it started operations at Stansted two years ago, and asked for trading in its shares to be suspended "pending clarification of its financial position." The slowdown at Stansted is also fuelling fears that BAA will announce job cuts at Stansted this year as part of a programme to reduce costs. SSE has learned that certain departments at Stansted are shortly to be rationalised or relocated. We take no comfort from the present uncertainty at Stansted.

Carol Barbone,  
Campaign Director  
Tel: M 0777 552 3091  
Email: cbarbone@mxco.co.uk

### END OF AN ERA

In November, distributors and production team helpers of the 'Old Link' were invited to a *Celebration Thank You Tea* to mark 27 years of voluntary service. Entertainment, planned and otherwise, was provided by Peter Baker and David Harrison. So ended an era conspicuous for its personal loyalties.

Editor





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## SKYWATCH

A monthly look at an aspect of the night sky

This first month, we will look at the planet Mars. Whenever you go out to look at the night sky, it takes a few minutes for your eyes to get used to the dark. In fact it takes 20 minutes or so for complete acclimatisation: something you only realise when you go back indoors and find a 60 watt bulb hurts. As soon as it is dark (and clear!) face roughly eastwards and look upwards. The brightest dot you can see is Mars. It is not as red as a child's crayon, but red it is. Mars is the next planet from the Earth away from the Sun. It is about 4000 miles in diameter, about half that of the Earth. Like the Earth, it has a day of very nearly 24 hours and has four seasons in its orbit round the Sun, but a Martian year takes almost exactly two Earth years and each season is six months long. Because of Mars' 'two year' year, we therefore only have sight of Mars every other year while, every alternate year, Mars is on the opposite side of the Sun to us. Red Mars, contrary to its association to war, is a cold place with a very thin atmosphere consisting mainly of carbon dioxide and this is what freezes on to the surface at alternate poles through the Martian year. If you look at Mars through a telescope you can see one pole or the other is white.

The question of life on Mars has long been considered a possibility firstly by its mythology then later, and rather more scientifically, by a fuller understanding of the nature of the planet. The redness is simply due to a very high iron content in Martian rock and we know that the planet's temperature, around freezing point at the equator on Mid-Summer's Day, is within human capability. There are, as I write, small, radio controlled machines exploring different areas of Mars and finding new and sometimes surprising information about the planet's surface and below. Water is regarded as essential to life and there are clear indications of running water in the past from eroded rock. But today the atmosphere is too thin to allow running water. There is, however, some seismic evidence that liquid water is held under pressure underground which is sometimes released in to the atmosphere. If any of that could be analysed we might find some new single cell life form - but would they tell us?

Martin West  
Tel: 813514

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## UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The AGM brought to a close, sadly for members, the three year office tenure of Mary McKean as President. The ex-chairman of Essex Federation, Barbara Ball, came to pre- side over the election business, and joined us to express our great appreciation of Mary's leadership. During her time, she showed special care for members in illness, and we remembered with thanks and sadness four who have died. Yet Mary gave a happy description of Ugley WI's flourishing life, and paid warm tributes to each of the committee members who had supported her through the years. She also specially thanked Edna Wright for her open invitation to a screen presentation of a most expert sound film of British song birds. Sight, sound and commentary were appreciated enormously by the 20 or so who came and afterwards enjoyed Edna's renowned hospitality high tea. The event had raised £60 for our charity fund.

Barbara introduced all the new committee members in turn, ensuring that their faces at least became quickly known. The climax of the meeting was the election of our new president, Ruth Rawlinson, who brings to the job not only her skills as past treasurer, but many other talents, and her most valued personality. We are truly grateful to Ruth for agreeing to carry on the good work.

Phyllis Harrison

## WARTIME CHRISTMAS

In the last issue of the 'Link', in one of the School reports, the question was asked "... during the Second World War. With the difficulties of rationing did the children still enjoy the festive season?" Yes, of course we did! Although I did not realise it at the time, looking back, I think that my mother saved up some of the rations and probably went without herself sometimes so as to provide a bit extra on Christmas Day.

We did not expect as much as so many children do today so we were pleased with what we got. Family and friends made things out of bits and pieces, which we also had fun doing. I had a home-made dolls house, gradually added to as bits of wood became available to make furniture, and a toy theatre with a large old picture frame as a proscenium arch. A hand made doll, a new outfit for one and a knitted jumper and hat for my teddy bear were, to me, delightful presents.

Naturally, fathers, uncles and others away at war were missed and air-raid shelters were dreary and rather scary at times, but home made decorations could be put up and games such as Ludo and Snakes and Ladders played in dim light. It might not sound very jolly but we accepted that that was how things were, and when young there are always jokes to be told and played and silly rhymes to giggle over. One bonus from all of this - those raised on such slogans as 'Make Do and Mend' do not need lectures on recycling and how not to waste food!

A Wartime Child

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# Stansted Tennis Club



## Clower Girls' Doubles Tournament

In November, 11 girls took part in this newly created tournament. After a close-fought round-robin stage, the final was won by Gemma Armorgie and Ellie Sykes, who defeated Alice Golden and Zoe Wilson 6-5. Alice and Zoe had actually held a match point in the penultimate game, but were unable to convert it.

## Primary Boys' Doubles Tournament

Ten juniors, aged 11 and under, entered this December event. All played in the round-robin event and then were paired off for the knock-out section. The final was won by Joseph Coles and Matt Hollis (the youngest player in the field), who beat Zach Veitch and Trent Williamson 6-2.

## Pearce Tournament

This was due to have taken place on 9th December, but unfortunately had to be cancelled due to bad weather. It has been rescheduled for 24th February, 1.30pm for a sharp 2.00pm start. All members please note this new date and sign up on the club notice-board poster, if you would like to play. Places are restricted to 16 in total.

## Mince pie and mulled wine evening

Due to very cold December weather, this was attended by a disappointingly small crowd. However, those who came enjoyed the refreshments as well as a few games of tennis.

## Coaching

The adult coaching session on a Friday 2.00pm-2.45pm is now full. If you would like to go on the waiting list, please call Chris Hollis. You don't have to be a member of the club to join in. The junior coaching and match practice sessions for ages 6-15 have now restarted. Please contact Chris if you would like to find out more and get your name on the waiting list. Martyn Taplin (816386) continues to coach adults on Saturday afternoons at the club.

## Annual General Meeting

Monday 8th March 8.00pm at 105 Cambridge Road. All members are welcome and indeed encouraged to attend. It is the members' opportunity to air their views about the club. If you are keen to serve on the Committee for 2008/2009, or would like to find out more, please contact Richard Mott.

## Used tennis balls

Please contact Janet Hollis - £1 per tin of 4 balls.

## Club Playing Sessions

Members are encouraged to attend these open sessions at the following times:

- Wednesday mornings from 9.30am
- Wednesday evenings from 5.00pm
- Friday mornings from 9.30am
- Sunday mornings from 10.00am

## Contacts

With effect from 1st January 2008, Martin Nankivell became the tennis club's new treasurer, taking over from John Eyre, who had served on the Committee for many years. If you would like further information, please contact Richard Mott (Secretary) on 466348, Janet Hollis (Chairman) on 812073 or Daphne Lunnon (Membership Secretary) on 817574.

Chris Hollis  
Tel: 319155



The playleaders have had a busy few weeks as due to excessive demand for places at Rainbow, we have opened up a satellite branch of the pre-school at the Quaker Meeting House on Chapel Hill. Welcome to all those children who have joined us and to our new member of staff, Michelle.

This term at Rainbow Pre-School we have been trying to convey to the children an idea of how things were different in the past. We have been looking at how people managed without the everyday conveniences we now take for granted from the luxury of running water in the home to the benefit of cars. Carrying on from that idea, the theme for this half of term is castles and the people who live in them. The older children will be heading over to the library to see if they can find more information and books about castles. The children have also been learning the nursery rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence'.

Another project for the term is to develop a bird garden at the St Mary's site. The older group will be making a trip to Bishop's Stortford to buy bird houses and feeders to see if they can attract some new visitors to the outside area. Other activities this month include making and eating our own pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and celebrating Chinese New Year by dressing up as dragons and encouraging the children to try different foods such as noodles and prawn crackers.

On the fundraising front, the sale of Rainbow Christmas puddings went extremely well and we hope that all those who bought a pudding enjoyed it. We also raised more money for equipment and upkeep by selling snow globes with photos of the children and again this proved very successful.

If you are interested in a place at Rainbow Tots (age 18 months to two and a half years) please contact Tina South on 814371. If you are interested in a place at the pre-school please contact Gill Pursglove on 814701 for further information.

Isabelle Page,  
Rainbow Committee

## ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING - ESSEX



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- French for Holidays *Newport School 29<sup>th</sup> April*

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## VALENTINE MUSINGS



There is usually a link between natural cycles and our festivals and feast days. We are all familiar with the modern customs connected to St Valentine's Day. Records exist of these goings-on, some saintly and others not so saintly, taking place back in Roman times and beyond. The link with nature is that country folk observed that birds generally chose their mates during mid-February (these days some of us may think that is a bit late), and what was good for birds was also good enough for us humans.

Before the availability of Valentine cards a good ploy was to send gifts or charm the intended with a verse or two. In East Anglia, however, the day acquired an extra twist and became one of those various occasions which all parts of the country have during the lean times of winter and which is seen as an opportunity to get up to mischief and go begging. Parson Woodforde, the 18th century diarist, recorded that on St Valentine's Day in his Norfolk parish he distributed food and alms to the poor and pennies to the children. In Stansted entries in the school log book record that during the latter part of the 19th century attendance was low on 14th February over about 20 years because the children were singing round the streets and people's doors asking for sweets, cakes or money.

Here are two sample verses for those who want to try their luck:

Good morrow, Valentine,  
Change yer luck an' I'll change mine.  
We are raggety, you are fine,  
So pray gi' us a Valentine.

Good morrow, Valentine, God bless the baker,  
You'll be the giver and I'll be the taker.

Cupid



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET  
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

It seems strange to be writing this again after the festive season and a long time since we enjoyed our December meeting, at which Paul Embleton presented a quiz. It set the tone of Christmas nicely and we thank him and his daughter for a very good evening. Our January meeting, on the other hand, seemed to be getting us back to more dismal matters, as our first talk of 2008 was on Essex workhouses. However, our speaker, John Drury, had done a great deal of research into the history and organisation of his subject, and had, in fact, written a book on it. Coupled with his excellent presentation and the slides he showed us, we were completely enthralled.

John began by apologising that he was not including Stansted in his talk, as the parish had been part of Bishop's Stortford Union of Workhouses and was, therefore,

subject to the arrangements for Hertfordshire. They would, however, have been very similar to those in Essex. The numbers of the poor and needy had risen by Elizabethan times into a great problem, and in 1597 an Act was passed giving parish vestries the duty of setting up provision under an overseer, and to raise a Poor Rate to meet the cost. By 1723, parishes could establish workhouses with a master, but were providing out relief if the applicants had a job. In Essex, there were 170 parish workhouses, but in 1834 Unions were set up which combined a number of parishes, and each union provided its own workhouse. Plans for these were included in the legislation and, coupled with the intention of persuading people to seek work rather than go to the workhouses, they were built much like army barracks, with total segregation of men, women, boys and girls. Parishes appointed guardians to attend the meetings of the Union, which set up a staff of a master, clerk, school teachers for the boys and girls, a porter and a nurse.

The numbers of the sick grew until many workhouses built separate infirmaries to house them - it is interesting to know that these are the origins of many of our NHS hospitals. We were very grateful to John for such an interesting talk, which gave us much to think about.

Our February meeting will have a totally different subject as Chloe Cockerill will be talking about 'Heraldry; it's all around you!'. Our meetings are held in the Day Centre and we shall be delighted to see you on Thursday 7th February at 8.00pm. In the meantime, have a Happy New Year!

Ian Seavers



MOUNTFITCHET  
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COMPUTING COLLEGE



Our new extension incorporating the extended Library and remodelled foyer has finally been completed. There is still some work to do to equip it fully but building is complete and it is now in use. The Library extension was funded by Government as part of our specialist status in Mathematics and Computing. Whilst building this, it seemed sensible to add some of our capital savings to remodel our reception area. This is now much more welcoming. More important, it is much more secure. The openness of our previous reception had long been of concern to me. The Library has a suite of workstations now being used by our students. We will eventually be offering this technology also to the community. So, I am delighted to welcome visitors into a much more congenial setting and look forward to making our ICT facilities available to the community in various ways.

Jo Mullis, Headteacher





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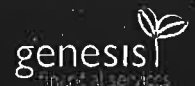
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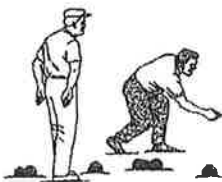
## Nature Notes

Last autumn many of you will have noticed gatherings of ladybirds, which were not our usual seven spot ladybird which is bright red with seven black spots and small white markings at the back of the head. The newcomers, or rather, the invaders, are the harlequin ladybirds, which are threatening to wipe out our favourite seven spot. They are generally a bit bigger and are divided into several sub-species exhibiting a wide range of markings from two red spots on a black body to 20 or more black spots on red, orange or yellow bodies.

They originate from somewhere in Asia and were introduced into North America some years ago to help control aphids in crops. They were successful in that and spread rapidly. About 10 years ago they were introduced to several sites in Europe for the same reason and, of course, spread rapidly across the continent. Less than four years ago they were first sighted in South East England, having blown across the Channel, and have now reached our area in large numbers. The downside is that apart from feeding on aphids they also eat the eggs of ladybirds, butterflies and other insects and are in direct competition with the seven spot, which is likely to be overwhelmed.

By late October hundreds of these harlequins had gathered in clusters round the door and window frames of Stansted Windmill. When the first frosts appeared, they retreated as far as they could into cracks and crevices. As it happens, they did not choose a good over-wintering site because the mill timbers have been treated for protection against the wood beetle, and many have perished along with all the flies and other insects whose bodies strew the floors at this time of year. There are now only a few depleted groups of harlequins gathered close to gaps round door or window, which permit a draught of fresh air. I fear that this is only a small skirmish won in a much wider conflict.

Felix



## STANSTED BOWLING CLUB

We are now looking forward to the new outdoor bowling season, which starts on 19th April and hope that we have good weather to start off with like last year. Again this year we are hoping to attract new members, as like most clubs in the area, people leave and we find it difficult to replace them. We would like to hear from experienced bowlers or anyone who wants to have a try; and all will be made welcome. Maybe you used to be a member but left for some reason - perhaps you may consider coming back again? We will be having beginner sessions in May for those who have never bowled or have tried but want to try again, and qualified coaches will carry out these sessions.

Our fees are very competitive at £65 for the year and we do not charge a joining fee like some clubs. There are opportunities for both men and women to play friendly games against other clubs in the area, club competitions and, for those who are experienced, to play in the various leagues. If you are interested, why not call in at the club in Recreation Ground on any Friday evening from 8.00pm, and someone will give you all the information you need and a chance to sample a drink from the bar? Many people who join wish they had started playing years ago instead of waiting until they retire - and remember, we bowl in the evenings as well as weekends, so there is always time after work or school - yes, we really would like to see some younger people. There is a very friendly environment within a bowls club and the chance to meet new friends around the area. We look forward to seeing you.

Rex Turner

## St Mary's CE Foundation Primary School



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The choir took part in a charity concert for Dr Barnardo's back in November. It was a wonderful occasion, one I hope the children will long remember and also all the families who supported the event. After the excitement of Christmas, this is the term when teachers are able to plan a sustained period of work for the children, making good progress towards pupils' learning goals. We have a number of enrichment activities arranged to supplement the curriculum. These include a KS2 visit to the British Museum; a visiting historian for KS2 (both part of the Ancient Egypt topic); a performance and workshop from Theatre Active on Cultural Diversity for Year 6; and a dance workshop where each class will learn a different aspect of dance for performance at a Celebration Assembly on 29th February. Further activities will be arranged as the term progresses.

Our Environment project is progressing well. We now have bins for recycling food waste as well as paper, card and plastic. All the classes are monitoring some aspect of our school including our use and re-use of paper, the consumption of energy, and where we could make savings. Key Stage 1 are planning a wildlife garden and Years 3 and 4 are working with the RSPB to make St Mary's a bird friendly environment. Year 6 are calculating our school's carbon footprint and preparing an action plan to reduce it.

We were very sad to say farewell to Ann Scott during January. Ann has been with the school for 21 years during which time she has worked in Learning Support, helping countless children with their work and development. I am sure there are many in the community who will remember her from their own time as pupils at St Mary's! She has been an invaluable support in the classroom for the teachers, and has been one of our First Aid experts. In the past she has run First Aid courses for the older pupils on behalf of the Red Cross. Ann has been a true friend to this school and we will miss her enormously. Needless to say, Ann is welcome back in the school whenever she wishes to visit.

Christine Tonkins,  
Headteacher



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## STANSTED DAY CENTRE

### News from the Crafton Room at the Day Centre

We thought it would be helpful to explain the different functions that go under the heading of 'Day Centres'. Some are for people with special needs or illnesses and are usually run by Social Services and others are for the very frail elderly.

Our Crafton Room is different and is for lively active people who enjoy meeting with friends, chatting, having a coffee or tea, and/or eating a two course lunch which is home cooked and only costs a very reasonable £4.50. The only restriction is that you must be over 55. There is some help with transport if needed. We are open on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 10.00am to 3.30pm. You need to book ahead for lunch by ringing 815091. Below are some examples of the many different dishes that we serve.

#### Main Courses:

Roast chicken    Fish pie                      Pork steak  
Liver and bacon    Stew and dumplings    Baked gammon  
Shepherds pie    Sausage and mash  
(All with seasonal vegetables.)

#### Desserts include:

Fruit crumble    Trifle    Bakewell tart    Lemon sponge

The Day Centre is run by a committee of volunteer trustees with officers, eg Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. We are looking for new blood and would like to hear from anyone who might like to join the committee and take an active part in our work. Please contact Brenda Scarr on 813080 if you are interested.



The picture shows Catherine Dean, Chair of Uttlesford District Council, talking to some of our members enjoying their Christmas dinner.

Brenda Scarr  
Tel: 813080



STANSTED & DISTRICT  
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Our next social event will be a Quiz evening to be held at the Stansted Day Centre, 7.00pm for 7.30pm, on Saturday 16th February. The Quiz master will be David Morson, and there will be a bar and a raffle. Tickets are £7.50, to include a ploughman's supper. For tickets and further information, please ring 814222 or 813432.

Ruth Rawlinson

## Wellbeing

### Exploring the connections between mind, body and spirit with Isobel Bradshaw



Hello, I'm Isobel Bradshaw and I've been invited to write a regular column on wellbeing for the 'Link'. During the last 10 years or so I've been busy growing things. Firstly (with great help from my husband!) my two beautiful daughters aged 11 and 13, and secondly a business teaching singing, yoga and wellbeing (not all at the same time!). The singing was a natural step after 20 years experience as a singer at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. However, you may ask how and why my interest in yoga and wellbeing began.

Well, like many 40-something people, I have experienced two very common health issues that prevent people from living their lives; namely depression and back pain. Thankfully they were not both at once, and I am also pleased to report that I have now successfully moved from the functioning to the flourishing stage of recovery. It is from this positive position, and the challenges that preceded it, that in future months I will be discussing the practices of wellbeing. For me, it was the discipline of yoga that set me on the path to mental and physical wellbeing. To practise what I preach, I shall be focusing on our strengths rather than our weaknesses!

Each month I hope to explore the meaning of wellbeing and discover the kind of activities both mental and physical that enhance it. My singing and yoga students are using mind-body disciplines in order to sing a phrase of music or hold a yoga posture – the students develop a sense of control over their minds and bodies but possibly most importantly get the two parts of their bodies to work in harmony. On a regular basis, be it in a timid nine year-old, an emotional teenager or a stressed city analyst, I see people arriving for their lessons feeling world weary, but leaving with renewed energy and a zest for life. There has been a change in their sense of wellbeing and it is a privilege to be part of it!

Eastern philosophers have been teaching a path for humanity for thousands of years, and during the last 50 years western psychologists have moved beyond curing people with mental illness into the realm of human potential. Philosophers and psychologists alike are saying the meaning of our lives now will be developed and understood by realising our potential, and deepened by reaching out beyond ourselves in the service of others.

I feel very fortunate that I can earn my living from teaching and practising mind-body disciplines. Not only does it keep me in good health but I am rewarded with the joy of seeing other people develop as their confidence grows.

I do hope you will enjoy reading this column and will find it helpful in your everyday life. I would love to hear your views on anything concerning wellbeing. Take care for now.

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## FESTIVE ILLS AND WOTSITSNAME

By the time you are reading this, Christmas and New Year celebrations will be a distant memory, but I hope you all had a suitably enjoyable time.

Veterinary practice can be either incredibly busy at that time of year or quite quiet. This Christmas was a quieter one for us but my morning surgery on 27th December was a classic example of the effects of overindulgence. The last three patients were all dogs. The first, a rather shamefaced looking corgi, had eaten the smoked salmon that was destined to be the starter of the Boxing Day lunch and had spent the day with an extremely uncomfortable tummy. The second was an embarrassed looking border collie who had eaten what was left of the turkey and spent Boxing Day in disgrace, not only because of the theft but because of the large amounts of noxious wind that he then proceeded to pass for the rest of the day. The final patient was a labrador who shuffled into the consulting room door looking a decided shade of green. When I asked the cause of his obvious discomfort, the owner told me he had eaten the remains of the Christmas cake. When I asked how much Christmas cake there had been, she replied "about three quarters!" Needless to say, the labrador had spent all night getting rid of the cake with a combination of diarrhoea and vomiting. When I looked back on the dog's record, the last time we had seen it was at Easter when it had eaten all the Easter eggs. Some dogs never learn, but I suppose it was a labrador!

Quieter times also allow us to catch up on cleaning and tidying jobs and paperwork. As a distraction from all of these I decided to do a little survey into cat and dog names in the practice. What I uncovered was really two completely different sides of a coin. On one side a lot of inventiveness and a testament to people's imagination and on the other side a desire for tradition and simplicity. Cat names were interesting, I found a lot of the time they were descriptive; Tabby for tabby cats, Snowy for white cats, Blackie for, you've guessed it, black cats and so on. There were a fair few Lucky cats out there, some of them clearly not if you saw the number of times they'd been to see us! I also found that people often had cats in pairs and that led to some interesting combinations: Whisky and Soda; Gin and Tonic (a lot of our clients also clearly like a drink or two!); Ant and Dec; Ginger and Scary (named by the younger members of the family) I suspect); and, more bizarrely, Zanussi and Hotpoint. The effect of naming in pairs does, however, have its disadvantages. I remember treating a cat called Onion once and commenting on the rather unusual name to the owner, who explained that he had had a brother called Cheese who unfortunately got run over ...

Dogs' names I found to be a more complex subject, as there are often certain names associated with certain breeds. For example, if a dog's called Rocky you can bet it's a Rottweiler; a dog called King or Prince is often a German shepherd dog; and if you've got a Jack, a lot of the time, it'll be a Russell. Some names follow celebrity trends. I remember when Sarah Ferguson married Prince Andrew there were a fair few Irish setters with their flowing red locks called Fergie. We've had a few Britneys and Jordans in the last few years although not many Victorias or Davids. Some dog names are descriptive. There are a fair few black dogs with

white paws or tail tips called Guinness. I remember a particularly huge bull mastiff called Tiny and a particularly tiny chihuahua called Big Ears. Animals are also often named as a joke, the classic being Ceefer for a cat (C for cat, get it) and Defer for a dog. I also know of a cat called Plastic, the Owner's surname is Bagge!

The moment you've all been waiting for however. The most popular dog's name in the practice at the moment is ... Ben, closely followed by Sam. Megan and Poppy are also high up there on the popularity stakes as well. My personal favourite name happened to belong to a rabbit who was brought in by a mum and her two year old son. I asked the little boy what his rabbit was called. "Little Lamppost" he replied solemnly. I looked at the mother who nodded and shrugged in resignation. Mind you, who am I to comment; my dog's called Broccoli!

Ilse Pedler,  
Partner  
Mercer and Hughes  
Veterinary Surgeons

## Of Marjory and a Kneeler

This picture of a kneeler, situated in St George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, was photographed by Linda Hamling in April 2007 and sent to me recently. The beautiful kneeler was made by Marjory Cowan and presented to the Cathedral in 1982, during a visit to the Holy Land by St Mary's Singers, so it has been in use there for 25 years.



Many of the older generation will know Marjory very well. She spent the whole of her working life as a teacher in Stansted, and many hundreds of her former pupils will remember her by her maiden name of Player. I know that she is remembered with much respect and affection by many of her colleagues, pupils and friends, and I am sure that everyone who knows her will want to join me in congratulating her on her handiwork, and wishing her well in her retirement.

Keith Turner

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