

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine

The Link

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EDITORIAL



The latest Governmental twists make the 'Elshenham' housing proposal of even more profound concern to Stansted. However, as it is a highly charged party political issue, it would be inappropriate at present for the 'Link' to contribute to the furore. Suffice it to say, that as the concept is detrimental to Stansted, we are opposed to it.

The Health Centre is our present *cause celebre*. We may just be in time to announce a public meeting to be held by the Primary Care Trust at the Day Centre (Crafton Room) on 28th April at 7.30pm. Do attend if you can. Is Forest Hall the right place? If not, where? An appeal was recently made in these columns for a satisfactory long-term solution and with the sums of money involved anything less would be unsatisfactory. At this meeting any counter-proposals should not be rhetorical but well thought through.

Two final thoughts: please support the Health Centre petition (see p25) and the Christian Aid collection from 11th-17th May. Two different but worthy objectives.

CIRCULATION:

The Link is delivered free to 2500 homes and businesses in Stansted Mountfitchet. Further copies may be purchased for 50p each or £5.00 for the year.

CONTRIBUTIONS:

by email (*preferred*) to:
editor@stanstedlink.org.uk

or by hand to:
58 Chapel Hill, Stansted

by **noon** on 11th May
for publication on
23rd May
by **noon** on 11th June
for publication on
25th June

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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

Before I became a Vicar I used to work in the computer industry. In those days (and we're talking about the 1970s and early 1980s – prehistory in computer terms) computers were huge machines which filled large rooms and required complex cooling systems to stop them overheating. I was a sort of odd job man who did various tasks to keep things going. Connected to the computer by long wires were various 'terminals' which were distributed all over the factory so that people could obtain information which was stored on the computer. Sometimes these went wrong and I would get a telephone call to go see if there was anything I could do to fix it before we sent out and paid to get an engineer in. On one occasion I was called to the office of a very senior manager in the company who crossly stated that his terminal was broken and he wanted it fixed 'without delay'. As I looked at the machine it was doing nothing at all, so something must be seriously wrong. It didn't take me long to discover what it was: it was unplugged! Once the plug was put back in to the wall and the power was flowing everything began to work just as it should.

I often think of that story at this time of year. We are coming up to the day which the Bible calls Pentecost and which used to be known in England as White Sunday or Whitsun. This year Pentecost is Sunday 11th May. Pentecost is the day when Christians recall how the Holy Spirit came upon the first disciples of Jesus on the fiftieth day after he rose from the dead, and ten days after he had ascended into heaven. Jesus had told his disciples "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses". In the original language in which the New Testament was written the word for power is 'dynamis', the origin of the English words 'dynamic' and 'dynamite'. Hence the title of a book written some years ago about the work of the Holy Spirit: 'Pentecost is Dynamite'.

In the Bible we read that first followers of Jesus met together early in the morning on the Jewish feast day of Pentecost. They met in the upper room where Jesus had shared the last supper with them on the evening before he died, and where he appeared to them on Easter Sunday when he had risen from the dead. As they were praying together there was a sound like a rushing wind and something that looked like tongues of flame touched each one of them. Suddenly they were transformed and burst out onto the streets of the city of Jerusalem celebrating the Good News that Jesus was risen. Unsurprisingly some people thought they were drunk but others recognised that God had done something special in and for them. From that they were given courage and power to carry the message of Jesus out across the world. Men and women who had before this hardly left their own village found themselves travelling across the world to tell people what God had done for them in death and resurrection of Jesus, and of the power and new life God would give them if they would welcome God's Holy Spirit into their lives.

The amazing thing is that that power of God's Holy Spirit is still freely available to all who will welcome him (the Holy Spirit is a 'him', never an 'it'). All over the world people are learning that they can 'plug in' to that power and know the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. If you want to know more I'm sure that if you go to any of the churches in Stansted on Pentecost Sunday (11th May) you'll hear more about this. And perhaps you'd like to simply try out welcoming God's Holy Spirit into your life, perhaps for the first time or perhaps as renewal of your commitment and welcome to him. You may like to use this ancient prayer:

*Come Holy Spirit, fill the heart of your servant,
and kindle in me the fire of your love. Amen.*

Paul Wilkin
Rector,
St John's Church



 **CHRISTIAN AID – EMPOWERING PEOPLE**

Christian Aid Week 11th-17th May
We believe in Life before Death

Empowering People – the action of putting money into envelopes can empower individuals and communities supported by Christian Aid. Access to clean water, health care or justice is empowerment for the most disadvantaged.

Christian Aid week collectors raise an average of £33.50 each (even more in Stansted!). This is enough to empower 67 women to get the water they need. So please give generously this Christian Aid week. You can change lives for the better.

Coffee Morning - There will be a coffee morning for Christian Aid on **Wednesday 14th May** 10.30am-12 noon in the foyer of Stansted Free Church. Please support us. Fairtrade goods will also be on sale.

Catherine Dean
Tel: 813579

Email: christianaid@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



SHALOM

At 8.00pm on 12th May in the Free Church Hall, Catherine Dean will be leading us in a Christian Aid related evening. Please join us – you will be warmly welcomed!

Marion Dyer
Tel:814059

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 10.30am

THE GOOD FRIDAY PROJECT

Photos: Mike Howes and Rachel Pocknell

About 80 children arrived at St John's Church, Stansted at 10.00am on Good Friday, 21st March and had a wonderful time during the day.



The children worked and played hard, painting the scenery, making their own costumes, learning their own roles in the drama, and also learning the music to sing or play.



The activities culminated in a drama presentation in the church of 'The Cross Factor', a drama written by Laurie John, father of one of our parishioners, and performed by the children themselves in front of an audience of parents, helpers and clergy.

It was a village-wide, ecumenical effort with contributions from all the denominations represented in Stansted Mountfitchet.



As for 2009's Project ... watch this space!

Rachel Pocknell



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 Chapel Hill
www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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 Tel: 654475
minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Lettings Janet Townsend
 58 Chapel Hill
 Stansted CM24 8AQ
 Tel: 812593
lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Preachers for May

4th 10.30 am All Age Worship
 2.30 pm Rev'd Murray George
 11th 10.30 am Peter Dawe
 18th 10.30 am Rev'd Janet Tollington
 Holy Communion
 27th 10.30 am Gerry Arnell



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

Rector: Rev'd Paul Wilkin
 Tel: 812203
 Email: paulwilkin@iname.com

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Dr Caroline Curren
 Tel: 815243
 Email: through the Church Office

Director of Music: Lorraine Everett
 Email: church.music@stansted.net

St John's Diary

Sunday

8.00am	Said Holy Communion	Junior Church meets in church at 9.30am and then goes to the Church Hall halfway through the service.)
9.30am	Choral Eucharist	
4.00pm	Open Door @ 4 Service (all age worship) 3rd Sunday	
9.45pm	Night Prayer	The Lazer youth group meets on Sunday evenings at 7.30pm.

Monday-Wednesday

8.30am Morning Prayer
 5.00pm Evening Prayer

Wednesday

10.30am Holy Communion

Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer

Saturday

9.00am Morning Prayer

There are services of Holy Communion on the first Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the month in Norman Court, Hargrave House and Broome End Nursing Homes.

From the Registers

March

Baptisms

23rd Harvey Leonard Smith
 Frederick James Mackenzie
 Cheryl Violet Walker

Funerals

5th Peter William Gray, age 67 - at St Mary's
 6th Marjorie Kate Pearce, age 92 - at St Mary's
 11th Doreen Myrtle Newby, age 84 - at St John's
 27th Walter Ronald Johnson, age 78 - at St John's

Are we a welcoming church?

Many will remember Lyn Hillier's stimulating presentation on this subject before Christmas, which was based on your answers to her questionnaire. Now we would like to follow up the issues and turn them into some action points to improve our welcome. So we have planned an 'away day' for Saturday 24th May - before Lyn leaves us. This will be held at Mill Green House, Horseheath, near Cambridge. Those who came to the previous event on prayer will remember that it is a lovely venue. The cost is £5 and you will need to bring a packed lunch. It is hoped that we can arrange care and activities for children if they want to come, and we are checking disabled access. Please sign the clipboard at the back of church if you wish to attend.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

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 High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
 The Presbytery
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 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



MAY FÊTE

2pm Sat 10th May
Free Church Hall

Stalls ~ Children's Activities
Cream teas ~ Tombolas

Join us for a great family day out



UNITED SERVICE

6.30 pm Sun 11th May
Quaker Meeting House

COFFEE MORNING

10.30 am - noon Wed 14th May

Free Church Foyer
Fairtrade Goods on Sale

All welcome



STANSTED MILLERS

QUIZ

7.30 for 8pm

Sat 17th May

Free Church Hall

Tickets £7.50 incl Ploughman's

Bring your own drink & glass

Tel 813124 or 647213

VILLAGE EVENTS

April

28 Mon Public Meeting on Health Centre Day Centre 7.30 pm

May

1 Thu	Local History Society (incl AGM)	Day Centre 8 pm
	Police Comm Supp Off Surgery	Youth Centre 10 am - noon
4 Sun	St Mary's Church Open	2 - 5 pm
	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
	Outreach Tea (after service)	Free Church 3.30 pm
5 Mon	Skateboard SK8 Eight	Lower St Car park 12 - 5 pm
	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
7 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors Outing	
	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
8 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
	Conservatives Pub Evening	Rose & Crown 8 pm
10 Sat	Rainbow Pre-School May Fête	Free Church Hall 2 pm
Sat 10 & Sun 11	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
11 Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
12 Mon	Shalom	Free Church Hall 8 pm
14 Wed	Christian Aid Coffee Morning	Free Church Foyer 10.30 am
17 Sat	Millers Quiz	Free Church Hall 7.30 for 8 pm
21 Wed	Mfitchet Seniors Clothes Show	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
	Stansted Lunch Club	Bury Lodge 1 pm
Sat 24 & Sun 25	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
25 Sun & 26 Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm

June

1 Sun	St Mary's Church Open	2 - 5 pm
	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
	Outreach Tea (after service)	Free Church 3.30 pm
2 Mon	Shalom	7 Blythwood Gdns 8 pm
4 Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
7 Sat	Carnival Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 4.30 pm
Sat 7 & Sun 8	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
12 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
13 Fri	Hill Chilli	31 Chapel Hill 7 pm
15 Sun	Stansted 10K Fun Run & Walk	Bentfield Green 11 am



Stansted Windmill

Open Days

2 - 6 pm

Sun 4th & Mon 5th May

Sun 11th May (Mills Day)

Sun 25th & Mon 26th May

Sun 1st June



St Mary's

Church Open

2 - 5 pm

Sunday 4th May

Sunday 1st June

Everyone Welcome



STANSTED

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www.stansted10k.org.uk

Bentfield Green 11am

Sun 15th June

Raising funds for: Diabetes UK

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The Moreton Romanian Orphans' Fund

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For entry form

& more details

please ☎

814059

or email us on

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Advance entry closes 1st June



Green Waste, Metal & Wood Skip Dates

9 am - 3 pm

Saturdays & Sundays

26th & 27th April

10th & 11th May

24th & 25th May

7th & 8th June

Bentfield Primary School PTA

CARNIVAL FAIR



Sat 7th June

2 - 4.30pm

Raffle ~ Tombola ~ Plants

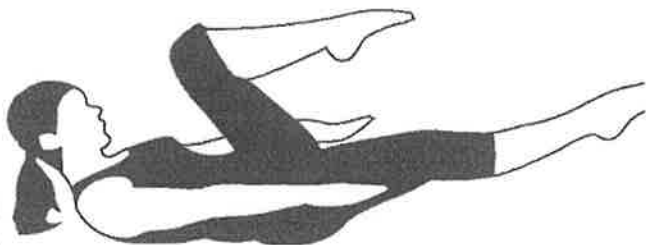
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STANSTED BEAVERS

We've been having a great time on Saturday mornings recently at Stansted Beavers. We are all enjoying the super facilities at the Scout Hut and are now seeing the benefits of all the hard work on the outside as well as the inside; the bulbs are up and it won't be long before the grass seeded last autumn gets its first mow.

Stansted Beavers have had quite a varied programme of late; with visits and visitors, quizzes and crafts and some hilarious Easter cooking (don't ask!). We've been linking some of the meetings with Beaver badges and it's proved to be lots of fun as well as interesting and informative. In March we met Rev'd Paul Wilkin, Rector of St John's Church in Stansted, who gave us our very own private tour of the church. Although unable to climb to the top of the tower for fear of losing a Beaver or two over the edge, we were shown lots of other bits you don't normally see and the children even went home with a smattering of Latin. It was very kind of Paul to give up his time on a busy Saturday and to make the visit so interesting.



Also in March, we welcomed Jenny Solway who gave a talk on Fairtrade. Like Rev'd Paul, Jenny pitched her talk beautifully for six and seven year olds and the children were totally engrossed in her presentation. They really got an inkling of what life is like for some children in poorer countries and what Fairtrade means – I suspect quite a few of them will be pointing out the Fairtrade symbol on the supermarket shelves. It wasn't all serious though; Jenny had the Beavers measuring lengths of spaghetti and noodles and was kind enough to give them all a chocolate bar before parents were invited in to the Scout Hut to buy Fairtrade products.



The Scout Group ran a very successful Tombola stall at the WI Table Top Sale in early April, raising around £50 for future camps etc, so sincere thanks to all who supported the stall whether it was donations of goods (just the one Value tin of tomatoes ...) or buying raffle tickets.

There's lots of fun lined up for future meetings and now that warmer weather is here we have some outdoor games planned as well as a hike, some model making, a Police visit and a visit to Bishop's Stortford Mosque. Other important dates are the Renewal of Promise Parade on 27th April and a Hatfield Forest Day Camp in May.

By the time you read this we will have welcomed several new Beavers to the Colony who will all, we hope, be enjoying the fun and activities as well as making new friends with other local children who attend different schools in and around Stansted. If you have a child who would like to join us/the waiting list, do please make contact:

David South (Beaver Leader) Tel: 814371
Jenny Amos (Helper) Tel: 817536
Claire Jonas (Helper) Tel: 816924
Dot Staunton (Helper) Tel: 812825

Claire Jonas
Stansted Beavers



SWCS BIRTHDAY PROM

Saffron Walden Choral Society invites you to celebrate its 125th birthday in style! 7.30pm Saturday 28th June in St John's Church, Stansted.

Crispian Steele-Perkins trumpet
Richard Carr organ
Janet Wheeler conductor

Join the choir and their special guest Crispian Steele-Perkins as they celebrate 125 years of the society's music-making. The programme pays homage to some of the greatest choral composers of the past from Byrd to Brahms and include favourite folksong arrangements, spirituals and the festival anthem Parry's *I was glad*. Crispian Steel-Perkins' sparkling playing (with Gershwin and Mozart on the posthorn to the fore) will balance the choral items and also join with them to rousing effect, not least in pieces straight from the tradition of the Last Night of the Proms, when mezzo Diana Hoy will put in a triumphant solo appearance not to be missed. Do join us to celebrate our 125th birthday! Interval drinks available. Tickets £10 (accompanied under 18s £1) from: SWCS Ticket Secretary 01279 812849, email: tickets@swchoral.org.uk; Stansted Church Office 01279 815243; or at the door. You can also download order forms from www.swchoral.org.uk. Alternatively there is an earlier performance of this concert on Saturday 14th June at St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden.

Sue Sylvester-Bradley,
SWCS Publicity Manager
Tel: 01440 783157
Email: publicity@swchoral.org.uk

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Photos: Judy Colliver and Ian Seavers

Frances Harper came in March to speak on 'Wholefood Cookery' - that is using ingredients that are not processed or contain artificial additives - ideas very much to the fore these days for all ages. With the aid of an electric grill she was able to demonstrate several delicious dishes with great speed and efficiency, such as ratatouille, bulgar wheat salad and a delicious Russian pashka, made with low-fat cheese and dried fruit soaked in brandy. All these dishes were raffled; copies of the recipes are available.

Wilma Martin enjoyed her trip to Southend for the County AGM and found Baroness Scott's talk on 'Life in the House of Lords' very interesting. We are fortunate in the WI to have the opportunity to hear so many top speakers at a very low cost. Wilma described Baroness Scott as 'young and casually dressed' not at all as she had imagined, and someone eager to raise the profile of the House of Lords.

The weather kept fine just long enough for our Table Top Sale on Saturday 5th April and there were many bargains to be had as well as tea and WI cakes. The stalls were packed with things to buy, representing a large number of local organisations, though I think we would have liked more shoppers! Thank you to all who came along and supported us all and we hope you enjoyed it.



Two of the many tables - Mountfitchet Seniors and Scout Group

Judy Colliver
Tel: 812470



Stansted Tennis Club



Floodlights

The tennis club has recently been granted permission to use the floodlights up until 10.00pm each night and 9.00pm on Sunday nights. This means that league matches will not have the previous pressure of having to finish at 9.00pm during the week.

Forthcoming tournaments

Sunday 11th May 12.45pm
Clower Boys' Secondary Doubles Tournament
Sunday 18th May 12.30pm
Cayless Chilli Senior Tournament
Sunday 8th June 12.45pm
Boys' Primary Doubles Tournament
Club Tournament singles and doubles.

Please note that entry forms for the above tournaments should be available in the clubhouse a month before each tournament.

PWP Open Morning

Martyn Taplin is in the process of arranging for PWP to bring equipment along to a Sunday morning club session for members to try out new rackets, tennis trainers and clothing. No date has been set as yet, but if you are interested or would like to find out more, please contact Martyn on 816386.

Coaching

The adult coaching session on Fridays 2.00pm-2.45pm is now

full. If you would like to go on the waiting list, please call Chris Hollis on 319155. You don't have to be a member of the club to join in. The spring/summer 2008 junior coaching and match practice sessions for ages 6-15 have recently started up. If you would like to find out more and get your name on the waiting list, please call Chris on the above number. Martyn Taplin (816386) continues to coach adults on Saturday afternoons at the club.

Used Tennis Balls

These are available for sale at the reasonable price of £1 per tin of four balls. Please contact Jan Hollis on 812073 or call at 105 Cambridge Road.

Club Playing Sessions

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

Wednesdays from 10.00am and 6.00pm
Fridays from 9.30 am; Sundays from 10.00am

Contacts

For further information, please contact Richard Mott (Secretary) on 466348, Janet Hollis (Chairman) on 812073 or Daphne Lunnon (Membership Secretary) on 817574.

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IN MEMORIAM

DOREEN MYRTLE NEWBY

1923-2008

Doreen was born in Lowestoft, Suffolk in 1923, the daughter of a trawlerman. She attended a school which was just outside her back door, and she left at the age of 14.

She worked in the office at Lowestoft harbour. In 1942 she joined the Royal Navy and became a Wren, stationed at HMS Europa. Doreen became a Petty Officer in the Royal Navy Patrol Service. During the war Doreen met John Newby, but at that stage they were just friends. In 1953 Doreen emigrated to Australia as a '£10 Pom'. She settled near Sydney. John wrote to Doreen several times during this period, asking her to marry him, but she refused! Eventually John's patience must have run out, as he gave her an ultimatum to come home and marry him, or ... So in 1957 Doreen returned to England where she and John were married a few weeks later by special licence on 21st December. They set up home in Ipswich, where Kathryn was born the following Christmas. In 1959 the family moved to Hargrave Close in Stansted, where Doreen and John were to live for the rest of their lives. Jehane, their second daughter was born in 1961. Every year when the girls were young, the family used to spend their annual holiday in Lowestoft.

Doreen and John were both active members of St John's Church. Doreen ran the Tuesday Club, which was made up of a group of ladies who knitted and sewed items to sell, in order to raise money for church funds. I can't remember the amount of money raised by the Tuesday Club, but it was an amazing sum! The house was always full of wool and materials!

Doreen worked as a dinner lady at St Mary's Primary School. She also worked in Stansted Library, first when it was in Lower Street and later in Crafton Green. In 1984, after John retired, he and Doreen visited Doreen's brother in Sydney and John's brother in Sri Lanka. They bought a camper van and travelled in the British Isles too. Sadly John died on 10th March 1988. After John's death, Doreen still involved herself in village life, being a member of the British Legion and on the committee of the Stansted Seniors.

I have lived next door to Doreen for nearly 36 years and she has been a wonderful neighbour; always there if needed but never intrusive. I well remember the day that we moved into Hargrave Close. Doreen appeared at one point, carrying a tray of tea for us. Her words were, "Did you think this day would never come?" I can't remember my reply now. While Anna was small Doreen often baby-sat for us, until her daughters were old enough to take over from her.

Doreen enjoyed her garden and worked in it until she was physically incapable of doing so any more. She used to come out of her back door, go to her shed and get out her kneeler, saying, "I'm just going to do an hour out here". Later this became half an hour. Eventually she relented and hired a gardener who still comes once a fortnight to keep the garden tidy. Doreen was a very independent lady and only asked for help when things became impossible for her to do herself.

After John's death, we told her that we were there for her at any time, but she really only turned to us during the last few years of her life. In latter years Doreen developed osteoporosis and, as a result of this, lost height.

One day in July 2006 I was on my way to Doreen's with a cucumber and some tomatoes from our greenhouse. I liked to give her a regular supply, as she told me that ours were the only cucumbers that didn't give her indigestion! I realised that Doreen was paying a taxi driver outside her house. This seemed strange as she normally travelled by bus. "Oh, Stella, she said, "I'm in a terrible state!" Apparently she had been to the optician's in Bishop's Stortford. He or she had found a problem and had told poor Doreen that she **must** go to the

Eye Unit at Harlow Hospital that day. This was the start of about 15 months' visits to that clinic and sometimes to Bishop's Stortford, during which time Doreen had various operations and procedures carried out on her eye. Frank usually took Doreen on these visits, and they struck up quite a friendship during that time. I found it sad that, although we'd been neighbours for so long, it was only in these latter years, when her

health was failing, that Doreen really opened up and chatted to us.

Even quite recently Doreen always tried to go out each day for a short walk to the local shops. She still delivered 'The Link' to a few people, including us. On Wednesday mornings, whenever she was well enough, Doreen liked to attend the 10.00am Communion service at St John's Church, kindly driven there by John or Janet Hollis. She was a very private person and that was what made her so special. We are already missing her and will never forget our lovely neighbour, Doreen.

Stella Skingle

(with gratitude to Kathryn Chatto [nee Newby] for providing the details of Doreen's early life and work)





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On one of those bright but very windy afternoons in March I ventured out for a walk round the lanes and footpaths beyond the north-west edge of the village. Quite a few spring flowers were already blooming, including yellow kingcups on Bentfield pond and the spring along Pennington Lane, and some early oxlips just off the bridleway in Wakelings Wood.

There had been a lot of heavy rain during the previous few days but the field paths were surprisingly free of our notorious Essex mud, partly due to the relatively dry winter and also the strong drying wind. Hares were chasing each other in the open fields and there were signs of badgers along the hedgerows. At a high point I looked around for the herd of deer that often graze on the young crops in the area but could not see any. When I had a second look through binoculars, there they were, only 200 yards away, merging with the background in the lee of a hedge.

On my way home as the sun was going down there was an unusual tweeting from above. A small flock of middling size birds with swept back wings passed overhead heading south, soon followed by several more flocks. They decided to turn back when they approached the outskirts of Stansted and all the flocks merged into one large flock which then wheeled about over the fields just like those flocks of starlings one sees in the nature films. Light was failing and I did not see where they settled, but I think they were wading birds, possibly dunlins, which had been driven inland by stormy weather. So ended a typical walk - always something different to be seen.

We are lucky to have footpaths and country lanes, which give us access to our countryside and one does not have to walk too far to discover all sorts of delights. The kingcups and oxlips mentioned above will still be flowering now, along with primroses, cowslips and lots more. The bluebells are already budding and they will soon be prolific in nearly all the woods in the area. They are even growing under the hedges along Lime Kiln Lane and Pennington Lane.

Enjoy the spring!

Felix

School News

Our brilliant Messy Play continues to run in the Nursery on Mondays from 1.45pm to 3.00pm during term time. It is open to children 18 months upwards. If you would like to come, contact the school or just turn up! Sessions cost £1.00 and children must be accompanied!

If you are interested in either a Reception or Nursery place, and would like to visit the school, please give us a ring (813626) and we will be very pleased to arrange one for you. We are also able to offer both a Breakfast Club (from 7.45am) and an After School Kids Club (until 6.00pm). Both clubs are available to children who attend the school.

Forthcoming Events:

Summer Fair 2.00pm-4.30pm Saturday 7th June

'Carnival' is the theme of this year's fair and we are getting in the mood already! The theme has been chosen to tie in with Art Week which will be running in school so all the children will be involved in producing brilliant art and craft work, enjoying samba/salsa music and generally getting into the carnival spirit and ready to rumba at the fair!

You will find many of your old favourites such as the raffle, tombolas, plants, cakes, BBQ, bar, entertainment and games galore! In keeping with the theme, there will of course be a colourful carnival procession with all classes taking part and plenty of great music to help create a fantastic carnival atmosphere! Don't miss it - put it in your diary now!

Music in the Park 2.00pm- 8.00pm Saturday 12th July

We are already counting down to Bentfield's seventh Music in the Park. We are busy lining up bands now, so put the date in your diaries and start filling in your dance card!

Alison Thompson
Co-Chairman,
Bentfield PTA

EASTER SNOW IN STANSTED

Photos: Derek Honour



A temporary resident of Bentfield Playground



A view across the fields by Bentfield pond which would be affected by the current youth football proposals

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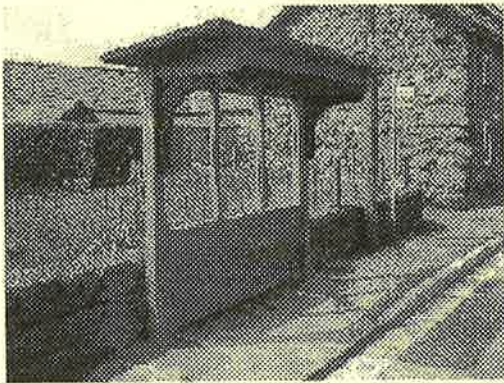
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NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

BUS SHELTERS

Good news for our parishioners who use the buses. Essex County Council has agreed that we can use some of the money from the development of the Rochford Nursery site for the replacement of three bus shelters. Those on Maitland Road, Chapel Hill and Cambridge Road will be replaced first. It may be that new shelters for Silver Street or on Cambridge Road outside The Feathers, can follow at a later stage.



The County is trying to have a uniform approach to shelters across the County, and the design of the shelter will be similar to that shown above, but with side panels and a bench seat as well!

SPRING BULBS

We hope you will have noticed that our daffodils looked really good this year. However, there is always room for improvement, and we have identified several areas which could benefit either from additional planting to boost the existing display, or require planting.

We are putting together a rolling programme for planting over the next few years, and areas listed include

- verges at Blythwood Gardens
- grass triangle at Bentfield Lower Green
- under the trees at the top of Bentfield Lower Green
- grass verge on B1383 entering the village from the north – known to some as Walpole's Hill!

If you have other suggestions to make, please let us know. Additionally, if you are able to offer to supply, or help with planting bulbs, we would also like to hear from you!

FEEDBACK FROM THE VILLAGE PLAN MEETING

The following summary is not comprehensive nor should it be assumed that the Parish Council or any other agency will necessarily accept all the views as stated. Should you wish to see a more comprehensive summary, go to the Parish Council's website, www.stansted.net and click on the Publications page.

The attitude to further growth – overwhelming opposition not least because of inadequate infrastructure as well as to any intrusion into greenbelt. Mixed views on further infill but support for more affordable houses. Efforts to be made to involve the new residents of Forest Hall Park (Rochfords).

Wish-list for new facilities – Leisure facilities including a swimming pool and junior football pitches, large village hall with stage, more school places both primary and secondary, improved healthcare provision plus facilities on Forest Hall Park.

Health Provision – Overwhelming opposition to a health centre being built away from the village centre not least because of traffic flows. Concern over adequacy of

hospital facilities as population increases and criticism over no local A&E department, although the Herts and Essex Hospital is generally well reviewed. Lack of NHS dental facilities emphasised.

Education – Strong criticism of the idea that St Mary's School should move to Forest Hall Park, but support for seeking to reintroduce a sixth form at Mountfitchet College with some concern over choice availability in secondary education. Provision of play/care facilities in the holidays should be encouraged.

Policing, Crime and Safety – Dominant view is that the village is a safe place to live; the major concern is anti-social behaviour. Unanimous calls for visible policing on the streets, demands for more control of groups of young people behaving badly – often alcohol driven. Support for rebuilding Neighbourhood Watch (call the Parish Council if you would like to volunteer). Other demands include the enforcement of speed limits and the prevention of parking on pavements.

Sport – A swimming pool is considered high priority and there is support for junior sports facilities, preferably to the east of the village.

Leisure and the Arts – Support the Village Music Club, encourage more varied music events and create a properly equipped space for theatre plus, possibly, a cinema.

Open Space – Positive response including a demand for allotments. Possible locations include Stansted Park (but without development), Bentfield Green (strong views for and against) and around the Mountfitchet College/Forest Hall. More variety of equipment on play areas is requested.

Public Transport – Demand for improvement in all areas:

Bus – Services take too long given routes through other villages, do not run late enough and are too expensive. Request for services to Stansted Airport and Harlow.

Rail – Much criticism – too slow, inadequate service, unreliable and too expensive. Requests for late trains from London and more services from Cambridge to Stansted

Airport. Railway station needs attention and should be open longer.

Highways – Provoked much adverse comment. General agreement that the volume of traffic and heavy vehicles is too high with Cambridge Road, Chapel Hill and High Lane particularly identified, along with Old Bell Close. The fountain junction is also considered a problem. Opinions on a one-way system are divided while there is support for traffic-calming measures on the main roads in the village.

Stansted Airport – Overwhelming opposition to a second runway with concern over noise, pollution and additional traffic.

Retailing and Services – Opinion over the adequacy of the range of shops was evenly split but there was strong support for the Post Office and pharmacy. Better parking in terms of convenience and cost would help the local shops.

Local Councils – Response relating to the efficiency and effectiveness of Essex County Council and Uttlesford District Council was split on a fairly equal basis. The Parish Council received a positive response along with a request for longer office opening hours and approval for it to take on more responsibility. Hostility shown to party politics.

Communication – Unanimous praise for The Link in its new form. Support for an improved website provided it was remembered that not everyone has access. The sample of people, whilst representing a good turnout on the day, is still small at about 2.43% of the population. Of the attendees, about 56% were women while 63% had lived in the village for over 25 years. The age profile is also relevant: over 70 – 31%, 51-70 – 47%, 31-50 – 13% and under 30 years – 9%.

If you have views which you want to be taken into account, you will have a number of opportunities –

- Write to or e-mail your views to the Parish Council.
- Return a detailed questionnaire which will be sent to you later this year.

- Join one of the working parties: if you are interested, come to the meeting on 21 May (see below).

Help us to plan the future of our village: your ideas and evidence are crucial.

JOIN THE WORKING PARTIES TO PREPARE THE PARISH PLAN

A meeting will be held at 8pm in the Day Centre on 21 May for all those who have already volunteered to join working parties, and for all those who may wish to consider joining. As a reminder, the list of working groups which it is hoped to establish, is as follows:-

Sport, Leisure and Open Space	
Police	Local Councils/Communication
Future of Stansted	Highways
Bus	Rail
Airport	Health
	Retailing
	Education

Your expertise, local knowledge and time are needed for this project.

DATES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

May 7	-	Full Council and Annual Council
May 14	-	Open Spaces
May 28	-	Full Council

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. These comments are noted but no discussion is entered into. 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 under Publications.

LIBRARY NEWS

Bookstart Baby and Toddler – every Tuesday from 11-11.30am. Come and meet other parents and carers and have fun with story and rhymetime.

STANSTED IN BLOOM

If you have a business in the village and are able to hang a hanging basket at the premises, these can be supplied as part of the village scheme at a very reasonable price. Watering can also be arranged at a modest cost. Please contact Ruth Clifford or Anne Court for further details.

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	
Tudor Owen	812825	
Ruth Rawlinson	814222	**
Jonathan Rich	813112	
John Salmon	814789	
Geoffrey Sell	815925	*
Valerie Trundle	813433	
* Chairman		
** Vice Chairman		

NEW MEDICAL FACILITIES

Like many residents the Parish Council is clear that Stansted needs a new surgery to cater for our expanding population. The St. John's Road practice is no longer fit for purpose and its lease is due to expire.

The West Essex Primary Care Trust has been looking at potential sites in the village for over 13 years. It has considered 10 possible sites including Western House in Cambridge Road and discounted each one. They believe the only possible site now open to them is at the Rochford's development. Under the section 106 agreement which gave initial planning permission land has been made available at no cost to the PCT for provision of medical facilities. It is the PCT's intention that the clinic currently at Crafton Green, the surgery and a new NHS dentist should be under one roof.

There has been quite legitimate concern by many residents about the move of the surgery from the centre of the village. Rochford's is about 1.5 miles from Cambridge Road. The Chairman and Cllr Peter Jones have met with some of those most concerned and listened to what they have to say. Subject to Parish Council agreement on Wednesday 16 April it is our intention to hold a consultation with residents as to whether there should be satellite medical facilities provided in the centre of the village. We would also want to know what services residents would like the PCT to provide at their new facilities.

The Parish Council has been clear from the outset that if Rochford's proved to be the only viable site, then an adequate bus service would be essential. To this end, David Forkin the Area Highways Manager for Essex County Council will be attending one of our meetings in May. We will be pursuing this with him. Your chairman has had several discussions with Toni Coles of the PCT and made it clear to her that we would also want to see a more accessible appointments system at the surgery.

There will be a public meeting chaired by Aidan Thomas, the Chief Executive of the PCT to discuss their proposals. This will be held at 7 pm on Monday 28 April 2008 at the Day Centre, Crafton Green. There will also be two day-time consultation meetings. It is important there is a good public turnout for these meetings.

ECO TOWNS

The Government has issued a shortlist of 15 proposed eco-towns one of which would be created north of Elsenham. The shortlist will be reduced to a final 10 settlements over the next six months. If Elsenham were to go ahead it would mean a new settlement of 5,400 homes. A county council spokesman has made the valid point that Elsenham is only served by a tiny rural railway station and has poor road network. In order it states "to create a truly sustainable new community in the area full infrastructure is of utmost importance."

Some people feel that the announcement by government of Elsenham as a potential eco-

town is linked to their plans for a second runway at Stansted Airport. As a parish council we have been clear in our wish to maintain the rural character of the district as much as possible. We have been opposed to airport expansion (but not the existing airport) and also to Option 4 proposed by Uttlesford District Council. Their preferred option would mean the building of 3000 houses at Elsenham. Eco-towns are on our agenda for our next full council meeting.

The southern part of Uttlesford is facing great challenges and we shall do our part to resist undesirable development which threatens the quality of life of our residents.

DOG WALKERS!

A gentle reminder to those walking their dogs around the village – PLEASE ensure that you pick up what your dog leaves behind. The Recreation Ground appears to be suffering a lack of picking-up currently – there are plenty of dog bins provided and emptied regularly.

CONTACT US!

Clerk – Ruth Clifford
Admin Assistant – Anne Court
Phone/Fax: 01279 813214
E-mail: parishcouncil@stansted.net

OTHER CONTACTS

Uttlesford District Council Members

Alan Dean Tel: 01279 813579
Email: cldrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk
John Hudson Tel: 01279 814489
Email: cllrhudson@uttlesford.gov.uk
John Salmon Tel: 01279 814789
Email: cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk
Geoffrey Sell Tel: 01279 815925
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Essex County Council Member

Ray Gooding Tel: 01279 813103
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Member of Parliament

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 020 7219 5214
Fax: 020 7219 5600
Email: haselhursta@parliament.uk

SPANGLES CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Since opening, the Stansted Children's Centre is going from strength to strength and our timetable is filling up with new and exciting activities. After two extremely successful open days, with hundreds of people attending, we began running our Stay and Play sessions. These take place on a Tuesday and Thursday and we have since had to extend the sessions from two to five hours due to their popularity. We now provide a light lunch along with refreshments and a selection of fruit throughout the day.

Another exciting development is our centre's new title. On the open days we ran a competition to choose a name and the winning suggestion came from Adam Warner, whose idea of 'Spangles' was inspired because he found the centre 'bright, exciting, stimulating and sparkly'.



Over the coming months there will be lots of exciting sessions starting up alongside the Stay and Plays. After listening to suggestions from parents and children, we are launching courses such as a Ball Skills workshop for Key Stage 1 pupils run by an experienced coach. At the same time there will be a KS1 Stay and Play, which will include, amongst other games, K'nex, Lego, and some fantastic computer programs. We will also be running a Sing and Sign class, which is both fun and educational. These will be starting in late April. Other sessions include a group for first time parents, a Young Parent's Group for under 19s, and a group for children with additional needs, with lots of multi-sensory toys and equipment.

We are always open to new suggestions; so to share ideas or to get more information please do feel free to pop in or call Mandy or Emily on (01279) 812348 at any time. We are here from 9.00am-5.00pm from Monday to Friday or you can leave us a message. We look forward to seeing you down at the Centre!

Amanda Fitchett



Stansted Cricket Club

Our home fixtures for the month of May are as follows:

Sat 3rd May	1330	2nd XI v Rickling Ramblers II
Sat 10th May	1330	1st XI v Little Hallingbury
Sun 11th Ma	1400	Sun XI v Epping Foresters
Sat 17th May	1330	1st XI v Braughing
Sat 24th May	1330	2nd XI v Westmill
Sun 25th May	1400	Club Day
Sat 31st May	1330	1st XI v Ardeley Walkern

New players wishing to join should contact the club as follows:

Adults to David Hedge on 812509
Juniors to Keith Ayres on 814471

Regular visitors may like to consider becoming non-playing members (annual fee £10, which entitles the holder to buy drinks in the Club's bar).

David Hedge,
Secretary

STANSTED DAY CENTRE

News from the Crafton Room

To try and avoid what some regard as a fuddy-duddy image, you will notice that we are now calling the Day Centre the Crafton Room and it would be lovely if everyone who hires it could do the same. We are looking for a few more helpers who could spare two hours a fortnight to serve teas/coffees and lunches - no cooking is involved. It would also be appreciated if anyone can give a little time to drive people who need transport to and from Crafton Green. Please ring James Ramselle on 815091 for the former and Bridget Gott on 814440 for the latter.

Stop Press

We have just heard that our Manager is taking a position much nearer his home. If anyone is interested in the Manager's job please ring me for further information.

Brenda Scarr
Tel: 813080

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BAA will be beaten on second runway plans

BAA's plans to build a second runway at Stansted Airport will be beaten. That was the unanimous and resounding message from speakers at a rally at the Rhodes Centre, Bishop's Stortford, organised by SSE on 2nd April. A capacity audience witnessed an impressive show of the scale of opposition to BAA's plans from politicians of all parties and every one of the UK's leading environmental groups. In his opening address, SSE Chairman Peter Sanders warned that the capacity throughput of 68 million passengers a year quoted by BAA was in reality 85 million passengers a year, based on BAA's own projections. Quoting Inspector Graham Eyre at the 1980s public inquiry into Stansted expansion proposals, he told the audience "Such a monster cannot and must not be inflicted on this landscape, yet this is the monster that BAA wants to let loose. The loss of what is priceless and irreplaceable cannot be mitigated. What can you put onto the scales to cancel out an environmental disaster?"

Lord Hanningfield, leader of Essex County Council and Transport Spokesman for the Conservatives in the House of Lords pledged to do everything possible to stop airport expansion at Stansted. Hertfordshire County Council's Deputy Leader Cllr David Lloyd warned that "We know we are seeing an environmental disaster in slow motion... A third runway is what BAA has in mind..." Cllr Jackie Cheetham, Deputy Leader of Uttlesford District Council, told the meeting: "Uttlesford District Council is clear that a second runway will bring catastrophic change to the character of our beautiful rural landscape." Geraldine Nicholson from the Stop Heathrow Expansion campaign spoke about the experience of the local community around Heathrow over the past 20 years and warned against ever accepting BAA's promises. Closing the meeting, Sir Alan Haselhurst said: "The proceedings can be summed up in a simple three word message: NO, NO, NO to a second runway. ...Let the drum-beat of resistance sound. The organisation of SSE is strengthening. Support at Westminster has emerged. We are determined our voice will be heard. We can and we will prevail."

Comment on proposals for an eco-town at Elsenham

No-one should be surprised by this announcement. If the Government wants to see an airport bigger than Heathrow at Stansted then developers will inevitably hover like vultures over communities in its vicinity. This is only the start of what would happen if a second runway were ever to be approved at Stansted. Stop Stansted Expansion's focus is therefore on tackling the second runway application for Stansted as the root cause as a means of overturning plans for the 'symptoms' of proposed development at Elsenham and elsewhere.

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



494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

We start this month by congratulating Cadet Sergeants Nathan Basford and Robert Hume on successfully completing their Staff cadet examinations, both having now completed the academic part of their cadet training. They will now form part of the cadet training team passing their skills on in turn to other members of the Squadron.

A team of cadets took part in an expedition to the Peak District as part of their Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The Air Cadet Organisation is one of the largest participants in the Scheme and more members of the Squadron will be completing their Bronze Awards over the next few weeks.

The Squadron attended the Wing Presentation Evening at the Civic Hall in Chelmsford, where units from all over Essex gathered to celebrate the achievements of the last year. Banners from 22 of the Essex Squadrons formed an impressive sight in the foyer, and the evening went on to highlight a very positive picture of Essex youth.

The cadets are training hard for the Falklands Trophy competition to be held at Carver Barracks - teams from the unit will be competing against other Squadrons in the Wing in a range of disciplines including Obstacle Course, Shooting, First Aid and Navigation.



Finally Cadet Sergeant Robert Hume (pictured) added to his personal success by completing an arduous week long course with the RAF Regiment at Honington in Suffolk. Rob (16) greatly enjoyed the experience, especially as he has wanted to join the Regiment since he was 8! His favourite part of the course was the 5k run in full kit; helmet and carrying his weapon, something he freely admits nearly killed him! Sports, unarmed combat, shooting on the range and personal fitness training featured heavily, with the cadets getting up at 5.00am and in bed by 11.00pm. The early mornings, kit inspections and gruelling runs have not put Rob off, though as he says, "I now *definitely* want to become a Regiment Gunner!" Who says the youth of today have no get up and go?

Simon Stacey,
494 Squadron ATC
www.stanstedaircadets.org.uk

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Wellbeing

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



"Just find out what makes you happy and do more of it!"

My friends have always advised me on my personal and professional decisions. We shared with each other like many thirty-somethings as we settled down to bring up our offspring. Hours spent at each other's kitchen tables discussing child and husband care. It didn't take too long to realise that the theories were interchangeable!

Now, we are more likely to be spotted at the Radisson Hotel drinking champagne and gazing on the international travellers, just wondering when we can actually leave the kids for a weekend. We were celebrating a 40th birthday and our first collective success - someone's eldest son has just been offered a place at a prestigious college to study medicine. Everyone present was convinced his success was down to the day that they had collected him from school and made him his tea!

Women learn with effort and imagination to balance home and professional commitments. In a blink of an eye a woman may find herself changing from working woman to expectant mum. Then she has a brief moment of glory as a fashionable yummy mummy, only to find herself back as a working mum with the added skills of a teenage taxi service. No doubt men would say that they have similar demands put upon them!

Life does begin at 40. Psychologists suggest that you spend the first stage of life fitting in schooling, a career, finding a mate, raising children, learning what is expected of you, and moulding yourself to the outside world. In the second stage you begin to discover what is important and valuable to you. We embark on the second stage of life in pursuit of the demands of our inner being. Will we become grumpy old men and women, or will we choose to feel joyful as we pursue activities that give a deeper meaning to our lives? Perhaps it could be by supporting a local community project, or just having the courage to change things about ourselves and the way we live our lives?

Women's wellbeing is surely enhanced by our ability to talk around, through and within a problem. Some suggest we have an innate motivation to nurture - to consider everyone's feelings - giving us wisdom when it comes to family or community building. The experience gained in the second stage of life teaches that, whilst it's impossible to please all the people all the time, striving to please most of the people most of the time can be fulfilling, amusing and very rewarding. Spending time with friends is something that definitely makes me happy and I intend to do more of it. It's a hard life trying to talk and drink champagne at the same time but someone has to do it! Take care for now.

isobel@stanstedlink.org.uk



**STANSTED
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info@stansted10k.org.uk

**11.00am Sunday 15th June
leaving from Bentfield Green**

Entries are now being accepted: adults £8 in advance (£10 on the day); under 16s £4 in advance and on the day. For an entry form, please email us on info@stansted10k.org.uk or telephone 814059. Entry forms can be downloaded from our website, where you can also enter on-line using a credit or debit card. Sponsorship forms are available, and you can get your entry fee refunded if you raise more than £15 (adults) or £10 (children) in sponsorship money for the Fun Run charities: The Moreton Romanian Orphans Fund, Diabetes UK, and Hearing Help Uttlesford.

CAN YOU HELP?

Many thanks to those of you who have responded so far but we still need more helpers for the following:

Stewards

To be positioned along the route to give encouragement and summon help in case of emergency

General Helpers

at the water points
on the green before and after the run

If you can help even for a short while, we would be very pleased to hear from you. Thank you!

Marion Dyer

Tel: 814059

info@stansted10k.org.uk



**Huw Johnson
Club**

For several years our members from Saffron Walden have arrived at Club in the Uttlesford Community Travel minibus. We have used our own drivers and provided escorts to help look after our members. However, for financial reasons, the minibus has been withdrawn from Stansted and is no longer housed at the Peter Kirk School. This means that our drivers have to collect the minibus from Dunmow. This has been a big blow to the club and we are desperate to solve this situation. What we need are two people who would act as escorts and who would be willing to drive our minibus drivers to Dunmow using their own car. You would then act as escorts to our club members from Saffron Walden. However, as this means your car will be parked at Dunmow you will also have to act as escort on the return trip. A husband and wife team could split these journeys between them. You would only have to do this once a month.

The minibus driver on the return trip would be a different person, so they cannot use their own cars. Please will you help us to solve this problem so that our members will not be disappointed.

Marion Johnson

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STANSTED HEALTH CENTRE PETITION

I felt compelled to act after reading the surprise Herts and Essex Observer article of 3rd April – **Go ahead for Health Centre - £2.7m facility could open by autumn 2009.**

For several years there has been mention of some kind of Health Centre at the Forest Hall (Rochford Nursery) site – with 600 houses it is certainly big enough to merit it and a Health Centre there could presumably serve Birchanger and those who live at the southern end of Stansted. Most of us will also have been aware of the PCT's attempts to find an alternative location in the centre of the village. I am sure that it would not have occurred to anyone that there would be any move to locate Stansted's entire health provision, including the midwives and health visitors currently based at Crafton Green, to the Forest Hall site. It seems to me to be obvious that Stansted's main Health Centre needs to be at the centre of the village.

A central location gives easiest access to the majority of people, especially the elderly, those with small children and those without a car. There is mention of a bus service to Forest Hall, but how often will they run, how long will it take you just to attend a five minute appointment, how will you manage if you have young children, and what if you can't manage to get on a conventional bus? At a time when we are being encouraged to use our cars less, we will be expected to walk what could be up to a three mile round trip – who has the time for that, especially if you are ill, elderly, pregnant, or have children in tow?

A move to the Forest Hall site is also an erosion of our community. At the moment villagers often walk to the doctor's surgery, and then go to the chemists, popping into the local shops on the way. Once we get in our cars to go to the doctor's, who won't be tempted to pop into Bishop's Stortford or Tesco to pick up their prescription and bits of shopping? The very number of shops and pubs, which immediately agreed to take the petition, is testament to our shopkeepers' fears that this will affect their livelihood.

At the time of writing, the petition has been going for less than a week, and already it has more than 500 signatures. A group of concerned parishioners is now emerging and we have had a meeting with members of the Parish Council. I would urge you all to sign the petition to show the Parish Council and more especially the Primary Care Trust, the strength of feeling in the village. I would also urge you to attend the PCT's Public Meeting on Monday 28th April at the Crafton Room. Copies of the petition are available at the Co-op, Dorringtons, Family News, Kings Family Butchers, R&K News, Steve Golding Greengrocers, YZ Minimarket, The Dog & Duck, The Feathers, The Kings Arms, The Queens Head and The Rose and Crown.

Liz Kadir

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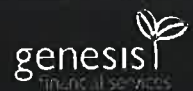
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SKYWATCH



This month, we consider The Moon. It is a convention that our Moon is The Moon with a capital M and other moons are given names from mythology. Six of the eight planets have moons orbiting them, with Mercury and Venus being the moonless exceptions. Of those moon-bearing planets, Earth is the only one to have a single Moon. It does have the distinction of being the largest Moon relative to the planet it orbits. The Earth is just under 8000 miles in diameter and the Moon is around 2000 miles. The Moon orbits at a distance varying between 220,000 and 242,000 miles.

The Moon has been the source of many myths and legends, not least because of the 'face' that a full Moon seems to exhibit and the 28 day orbit round the Earth coinciding with the female cycle. Yet the Moon does have a few curious, though strictly scientific, features. We always see the same side of the Moon because it spins round at exactly the same speed as its orbit round the Earth. This can be a bit hard to grasp without a visual aid demonstration involving a couple of different size balls. The scientific point is how did this happen? The mystery is one of many things in the universe that 'can't' happen. The Moon is also the only other world that humanity has visited, bringing back samples of the rock from six missions to quite diverse locations. The rocks are entirely different to Earth's and will entertain geologists for many years to come.

On the first mission, in July 1969, several experiments were set up on the surface. One of them was a reflector, which is still in use, to reflect laser beams from Earth to determine the Earth-Moon distance. The Moon is slowly moving further away from us and the distance is known within an inch! Another experiment was a seismometer to measure 'Moonquakes'. The Apollo astronauts set up their own 'quake' when they ejected the no longer needed Lunar Module from orbit to crash in to the Moon. Once again, The Moon gave us a surprise. The Seismometer did detect the impact. But the reverberations lasted for over 40 minutes. That suggested that the Moon was hollow. But that can't be true, can it?

Martin West



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STANSTED LUNCH CLUB

March Lunch

Copyzone were the generous sponsors of the well supported March lunch at Bury Lodge. John Barfoot gave a brief but fascinating account of the evolution of printing which, in a curious way, added depth to the modern printing enterprise of Copyzone. Ian Hudson of Copyzone Archiving guided us through the evolution of the company from its early days as a heritage enterprise, working almost solely for the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight (BBMF), to the present day as an archiving resource for a wide variety of commercial clients.

May Lunch

On 21st May, we are looking forward to a presentation by the Lord's Taverners, which is being promoted by Angie and Peter Ruggiero of Bada Bing!, Stansted, David Brown and Nigel Holland of The Stansted Hall Cricket Club, David Norris of Auditel, Brentwood, Frank Gillen of East Anglian Debt Management, Buntingford, Stephen Morrison of Martin and Mortimer, Harlow and Simon Dowell of Lloyds TSB, Bishop's Stortford. The Taverners do an enormous amount of good work by: providing incentives to play cricket in schools and clubs; enabling young people with special needs to participate in sporting activities; supplying minibuses to special needs organisations; and creating recreational facilities in conjunction with the National Playing Fields Association.

Alastair Richardson
amg.richardson@gmail.com



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FUTURE PROGRAMME

Autumn Course

A 10 week course taken by Peter White from Chelmsford starts on 15th September at 8 pm and will be entitled 'The Plant Hunters'. This is the story of those adventurers, traders and professional plant hunters, who travelled an expanding world to find and bring back to Western Europe, the plants that grace our gardens. Also the work of botanical and plant breeders will be included in the course.

The WEA can offer a fee reduction for those on recognised benefits.

Ralph Phillips

UGLEY FARMERS' MARKET

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Saturday 17th May



10.00am-12 noon



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LAST MONTH'S PICTURE PUZZLE

Not difficult was it! The timber-boarded house has been replaced by a brick-built one and the location is Cambridge Road, a little north of the former Three Colts pub.

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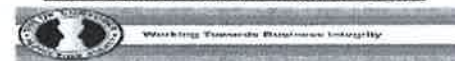
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The next big event to take place at Rainbow will be our **May Fête on Saturday 10th May**. There will be all sorts of stalls, tombolas, children's activities and cream teas available so please put the date in your diary for what promises to be a great family day out. The fun will start at 2.00pm at the Free Church Hall near Millways.

Last term we concentrated on the story of the Three Little Pigs and extended this focus to looking at how houses are built. For the brick and wood examples, we took the older group up to the construction site in the new development up by Mountfitchet College. For the straw house, the children collected twigs from the outside area and together with some straw made their own thatched roofs.

Our Easter celebrations included an egg hunt around the garden followed by hot cross buns all round. The children also enjoyed making Easter cards and nests to take home to their parents.

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



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

AGM and Members' Night

The AGM was well attended and the audited accounts were presented. Subscriptions for the forthcoming season (starting in May) will be: Single £11.50 and Double £19.00 (two members at the same address). The Chairman's report outlined the very varied 2007/08 programme. Over the past year the Club has welcomed visitors from neighbouring villages and towns to the meetings, many of whom then joined the Club. Therefore the membership has grown to 51 and as the Club has participated in the Parish Council's welcome pack for the new residents of Forest Hall Park, it was hoped that the Club would be welcoming many new faces to future meetings. Members were advised that the 2008/09 programme can be seen on the Club's website, as well as forthcoming trips/events. Photographs of past events can be found there too. Voting for the committee then took place.

After the AGM the members were treated to a 'Trip to the Republic of China.' Last year Sheila and Alan Bowles criss-crossed China and they shared their holiday slides with the members. As well as visiting famous places such as The Forbidden City in Beijing, The Great Wall, Xi'an and the Terracotta Army, the Yangtze Gorge Dam and Shanghai,

they also spent time visiting the beautiful parks and gardens en-route. A vote of thanks was given - with members wondering where they are off to this year!

Spring Show 2008

The Free Church Hall was a spectacular sight for the Club's Spring Show with beautiful daffodils and spring flowers welcoming visitors. There were over 80 entries in 46 various Classes. The Daffodil Society Bronze Medal awarded for most points in the Daffodil classes resulted in a dead heat between Cyril Stoneham and Brian Townsend, both with 56 points. The other cup winners were:

Humphrey Vase for Floral Art	Margaret Loynds
Committee Shield	Cyril Stoneham
Oldfield Shield	Cyril Stoneham
Prentice Cup	Brian Townsend
Daffodil Best Bloom Certificate	Brian Townsend
Maud Banks Tankard	Cyril Stoneham



Photo: Ian Seavers

Trips

The spring coach trip to Wisley is full. The next coach trip will be in July to the late Geoff Hamilton's garden at Barnsdale - a board will be passed round at next meeting. An evening outing has also been arranged for June - details at next month's meeting.

May Meeting

The first meeting of the new season is on 7th May - 'Plant Production/Propagation' by Mrs Linda Blunt of Writtle College. The Members' competition is 'A Gardening Tip'. Visitors are welcome and membership is available. Doors open 7.30pm for 8.00pm start.

Maralyn Harris

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A TIME TO LEARN!

An important part of a veterinary student's education is 'extramural studies' or 'seeing practice'. This means spending many weeks of the university holidays attending veterinary practices and learning the practical side of the job such as animal handling, client care and communication; and also acquiring the basic skills of a vet's job such as being able to give an injection without putting the needle right through the unfortunate animal's skin and spraying the wall - or even worse - the client, with antibiotic! We have always been a practice that welcomes vet students and have been fortunate enough to have had some really interesting ones over the years. Just lately we have had three lovely students all in various stages in their training, and one of the most satisfying parts of the job is to see them grow in confidence and practical ability over their time with us. It has also given us some hilarious moments as I am sure you can imagine. I was demonstrating to one young lady how to empty a dog's anal glands and suggested she tried the next one that came in. With the owner's permission and a look of grim determination on her face she lifted the tail, got in the right position and squeezed the glands beautifully ... directly into her face! As any of you with dogs will know anal gland secretion is not pleasant stuff. Still, as I told her, she won't do it that way a second time!

This month we welcome a new nurse to Stansted. Jo is especially keen on continuing our nurse clinics at the surgery and is keen to see anyone for nurse appointments that would like advice on flea control, diets for dogs, help with worming their pets, claws that need clipping, and micro-chipping and she is able to offer free advice on a number of other topics. Please ring the surgery and book an appointment with her. We will also be at Hatfield Forest on Friday 30th May as part of their initiative to promote responsible pet behaviour while in the Forest. We will be able to give advice on a wide variety of topics, and will also have some quizzes and games for children and lots of information leaflets and some prizes and goody bags to give away. Come and say hello to us. Broccoli and I will be there, I just hope he'll be on his best behaviour!

Ilse Pedler,
Partner,
Mercer & Hughes,
Veterinary Surgeons



BIRTHSTONE OF THE MONTH

May - Emerald

Green transparent variety of beryl. Its name describes a distinctive colour although the stone can vary. Ireland is known as the Emerald Isle because of the lush green growth, not because emeralds have been found there. Inca royalty used it in their crowns and it now commemorates the 55th wedding anniversary. Emerald Lake in Canada appears that colour due to the minerals washed into it, as can be the case with icebergs.

'And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald'.

The Ancient Mariner - Coleridge

Peggy Honour



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Our talk this month was rather different in that, although based in history, it took the form of a couple's personal odyssey. The subject was 'The Time Line: the Greenwich Meridian' and told of Stuart Bale's decision to follow the Meridian through England from the south coast at Peacehaven in Sussex to the North Sea at Tunstall, Yorkshire.

For many years, sailors had faced the problem of navigating at sea out of sight of land. Matters in England came to a head in 1707 with the loss of a fleet under the command of Sir Cloudesley Shovell when, through inadequate navigation, the ships struck rocks off the Scilly Isles. Through the intervention of Charles II, Parliament was persuaded to pass the Longitude Act in 1714 offering a prize for the one providing a solution to the problem and many people tried to establish this vital part of navigation. Ultimately, John Harrison invented an accurate clock from which sailors could establish their position on the globe in relation to the 0 degree Greenwich Meridian. (France insisted on having the Meridian going through Paris until the 19th century!) It was this North/South line as it passed through England that Stuart wanted to follow and record what he discovered.

The talk was given by Mrs Bale and she showed us some excellent slides taken during their journey by her husband. Starting with photos of the marker at the top of the cliffs at Peacehaven, she proceeded up the line of the Greenwich Meridian, showing pictures of all the markers that they came across on the way to Yorkshire. Some of the markers were quite handsome objects put up, for example, by local authorities, others were relatively simple such as a compass rose placed on the ceiling of a school on the outskirts of London. Many were erected about the time of the Millennium but others had been in position for many years. In Lewes in Sussex, the name of an adjacent pub had been changed to The Meridian and a marker stone placed on the appropriate position in the road. In all, the Bales had discovered a large number of indicators (including one in the roof of a railway passenger tunnel, which had been beautifully photographed and recorded for posterity). It was a wonderful collection, which we greatly enjoyed seeing and hearing about.

Our next meeting will be on 1st May and will be the Annual General Meeting (which the Chairman promises to keep as short as possible) and it will be followed by another of Peter Sanders' presentations which are so popular. He will, as usual, be assisted by members of the Committee. We look forward to seeing you then.

Ian Seavers



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