

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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**VOLUME 30
Issue 3
February 2010**

Stansted Mountfitchet Village Magazine
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The Link is delivered free to 2700 homes and businesses in Stansted Mountfitchet. Further copies may be purchased for 50p each or £5.00 for the year.

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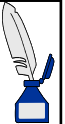
or by hand to:
7 Blythwood Gardens,
Stansted CM24 8HG

by **noon** on 11th February
for the March issue

by **noon** on 11th March
for the April issue

The Link is an independent publication supported by local churches, businesses and the Parish Council. Each edition is also available on line at www.stanstedlink.org.uk

Editorial



One of the inevitable outcomes of the recent hard weather is a plethora of pot-holes in our roads and footways. The availability of resources for repair, both financial and human, will be severely stretched but a possible temporary silver lining could be that road conditions are a deterrent to speeding. This, together with pavement parking, continues to be our principle highway problem. The 'Link' recently commended local drivers for their restraint on Grove Hill but the flouting in January of the 7.5 tonne limit by a rogue HGV driver is a reminder that our road system is dependent on considerate driving or parking - and no massive 'Ecotown' up the road.

Our cover and centre pages depict the treasury that our two nature reserves provide. With their ownership assured they give a guaranteed future for many of our natural companions. The Essex Wildlife Trust is funded by donations and subscriptions, not public money, so we owe a great debt of gratitude to the benefactors who gave them and the volunteers who maintain them.

Another 'thank you' is due to our medical services that have had to cope with a stressful winter and steadily increasing population. Stansted folk are, to put it gently, increasingly curious about the lack of news on the Health Centre!

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Stansted Network is compiled by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Ever since seventeenth century Quakers were savagely persecuted and imprisoned for their faith, Quakers have cared deeply about prison reform and tried to promote more effective and redemptive ways of dealing with offenders. Our present justice system jails more people for non-violent crime and more children than any other country in Western Europe. In 2009 the prison population reached an all-time high of 84,442 and our prisons are bursting at the seams. The Government's remedy is to build 50 new prisons, each costing the equivalent of two district hospitals or 50 primary schools.

No-one is denying that anti-social behaviour needs a response and society does need to be protected from insane or violent people, but sending non-violent offenders to prison is neither cost-effective nor successful, since 76% of male prisoners and 65% of all prisoners re-offend within two years, many of them yo-yoing in and out of prison for much of their lives. We persist in imprisoning the most disadvantaged people in society, who tend to remain poorly educated, ill or addicted and just as damaged as before their imprisonment. Advocates of Restorative Justice (RJ) were heartened recently by a report launched in Northern Ireland, which showed that only 40% of offenders on RJ programmes re-offend within a year and spoke of the satisfaction felt by communities involved in RJ schemes. Unfortunately the Press Association announcement of this success spoke of "forcing young offenders to apologise" (in fact there is no compulsion for offenders or victims) and sought to trivialise RJ with headlines like "Say sorry and you get off", ignoring the weeks of preparation, what the offenders agree to and the follow-through that ensures them making amends. The arguments in favour of RJ include not only its cheapness but also its relative effectiveness. However, the Government is still pursuing its prison-building (vote-winning?) policies and RJ is still very poorly funded. Some recent statements, however, could be rays of hope for RJ - Charles Walker MP stating "We have to be brave in promoting prison reform"; Jack Straw announcing that women offenders will receive non-custodial sentences; and Dominic Grieve MP stating that a Conservative government would not build more prisons if elected. What with the above and the economic crisis, perhaps the day of RJ has dawned!

Anthea Lee
Stansted Quaker Meeting



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Chapel Hill

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Ministers Rev'd Allen Morton
Tel: 757635
minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Rev'd David Mullins
Tel: 654475
minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Lettings Marion and Mike Dyer
7 Blythwood Gardens, Stansted CM24 8HG
Tel 814059
lettings@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Preachers for February

7th	10.30am	The Worship Team – New Directions
14th	10.30am	Janet Bottoms
21st	10.30am	Rev'd Allen Morton – Communion
28th	10.30am	Rev'd Stuart Veitch

Café Worship returns to Stansted

On the evening of Sunday 14th February, we are holding our third Café Worship. This is an informal service where the congregation are seated around small tables in the church (café style!) and coffee is served during the service. Why not come and experience something different? All welcome – the service starts at 7.00pm. For more details please ring 814059.



Christmas Events

Very many thanks to all who supported the 'Celebration of Christmas' event at St Mary's Church on 19th December, and to those who braved the icy pavements to join the carol singing in the village on the Tuesday and Wednesday evenings just before Christmas. As a result of the collections and donations made, we have been able to send £330 to Grove Cottage (Mencap), Bishops Stortford, and £142 to The Churches Conservation Trust (which maintains St Mary's).

Lent Groups

This year's Lent Groups will be held on the following Tuesdays at 8.00pm in St John's Church:

23rd February	(led by The Anglicans)
2nd March	(led by The Friends)
9th March	(led by The Free Church)
16th March	(led by The Catholics)

On 23rd March there will be a bring and share Agape at 8.00pm in the Free Church Hall.

More details of the course we are following will be available in early February from the churches. All are welcome – you do not have to attend all the sessions – just come when you can. See you there!

Alan Corbishley

GOOD FRIDAY PROJECT 2010

Oh yes, it's nearly that time of year again. "But I've only just put away the Christmas decorations!" you cry. But with Ash Wednesday on the 17th of this month, we are reminded



that it's time to start preparing for the next big Christian festival and it's so good to look forward to spring after the winter we have just had. The Good Friday Project is a Stansted tradition greatly enjoyed by children and adults alike in this area, and this year we would like it to be as good as ever. Last year 80 children had great fun acting out the Easter story, creating the set, making props, crafts, music and singing. Like anything on this scale, it did not happen by magic. A lot of hard work and organisation goes into making the day a success. We need creative people to think up crafts and prop ideas, musicians and people with a sense of drama to make the story come alive. And we need helpers, willing to get stuck in with the children and lead activities. Anyone, young or old can do it, but you will have to have a CRB check which we can organise.

So if you would like to be at the heart of this exhausting, but fulfilling project please come along to our first planning meeting on Sunday 21st February at 3.00pm in St John's Church. You could also contact Janet Wilkin on 812203 or email via the Church Office: st.johns.church@btinternet.com.

We're looking forward to hearing from you, and seeing you on 21st February.

Janet Wilkin

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



All 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 Giles Tulk
Tel: 817155
Email: stansted.curate@googlemail.com

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

St John's Diary

Sunday

8.00am Said Holy Communion
9.30am Worship 4 All (1st Sunday)
9.30am Choral Eucharist (2nd -
4th Sundays)

Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday

8.30am 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.

Tuesday

9.00am St John's Tots

Wednesday

9.00am Morning Prayer
10.00am Holy Communion

Saturday

9.00am Morning Prayer

Monday-Friday

5.00pm Evening Prayer

FROM THE REGISTERS

November

Baptism

15th Zoe Katherine Craig

Funerals

25th Evelyn Florence Tame, age 96 - at St Mary's
26th Stanley Frank Scotney, age 86 - at Parndon Wood

December

Funerals

22nd Elaine Rose Jordan, age 54 - at St Mary's
31st Louise Agnes Hopkins, age 91 - at Parndon Wood

ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

St John's Church and its community is a thriving organisation which offers something for everyone of every age throughout the year. As well as providing a comfortable venue for worship, prayer and quiet contemplation, a joyful and appropriate setting for weddings and baptisms and the serenity required to celebrate the lives of the departed, it also offers a weekly Tots (pre-school children) service and play-time as well as holding regular events for the church school. In addition, it provides a very suitable venue for the Village Music Club, which has been operating for several years, and has hosted many diverse charity events.

In order to continue its outreach in providing benefits for the village as a whole, St John's, like so many organisations at the present time, is in need of further income/financial support. For this purpose, we are proposing to embark upon a new venture in the form of St John's 300 Club. We are therefore appealing to all Stansted residents to consider supporting this venture to assist the Church in continuing to operate at a level which we feel sure you would wish us to maintain. The basis of the scheme would be as follows:-

1. We aim to sell between 250 and 300 numbers
2. Each number would cost £2 per month (£24 per year)
3. There will be a draw once a month for one prize of £100, one prize of £50 and one prize of £25
4. In addition, there will be two Super Draws held in July and December (ideal to help with holidays and Christmas!) of £200 each.

Subscriptions and application forms will need to be received by 1st April to enable a start date of 1st May. To join the scheme, or for further information, please contact Francine Cope on 814562 or Rosemary Thomson on 815551.

PS If anyone knows of a tombola drum which is surplus to requirements, we would be very pleased to hear from you!

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane
Stansted
Tel: 814349

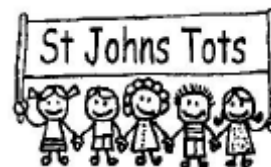
Masses Saturday 6.00pm
Sunday 9.00am and 10.30am

Holy Days of Obligation 8.00am and 8.00pm

Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am

Confessions
Saturday 10.00am
and by appointment

Baptisms By appointment



The first anniversary of St John's Tots was celebrated in December and the children came dressed as angels and shepherds for this special day. A cake made by one of the helpers was shared out after the service and everyone was complimentary on this new venture.



The St John's Tots is for pre-school children with their mums or carers, and meets every Tuesday morning in term time at 9.15am in the church. After coffee and a chat, Paul and Giles give the children a biblical story and usually a film with singing.



After the service the children play with toys and get used to the size and beauty of the church, which it is hoped they will continue to enjoy for the rest of their lives. At the last count 20 children attended with more on the rota. We always welcome new faces and hope to see more in the New Year.

Derek Francis



SHALOM

At 8.00pm on Tuesday 8th February, Rev'd Giles will be talking about 'How does the church respond to 21st century society?' This meeting will be at 7 Blythwood Gardens. On 22nd February at 8.00pm, our 'At home' will be at Margaret Silvester's house, 6 Church Hill Corner. All are welcome.

Marion Dyer
Tel: 814059

St Mary's School PTFA

MUSIC QUIZ

Sat 30th Jan
7.30 for 8 pm

£10 incl hot supper
bring your own drinks

Tickets from school office 812212



LADIES PAMPER EVENING

Come and Treat Yourself!

7 - 9 pm Wed 10th Feb

Day Centre

Tel 07966 506997 for details



LENT GROUPS

Tuesdays in St John's Church

23rd Feb led by The Anglicans

2nd Mar led by The Friends

9th Mar led by The Free Church

16th Mar led by The Catholics

23rd Mar Free Church Hall
bring and share Agape

Start at 8 pm ~ All welcome

You do not have to attend every
week. Come when you can!

VILLAGE EVENTS

February

3	Wed	Mountfitchet Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
4	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
6	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
8	Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
10	Wed	Rainbow Ladies' Pamper Eve	Day Centre 7 - 9 pm
11	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
18	Thu	U3A	St John's Hall 2 pm
19	Fri	Conservatives' Pub Evening	Rose and Crown 8 pm
20	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		Lib Dem Quiz	Day Centre 7 for 7.30 pm
21	Sun	Good Friday Project meeting	St John's Church 3 pm
22	Mon	Shalom At Home	6 Church Hill Corner 8 pm
23	Tue	Lent Group	St John's Church 8 pm
24	Wed - 26	Fri Oliver	Mountfitchet College 7.30 pm

March

2	Tue	Lent Group	St John's Church 8 pm
3	Wed	Mountfitchet Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
4		Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
6	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		Rainbow Nearly New Sale	St John's Hall 11 am - 1 pm
		Entertainment Quiz	Bentfield School 7.30 for 8 pm
		Music@stansted	St John's Church 7.30 pm
8	Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
9	Tue	Lent Group	St John's Church 8 pm
11	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
12	Fri	Conservatives' AGM	Day Centre 8 pm
16	Tue	Lent Group	St John's Church 8 pm
20	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		Saffron Walden Choral Concert	St Mary's, S Walden 7.30 pm

To advertise your **March** event please tel 814059 or email
events@stanstedlink.org.uk before 11th February
All entries subject to editorial approval



Monteverdi Vespers 1610

7.30 pm Saturday 20th March
St Mary's Church Saffron Walden

Tickets from:

Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre
or SWCS Box Office 01279 812849
Adults £15 Concessions £12

Bentfield School PTA Entertainment Quiz

Sat 6th Mar 7.30 for 8 pm

£6 or £40 for a table of 8
incl mash & stew supper
Bring your own drinks & nibbles
Please tel 815765



Nearly New Sale

Clothes ~ Equipment ~ Books
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11 am - 1 pm Sat 6th March
St John's Church Hall

Tel 07966 506997 for details



COULL STRING QUARTET

Haydn ~ Mendelssohn ~ Shostakovich

7.30 pm Sat 6th March
St John's Church

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MOUNTFITCHET MATHEMATICS AND COMPUTING COLLEGE



Presentation of GCSE Certificates

Former students returned to MMCC for a very enjoyable evening in November to celebrate last summer's GCSE successes. Students returned from various sixth forms, colleges and apprenticeships in the local area to receive their certificates from Miss Mullis. Students shared news of their new schools and colleges with staff, although many remarked that they would have welcomed the opportunity to continue their studies at MMCC!

Mr P Smith
Deputy Headteacher

MMCC hits 50 – Summer 2010

Plans are underway to celebrate our 50th birthday in summer 2010. As part of the celebrations a display of memorabilia and photographs is planned. If parents have any old school photos or items of interest that could form part of a display, I would be really grateful if you would contact me at College. The greatest care will be taken of your treasured possessions and they will be returned after the birthday celebrations.

Mrs M Smith
Head of History

College production 'Oliver'

Rehearsals for 'Oliver!' are well underway and it promises to be another excellent production. The performances are being held in the College Main Hall on 24th, 25th and 26th February at 7.30pm. Tickets from College reception: Adults £6.00, Children/Concessions £3.50.

Miss C Beard
Acting Co-ordinator of Creative Arts

Music at MMCC and in the community

The music department was very busy in the run up to Christmas. On 9th December we had a very successful concert involving students from all year groups. The College Choir, Junior Choir and Percussion Ensemble all performed, with individual performances on instruments ranging from the drums through to the harp. The Junior Choir were invited to sing carols at the Day Centre as well as Broome End, providing entertainment whilst their Christmas lunch was being served. On 15th December, the whole of Year 7 and Year 8 were taken to St Mary's Church to take part in a College Carol Service, led by the Assistant Curate, Rev'd Giles Tulk. It was a lovely and fitting way to start the lead-up to the Christmas festivities.

Mr M Rowlands
Music Department

Children in Need 2009

A huge thank you to all MMCC staff, students and parents who supported this year's Children in Need fundraising event. The total raised so far stands at £807 with money still being collected in. Some activities included: Sponge the teacher (thank you Mr Anderson, Mrs Wurr, Mr Ayres, Mrs Storey and Mr Burley); Teddy hiding in a locker competition; who could eat a sugared lace the quickest; and there's a moose loose. Once again well done MMCC!!

Miss A Davis
Community Co-ordinator

MMCC PTA

Forthcoming Events

QUIZ NIGHT - 6th March

CAR BOOT SALES - 28th March, 9th May, 4th July and 26th September.

www.mmccpta.org.uk

USE OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH HALL

Many will know that parties held at St John's Church Hall occasionally lead to excessive noise levels and sometimes rowdy and riotous behaviour in the neighbourhood, much to the inconvenience and distress of local residents. It must be said that the latter, rowdy and riotous behaviour, is frequently not directly the fault of those holding a party, but of ill-disciplined elements within the community and neighbouring communities, which try to 'gate-crash' parties and generally cause havoc. This can happen simply because these wayward elements happen to be passing and call up their chums, but more often it results from news of a forthcoming party leaching out through word of mouth, Facebook, and similar internet social networks.

A few months ago, the Church Hall Management Committee suspended further parties in the Hall whilst it considered how to address the problems. The simplest solution would be to abandon parties altogether, but that would deprive many in the village of a unique facility which, if used with consideration and sensitivity, enables villagers to celebrate and enjoy family and similar occasions. It is totally wrong that a small element in the community should prevent perfectly legitimate congregation of families and friends for celebrations of one kind or another. The Committee has decided to require Hall hirers to keep noise levels to a reasonable level and to reserve the right to close down parties where this requirement is not observed. For parties involving youngsters a minimum number of responsible adults will be required to be present, particularly when alcohol may be involved.

The Committee has also decided that music, whether live or recorded, must cease by 11.00pm unless otherwise specifically agreed with the Committee. This will also allow time for parties to wind down and clear up and for guests to disperse in time to catch late trains etc. The Committee has also had extensive discussions with the Police who have issued guidelines for the conduct of Hall users which will be given to them with the conditions of Hall use. The Police will be given advance notice of all Hall functions, not simply parties, so that they can provide appropriate cover where needed. Such cover could include up to three Police visits during a party: one at the beginning to introduce themselves and to ensure that organisers know how to contact them; one during the party to ensure that all is going well; one at the end to ensure peaceful dispersal of partygoers. Therefore we shall limit the number of parties or musical events to two per month for the time being. I sincerely hope that we shall alleviate, if not eliminate, the problems. If users do not respond properly, we shall not succeed, and we may have to impose a ban on parties which would be a sad and serious defeat for the freedom of villagers.

Alastair Richardson

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MARJORY TYLER at 90

Mrs Marjory Tyler, who celebrated her 90th birthday on 4th December 2009, has lived in Stansted all her life. She is vigorous, alert and lives very much in the present; there is no question of looking back longingly to some time in the past. She and her brother, Jim Pigrum, have always taken life as it comes and made the most of each stage. She was born in West Road; their childhood was happy and there always seemed plenty to do. Respect for parents and authority in general was more common then. Any question of troublesomeness outside the home was dealt with very effectively by Sergeant Alabaster - an imposing figure in his helmet and policeman's cape!

Marjory went to Lower Street Church of England School, leaving at 14. She then went into service, first at Blythwood House which had a large estate (now Blythwood Gardens); and then, until the 2nd World War started, at the home of the Chesters (now Broome End Care Home). When war broke out she was sent to the Cambridge Instrument Co in Great Chesterford - the only time in 90 years that she has lived out of Stansted. In 1943 she married Fred Tyler, the son of the foreman at Rochford's Nurseries, and they moved into Stoney Common, where she still lives. Rochford's then was Stansted's main employer, having many acres of greenhouses

growing tomatoes and cucumbers, and owning much of the property round about. Fleets of lorries took their produce daily all over England. Marjory and her husband both worked at the Nurseries - the hours were from 6.30am to 5.30pm, or several hours later when needed; they went home for breakfast and had one hour for dinner. Stansted in those days had lots of shops; there was no need to go elsewhere for clothes, shoes or anything else. There were trips by train to Bishop's Stortford for the cinema, and occasionally to London, the fare being 5 shillings (25p) return as long as you got the 6.20am workmen's train. Sadly Fred died in 1957. He had been in the Auxiliary Fire Service during the war, and as he worked on the land he was not called up.

After Rochfords Marjory worked at Mr and Mrs Dziedic's mushroom farm - nearly opposite Stoney Common. The

Polish couple later sold Christmas trees. This was followed by six or seven years working at the village shop nearby, until she left to look after her mother, who died at 92. Having been a widow for more than 50 years and not having children, Marjory takes a great interest in her brother's daughter and her family and all that goes on around her. She and her brother are very close, and he and his wife, Joan, are a great support to her. She does her own cooking and cleaning and goes to the shops in her mobility scooter; pedestrians should beware, I suspect she drives at speed! She certainly does not fit the usual picture of a 90 year old. She does not live in the past and takes an active interest in the present. Her attitude is unusual, and inspiring.

Happy Birthday and many happy returns from the 'Link'.

Katharine Hurford



Monteverdi: Vespers 1610 Saturday 20th March at 7.30pm St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden

It may be the 400th anniversary of Monteverdi's Vespers of 1610 but the music still has a freshness, even a cutting edge quality to it, which marks it out as a work of genius. Monteverdi was fluent in the traditional sacred style of his day but at the same time he was developing the new operatic style. The Vespers combines both approaches - with a wealth of virtuosic solo singing, monumental choruses, and various other vocal and choral styles, including choral chanting and distant voices in echo.

As SWCS begins rehearsals for this exciting concert the singers will be searching for clarity and a kind of Italianate voice production - musically speaking 'singing with an accent'. The choir has not performed this piece before and it is not often featured in large choir repertoire, so singers and audience alike are in for a rare treat. Top class soloists and orchestra add further to the frisson of SWCS's performance on 20th March. The choir will be joined by the Chameleon Arts Baroque Orchestra together with the English Cornett and Sackbut Ensemble. The soloists are members of Voces8, an award winning vocal ensemble whose repertoire ranges from early polyphony to unique jazz arrangements, and who have been much praised for their exquisite singing.

Make a date now to hear the Monteverdi Vespers performed in the excellent acoustic of St Mary's Church. Tickets are £15 (£12 concessions) from SWCS Box Office on 01279 812849 and from Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre. The SWCS brochure giving details of the whole season is available from the Tourist Information Centre or visit www.swchoral.org.uk.

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IN MEMORIAM

Evelyn Tame

1913 – 2009

Evelyn was born in 1913 at Southend-on-Sea. She was an only child and was brought up strictly in the Victorian ways of that era, and she epitomised a young lady of the period. She was not allowed to go into higher education despite being gifted with a high academic ability, having passed the equivalent of the 11+ at that time. Leaving school at the age of 14, her expectation was to stay at home, assisting her father and mother in the family business of making milk churns and running a shop of dairy necessities. As a young person in the 1930s, Evelyn travelled to Belgium and Paris on business with her parents. On the outbreak of war, Evelyn was employed by the Southend Police Force as a shorthand typist.

The family often visited Stansted as Evelyn's mother was born here. The family connection to Stansted on her mother's side goes back to about 1705 with the second oldest church bell at St Mary's being inscribed with the name of a Matthew Woodley, Churchwarden. Alas, she never found the man of her dreams, but her cousin, Ivan Roberts (18 years her junior), always saw her safely home! Following the death of both her parents, in 1954 she moved to Woodfields and was a dinner lady and playground supervisor at St Mary's School for many years. She subsequently moved to 58 Cambridge Road.



Evelyn was a member of the British Legion and the Friends of the Essex Churches. She was a keen member of the National Trust and had immense knowledge of the properties she visited. She was a regular helper at the Saffron Walden Tourist Information Office and was on the Committee of the Stansted Seniors Club. She loved knitting woollen hats and scarves for homeless or needy people and would travel to Whitechapel by train to deliver them. Evelyn was a very keen gardener and always

shared her produce. She also liked to help people, shown by her unstinting support of the Sue Ryder Charity based at Cavendish in Suffolk. She travelled there in her beloved Morris Minor until, at the age of 91, her eyesight started to fail and she was advised to stop driving. She stored the car on the Hollis' drive until it was sold. She would come round to see it. It took over a year to sell which may have had something to do with the fact that she put the wrong telephone number in the advertisement - which, perhaps, who knows, may have been done on purpose, as she did not want to part with such a faithful 'friend'.

After suffering a stroke, she became a resident at Moat House in Dunmow but made it abundantly clear that she wanted to move to Hargrave House in Stansted where she lived in comfort for the last year of her life. She had a very strong faith and the church played a very important part in her life. On 25th November 2009, she was buried in her beloved St Mary's Churchyard, beside her parents' grave that she had tended so faithfully. Despite her idiosyncrasies that were sometimes difficult to understand, she was very much appreciated and loved by her family and her many friends in Stansted.

Ian and Honor Roberts (Cousins)
Giles Tulk (Curate, who officiated at Evelyn's funeral)
Audrey Rodgers and Janet Hollis (Friends)

**THE RT REV'D (LATER MONSIGNOR)
GRAHAM LEONARD - CURATE AT
ST JOHN'S CHURCH 1950-52, WHO DIED
ON 5th JANUARY**

A PERSONAL RECOLLECTION

In June 1951 I had just completed my teachers' training course at Hockerill Training College. We were all anxious to find out where we would teach. I had my eyes set on returning to Cardiff with the promise of a post at my old elementary school. Miss Hudson, Principal of Hockerill, called me to her office and told me that it was not wise to return to Cardiff where the school staff knew me as a child. "I want you to apply for a post at St Mary's School Stansted."

Two of us from Hockerill were called for interview and Graham Leonard, known to all as 'Father Leonard', took us to St Mary's School.

A true Anglo Catholic, Graham Leonard had fought the St Mary's School Governors to keep St Mary's School a church school. The Governors were influenced by the 1944 Education Act, and like many others, were anxious to hand it over to the county. Father Leonard, backed by some influential people living in Stansted who promised money, persuaded the Governors to change their minds and St Mary's School remained a church school.

Graham Leonard and his wife Priscilla continued supporting the school. His son Mark was in my first class at Stansted and many will remember him. Father Leonard went on to greater things, becoming Bishop of Willesden, then Bishop of Truro and, after much controversy, Bishop of London. He continued to work for 'Education', but when the Church of England decided to ordain women priests, he was received into the Roman Catholic Church where, in the year 2000, he was appointed a 'Prelate of Honour' to the Pope. Graham Leonard visited my church in Cardiff, meeting my parents, and whenever he visited the area he would have a long chat with my father.

Many present church members will remember when he re-visited St John's Church on its centenary in 1987.

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Learning together we care, share and prepare

The second half of the autumn term was very busy, keeping the curriculum going whilst preparing for the Christmas productions, parties, carol service etc ... The PTFA ran a very well attended Christmas Fair complete with Santa's Grotto. Both the productions were successful and enjoyed by the pupils and families alike. Our evening carol service at the end of term had standing room only in the church and the falling snow added to the Christmas atmosphere! Our school choir were busy not only with school events; we went to the O2 Arena in early December. We sang as part of a massed choir of 8000 children, in aid of the Sargent Foundation; a wonderful experience! We also took part in the CTS Carol Concert at St Mary's and carol singing at the Old Bell. All of the Christmas celebrations went well and were a result of parents, staff and children all working together. Thanks to everyone for all their hard work.



Date for the diary:

Saturday 30th January PTFA Music Quiz 7.30pm for 8.00pm start. Tickets are available from the school office or members of the PTFA, priced £10.00 including a hot supper; bring your own drinks.

If you are new to the area and would like to have a look at our school, please give us a ring on 812212 to arrange a visit.

Christine Tonkins
Headteacher



ANNOUNCEMENTS

To Mark Chopping and Cathy in Miami Florida, a son Oliver Fitzgerald born 22nd December; and to Darran and Helen Chopping, a son Harry Brian born 31st December. Love and congratulations to you all from the very proud grandparents Jean Chopping, Sandra and Roger Gould.

Jean Chopping

Daniel and Bethany Harris are pleased to announce the arrival of their daughter Amy Elizabeth on Sunday 20th December.



Royal British Legion
Stansted & District
Branch

The Poppy Appeal 2009

I must thank all who contributed so generously to the Appeal. In Stansted, the magnificent sum of £3415.07 was realised. Besides the house-to-house collectors, to whom I extend my gratitude, I must also mention and thank all the shops, pubs, clubs, schools and other outlets for allowing collections on their premises. Besides helping former service-men and women our work is very much in demand today with the families of those serving in Afghanistan, the families of those killed there, and those who have come back disabled and injured in mind and body. Our help is thus in constant demand and I thank you all for your continued support.

The Poppy Appeal 2010 and onwards ...

Now I must request some extra help. This region covers a very large area, and as Poppy Appeal Organiser I cover it all. I now have co-ordinators in all the villages except Stansted. As a village co-ordinator you will be responsible for distributing poppies and collecting cans to all your house-to-house collectors and other outlets and collecting them in after the Appeal. I do hope that someone might offer to help. I will discuss this with any volunteer and help them to the best of my ability. Stansted is a very large village and should two people volunteer it can easily be divided. Please do contact me without any obligation to discuss this situation.

John L Segar

Hon. Poppy Appeal Organiser, Stansted & District
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The Troop was started in 1976 for boys who had learning difficulties and for whom a 'normal' Scout troop would be too demanding or boisterous. The name was derived from Aesop's fable where the tortoise's constancy won him the race. In keeping with other branches of the Movement, such special needs troops admit girls. From its inception Tortoises have had scouters and assistants of both sexes, so this presents no problem. The year's programme comprises camping, badge work, self-sufficiency and plenty of fun activities. There has been an annual camp with another special needs troop from Westcliff and most years the members meet other Scouts at the District Camp in Hatfield Forest. The numbers are comfortably small. The Troop meets on alternate Tuesday evenings at Stansted Scout Headquarters in Water Lane. If you would like to know more, please ring Mark Gerber on 07715 628201, who would also like to know if you would consider helping. It is a rewarding experience and does not necessarily take up a great deal of time.



STANSTED BEAVERS

Our programme of activities has been continuing through the winter months, with lots of games and craft projects, a nature hike, and a safety talk by our local community police officers. Several Beavers also participated in the Remembrance Day parade, together with Cubs and Scouts. Then to mark the end of term the Beavers excelled themselves with a fantastic Christmas show for their families, which I think everyone enjoyed. As the weather improves (we hope!) we are looking forward to lots more exciting activities and events. If you have a child who would like to become a Beaver please call 814371.



David South

SNOWDROPS AT THE GARDENS OF EASTON LODGE

The much-loved Gardens of Easton Lodge will be opening for four, possibly five Sunday afternoons from mid-February to mid-March to show off the magnificent snowdrop carpets which are always a delight. The annual 'Snowdrops' event has become a must-see feature of the garden lovers' calendar as the many thousand blooms herald the advent of spring, and after such a snowy January they'll be more welcome than ever. A volunteer team will be manning the gates and serving home made soups, hot chocolate and other drinks in the courtyard of Warwick House to sustain visitors who venture out to see the first signs of the changing season. Opening hours will be 12 noon to dusk (around 4.00pm) and entrance costs just £2.50 for adults, with admission for children free. Exact opening dates will be confirmed in early February since these depend so much on the bulbs themselves and an update can be obtained by phoning the recorded information service on 01371 876979, or by emailing enquiries@eastonlodge.co.uk or from the website www.eastonlodge.co.uk. The Gardens of Easton Lodge are located just outside Great Dunmow in Little Easton, off the B184 (Great Dunmow to Saffron Walden road). Follow the brown heritage signs.

Carol Barbone
Volunteer at the Gardens of Easton Lodge



Nature Notes

Even in January before the snow arrived there were signs of spring: catkins on the hazels and sticky buds on the horse chestnuts. You wouldn't normally expect at this time of year to see bumblebees flying about. Yet in the last few years bumblebees have sometimes been spotted in gardens in February, collecting pollen and nectar from winter-flowering shrubs such as mahonia. These are the young queens newly emerged from eggs laid in the autumn and brought out possibly by the more sheltered conditions or recently introduced exotic flowers. However, at present it is not known for certain.

Normally during the winter months queen bumblebees hibernate individually in sheltered spots such as holes in the ground or under moss. As the temperature rises, perhaps in March, the queens emerge and search for a suitable nesting site, usually underground or in a mouse hole, but



sometimes above ground, depending on the species. (There are over 20 British species of bumblebee.) Each queen lays her eggs in wax cells. After about three weeks the first worker bees, infertile females, appear and start collecting pollen and nectar and building more cells, leaving the queen to concentrate on laying eggs and building up the colony. Unlike honeybees, which live in permanent colonies in hives or in the wild, bumblebees have annual colonies founded by the queen. Males and fertile queens hatch out from the remaining eggs in the nest and fly out during the summer and mate. The males, having achieved their purpose, die; the workers and old queen also die and the young queens set off to find suitable hibernation sites towards the end of the summer. These queen bumblebees are the only ones to survive the winter.

As with honeybees, bumblebee numbers have declined in recent decades. It has been estimated that since the 1950s numbers have halved. This is probably due to modern farming methods and the increased use of chemicals which kill both the bees and the wild flowers on which they depend. Annual bedding plants are unattractive to bees and F1 hybrids are often sterile. They don't produce pollen and are useless for bees. Our gardens are therefore vitally important to the survival of bumblebees (and honeybees too). A patch of long grass, a compost heap or a pile of leaves can provide good nesting sites for the queens. Flowers such as lavender, foxglove, pulmonaria and clover are all very attractive to bumblebees. They much prefer an untidy garden with old-fashioned flowers!

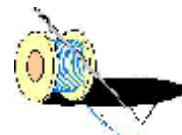
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HATFIELD FOREST HIGHLIGHTS

Happy New Year everyone, I hope you've all had a great Christmas and New Year and are now looking forward to the year ahead. Here at the Forest we have been busy with many developments that will continue in 2010 and beyond. Our marsh restoration project will make a big difference to our reed and sedge beds in this area. In recent years, willow and hawthorn scrub have intruded on to the marsh, shading out some of the smaller plants and reducing the amount of reed habitat for nesting birds such as the water rail. This project



has employed a specialised team to cut, remove and dispose of the willow and hawthorn to allow the reed to re-establish. Once they have been removed, we will be able to look after the marsh and remove any future re-growth.

February half term will be upon us before we know it and there are lots of events for everyone to get involved with. All week, to coincide with National Nest Box Week, you can come along to the Forest and build your very own nest box.



In addition we will be holding another of our very popular Introduction to Forest Survival Skills on 19th February, so if you fancy yourself to be the next Ray Mears book your place now! Until next time please come along to the Forest to have a look at all the hard work we are doing.



Laura Slater
Community Warden
Tel: 870678

laura.slater@nationaltrust.org.uk



BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Tel: 01279 813626

The end of term saw the start of the snowy weather but the children were still able to get in on the last day and make their trip to the Rhodes Centre to see Aladdin. Once again the PTA were able to pay for the coaches, keeping the cost of the trip down.

After a bit of a delayed start we are now back at school and looking forward to a new year. We will be holding our first meeting of the year shortly to obtain the school wish list and to think about how we can achieve that. As usual there will be our Summer Fair and Music in the Park, and more information about these will follow. Before that we will be holding an Entertainment Quiz Night. An experienced local quizmaster has developed this for us. It is in the old school hall on Saturday 6th March, doors open at 7.30pm for 8.00pm start. Tickets are £6 or £40 for a table of eight and can be obtained from Janet on 815765. Food, in the form of stew and mash, is included and is provided by Pocknell Foods. Please bring your own drink and nibbles. Hope to see many of you there and at our other events through the year.

Susan Scott
Co-Chair
Bentfield PTA



The children at Rainbow Pre-School had a very busy run up to Christmas, including staging of a splendid Nativity by the older group, carol singing at Norman Court and icing of Christmas cakes. Unfortunately, due to the cold weather snap and subsequent school closure, the Pre-School was unable to hold its Christmas parties on the last day of term. However, Father Christmas was able to spare some time before his busiest day of the year to hand out presents to all the children who managed to get through the snow. Once the weather improves, the older group will be travelling into Bishop's Stortford by train to purchase spring bulbs for their new planting tubs.

The Rainbow Committee has been busy organising several events for the coming weeks. On Wednesday 10th February, a Ladies Pamper Evening will be held at the Day Centre from 7.00pm-9.00pm. The Rainbow Nearly New Sale will be held on Saturday 6th March from 11.00am-1.00pm at St John's Church Hall. Finally, school photographs of the Rainbow children will be taken at the Quaker Meeting House on Wednesday 3rd March. If anyone outside of Rainbow would like a professional photograph of their child(ren), the photographer will be available from 12 noon-1.00pm. Further details of these events are available through the Pre-School. If you are interested in a place for your child at Rainbow Tots (age 18 months to 2½ 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.

Liz Stanley
Rainbow Committee

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NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

WILLOW TREE, FOUNTAIN JUNCTION

Unfortunately, the willow tree at the Fountain at the top of Chapel Hill has reached the end of its life and will be felled soon. The tree has been monitored by an independent expert, David Brown, over the last ten years and surgery has been undertaken as and when required. Mr Brown inspected the tree again in 2009 and now advises that the tree should be felled. Uttlesford District Council concurs and has granted Conservation Area consent for its removal. [Mr Brown's report is available on the website should you wish to read it - www.stansted.net]

We will, of course, plant a replacement tree, probably towards the end of this year, once the ground has recovered. The Open Spaces committee will be meeting soon to discuss the specie.

BUS SHELTERS

After a very lengthy wait, the three new bus shelters were installed in the late Autumn and we have received many favourable comments about them. However, we have been informed by Essex County Council that the one on Chapel Hill must be relocated! It was installed too close to the fencing behind, and is now to be replaced with a cantilever design which will be located at the edge of the pavement. We have therefore asked County to move the one currently on Chapel Hill to Cambridge Road, by the Feathers Pub. They have agreed, but it is subject to a site inspection. The good news is that all of this work will be undertaken at the County Council's expense and not out of the parish coffers.

GRITTING/SALTING OF ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

By the time that you read this article, we hope the worst of the wintry conditions will have passed. The Parish Council is currently looking at the village - in particular unadopted roads - to see where further grit boxes might be useful. Whilst the Council cannot fund these boxes, we may be able to act as facilitators and obtain discounted prices for residents' associations. Cost is in the order of £300 per box. Where we have contact details, we will be writing to these groups, but if

you think your road may be interested, please do contact the Clerk direct to let us know.

Essex County Council has done a good job of gritting the roads this year, and was much quicker in dealing with the pavements. Similarly, Uttlesford District Council battled through to undertake most refuse collections in trying conditions, and to clear their own properties of snow. We would like to thank them, and all of you who have endeavoured to keep our community spirit going - trying to keep the area in front of your home/shop/office clear, helping to clear unadopted roads and keeping an eye on neighbours. We are trusting the Government's comment that insurance will not be an issue.

WINTER PLANTING

As we write these Council pages, the flower beds are hidden by a blanket of snow. We had hoped that they would be planted with yellow violas, but when these arrived with our gardening contractor, he rejected them as the quality was not good enough. We therefore have pansies which will hopefully show themselves again soon!

BENTFIELD POND

On a nice sunny morning on Sunday 6 December, five people from the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, three parish councillors and one parishioner turned out to clear the weeds and side growth from the pond at Bentfield End. Those of you who have your own ponds know such work is on-going.



This was our third year of work on the pond and it is proving to be very worthwhile - it is surprising how fast the reeds and brambles grow! Considering the weather we have had recently, we were particularly lucky on that day and hope you will agree that this attractive approach to the village has been further enhanced.

For those people who may think that the water is not very deep – beware! The middle of the pond, heading towards the children’s play area is approximately 5 feet deep.

2010/11 BUDGET AGREED - ESTIMATE A 4% RISE IN PARISH COUNCIL TAX

- The outturn for 2009/10 is likely to be closely in line with the budget set a year ago, despite higher costs for lighting maintenance after an enforced change in the contractor.
- Expenditure in 2010/11 is anticipated to rise by 8% as the full cost of the annual contribution towards the PCSO is borne, a contribution towards the cost of repairing unadopted roads is needed and a full year of the new lighting maintenance contract is felt. However, with more properties the impact in terms of council tax should be mitigated with the estimate being 4%. On this basis a Band D taxpayer should be charged £61 - £62, equivalent to around £14 per week.
- The Council’s reserve position remains sound but it should be stressed that significant costs will accrue once the Clinic vacates Crafton Green and moves to the new Health Centre (assuming this is built) while the net costs associated with Forest Hall Park still remain to be clarified.

STANSTED IN BLOOM 2010

Once again, it is the time to be thinking about Stansted in Bloom and we have decided to hold the event sometime during the months of June/July. An actual date or dates will be announced later. An invited judge or judges and some members of the council will be ‘keeping an eye’ on the gardens, floral displays, etc of both residential and business areas alike. This way of judging was such a success last year that we have decided to do the same again this year. We will let you know when and where prizes will be presented.

If you would like to let us know of a garden, business display or an area of particular merit, please don’t hesitate to point us in the right direction!

It is hoped that the three schools in the village will take part once again and that members of the public will be able to see the results of any work that they may produce.

Watch this space for more information about ‘Stansted in Bloom’.

PROGRESS AT THE WINDMILL

All is going well with the restoration of the Windmill. By the end of December, the cap had been removed and the scaffold completed to protect the mill and the repairs to the brickwork from the elements.

The sails have been removed to the contractor’s workshop while repairs to the cap are carried out on site.

Your mill is in good hands! Four Millwrights, Paul Sellwood, Snod, Graham Robinson and Vincent Pargeter attended the last site meeting to discuss how repairs to the curb should proceed.

You can follow the progress of the restoration on the Parish Council’s website.



DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

27 January	Full Council
3 February	F& GP
17 February	Full Council
24 February	Open Spaces

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Catherine Dean	813579
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
Dan Scott	815098
Geoffrey Sell *	815925
Bill Stiles	813172
Valerie Trundle	813433

* Chairman

** Vice Chairman

CONTACT US!

Clerk - *Ruth Clifford*

Admin Assistant - *Anne Court*

Email: parishcouncil@stansted.net

Phone/fax: 01279 813214 10am - 1pm

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

From Cllr Alan Dean

Several residents have commented favourably on the improved snow clearance and gritting of main pavements during December's first signs of winter. Both Essex and Uttlesford have introduced better plans since a petition and complaints were made last February. I would like to see more grit bins located in particularly tricky areas so that residents can help themselves and their neighbours. I am writing this on January 3rd and as the New Year has got off to a cold start, it seems likely that these safety measures will have been tested again before The Link is delivered.

The environment committee meeting in November decided a fresh round of consultation on the local development framework will get underway in February. The council intends to run it far more professionally than two years ago; with better information including exhibitions on future locations for homes and jobs. We are still waiting to see the final highways report, which should spell out in plain English why Elsenham is a poor choice for a new town. Members have been pressing for this report to be published since it was first promised in November, but it has repeatedly been delayed and is said to be politically sensitive.

I have received an acknowledgment from the Essex Chief Constable to my support of the Royal National Institute for the Blind over parking on pavements but I have not yet heard whether the police will take action. I think it is likely that a carrot and stick approach will be favoured.

I have been in contact with the intended developer of the old school house next to the Free Church in Chapel Hill and that has been in an untidy state for many months. I was told there should be some action in January. I do hope so.

The council has added a new page to its website to cover scrutiny at Uttlesford. This can be found at www.uttlesford.gov.uk/main.cfm?Type=SCRUTINY&MenuId=976 or via the Your Council link on UDC's homepage. It shows how the public can try to hold the council to account by submitting a petition. We can also request other organisations such as the NHS, Police and other councils to explain their services and make improvements.

From Cllr Geoffrey Sell

A new year, a new decade

The last ten years have been the most eventful of Uttlesford's nearly 40 year history. It has been a period where the council's political control has moved from no overall control (no one party having a majority of the seats) to Liberal Democrat and currently Conservative. Not surprising the majority of councillors were not members ten years ago. Likewise there has been a considerable amount of officer turnover. Since 2000 we have had three chief executives. There has been innumerable reorganisations, another one is due this year. This is all in the name of efficiency.

There have been recurrent themes which I believe will not go away. Firstly financial pressures; council tax only provides a minority of the revenue needed to provide services. Uttlesford like other councils is very dependant upon central government grant. Whoever forms the government after the next general election it is likely that we will be faced with a tight financial settlement. Another theme is development pressure. One of the Council's highlights was the way it dealt with the planning application from BAA for maximum use of the runway. The local development framework still needs to be resolved. It will be going out to consultation early this year.

There are some ongoing issues in Stansted which I would like to see some significant progress this year. There has been no planning application submitted yet for the new doctors surgery. There has been extensive negotiations between the Primary Care Trust, the landlord, Essex County Council Highways and Uttlesford planners. The slow progress has been frustrating for many residents. Another concern is the number of empty commercial and residential premises in the village. Sometimes this is the result of market conditions, for example the financial collapse of Threshers. However, there are other sites which have been empty for some time i.e. B & R and the Three Colts both on Cambridge Road. We also have part of the Peter Kirk Building in Chapel Hill and Mont House in High Lane. Some of these properties are becoming eyesores. This will be an issue that councillors will be addressing.

Elections

Uttlesford is responsible for the conduct of all elections. It provides the electoral registration service, staffs the polling stations and does the count. A general election has to be held this year. Unlike for councils parliament does not have a fixed term so it is unclear whether the general election will be in March, May or June. Turnout at general elections is normally considerably in excess of council elections and therefore this will place more demands upon the council's resources. The council wishes to make the voting process as easy as possible. On our website uttlesford.gov.uk there is some information about electoral registration, postal and proxy votes. Postal vote forms can be downloaded from the Electoral Commissions website www.aboutmyvote.co.uk. This will need to be forwarded to the Electoral Registration Officer, UDC, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 4ER. Alternatively any query about elections can be dealt with through phoning 01799 510431 or emailing elections@uttlesford.gov.uk.

Stansted for electoral purposes is divided into two wards North and South. Each has its own polling station, North at the Peter Kirk Centre, St John's Road and South at the Youth Centre, Lower Street.

LITTER COLLECTING

We are very grateful to Uttlesford District Council for their help in emptying our litter bins and dog bins during Gerard's recent sick leave.

We are still very keen to find a relief litter collector to cover when Gerard is on holiday but also, rarely, on sick leave. If you or anyone that you know is interested in further details, please contact the office on 813214.

OTHER CONTACTS

Uttlesford District Council Members

<i>Alan Dean</i>	Tel: 01279 813579
Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk	
<i>John Hudson</i>	Tel: 01279 814489
Email: cllrhudson@uttlesford.gov.uk	
<i>John Salmon</i>	Tel: 01279 814789
Email: cllrsalmon@uttlesford.gov.uk	
<i>Geoffrey Sell</i>	Tel: 01279 815925
Email: cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk	

Essex County Council Member

<i>Ray Gooding</i>	Tel: 01279 813103
Email: cllr.ray.gooding@essexcc.gov.uk	

Member of Parliament

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA
Tel: 0207 219 5214/Fax: 0207 219 5600
Email: haselhursta@parliament.uk

Police

<i>PC Tom Bastendorff</i>	Tel: 01279 812211
Non-emergency number	0300 333 4444
<i>PCSO's (Stuart/Kelly)</i>	Tel: 07801 461 666

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Early warning! Our annual meeting will be held at the Free Church on Wednesday 24th March 2010 at 8pm. We are not inviting any guest speakers this year, but will make a short presentation on the findings, to date, of the Village Plan Questionnaires.

In order to facilitate smooth running of the meeting, we would ask parishioners to keep their questions for the Open Forum at the end. Anyone speaking will be required to give their name and address and, for the benefit of all attendees, to use a microphone. The meeting will finish at 10pm. The agenda and accompanying papers will be circulated with the March edition of The Link.

ST CLARE HOSPICE

What a great start to the New Year for the Hospice. As ever, we are being supported yet again by the local community. The retainer firemen of Stansted wanted to show their recognition of the work of St Clare and spent several hours on a rather damp Christmas Eve collecting in Cambridge Road in Stansted. I could not believe the generosity of those who were either passing through in cars, lorries and service vehicles and donating so kindly to the firemen - even those buying their last minute requirements in the Co-op kindly gave to them. Andy Monk, along with John Birnie, Paul Beresford, Darran Chopping, Paul Harrington, Ben Hutson, Bob Pottle and Dave Freeman, all with full-time occupations, gave their time to collect an astounding £2,500, which is being donated to the Hospice. I am really appreciative of these guys who have shown a great interest in the work of the Hospice but also by the practical help they have demonstrated their support. A big thank you to them and all who contributed.



It is our 20th anniversary this year and we look forward to the next 20 years of providing Hospice care to the local community. As a Group, Club or Society would you like to become involved with our celebrations perhaps raising £20, £200 or collecting 20p coins? However great or small, your contributions to St Clare are greatly appreciated and if you would like me to talk to you about the work of the Hospice please do not hesitate to contact me. You are also most welcome to visit St Clare at any time to see the work of your local hospice for yourself as an individual or as a group. The Stansted Friends of St Clare Hospice will be providing delicious breakfasts and refreshments at the Takeley Farmers' Market on Saturday 6th February in the Village Hall and there will be an opportunity to win some great Valentine's raffle prizes too.



Caroline Bore
Community Fundraiser East Herts and Uttlesford
Tel: 773751

Email: Caroline.bore@stclarehospice.org.uk

STOP PRESS

A well attended Quiz at St John's Church Hall on 16th January raised around £800 for the Haiti Earthquake Appeal.

SNOW AND ICE

I hope you have all had a good start to the year. I spent New Year's Day on call and my first three calls were about two lost dogs and a parrot in an oak tree. I did wonder if someone was playing an elaborate joke and that my next calls were going to be about calling birds that had lost their voices or egg bound geese! By the time you read this the snow and ice may have disappeared but at the time of writing we are in the grips of icy roads and below zero temperatures. These conditions do bring with them particular problems for animals and some that are not necessarily obvious. For example, we've had quite a few dogs and cats in recently who have been chewing their paws and making them quite sore. We often see this when roads are icy and the grit spreaders have been out. The grit and salt tends to irritate dogs' and cats' feet causing them to lick and often cause secondary infections. A good tip therefore is to wash your dog's feet when it comes back from a walk to get rid of any salt, which may hopefully prevent any problems.

Whenever there is snow or ice we also see a small increase in the cases of urinary tract infections in cats. Cats often enjoy their home comforts and to go outside and dig a hole in the frozen ground to go to the toilet is often just asking too much if you are sitting curled up in a nice warm bed. Therefore sometimes cats go out less often or wait until their bladders are fuller and in some cases this can result in urinary tract infections. If your cat is becoming reluctant to go out, it may be an idea to provide a litter tray inside in periods of snow and ice, and maybe to add a bit of water to the food to encourage them to urinate more frequently.

On the subject of cats, we have had a spate of them brought in to us by well-meaning members of the public thinking that they were strays. In nearly all the cases we've been rung by owners frantic because their cats had gone missing. In one instance an owner had only let her cat out ten minutes previously when it was catnapped and brought into the surgery as a stray! So if you see a cat wandering, unless it is obviously unwell or injured, leave it alone as it may well have a loving and comfortable home and it is just out for its morning stroll. Certainly don't start feeding it as you will only encourage it to leave its home more often. You may end up with a 'Six dinner Sid' which was one of my son's favourite stories when he was little. It is about a clever, but rather overweight, cat that does the round of six different houses getting fed at each, and is only discovered when he becomes unwell and is taken to the vet six times by six different 'owners'!

Ilse Pedlar
Partner

Mercer and Hughes Veterinary Surgeons



STANSTED & DISTRICT
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

We will be holding our usual Quiz on Saturday 20th February, 7.00pm for 7.30pm at the Stansted Day Centre. The Quizmaster will be David Morson and there will also be a bar and raffle. Tickets £8 (includes ploughman's supper) and further information from me or Alan Dean on 813579.

Ruth Rawlinson
Tel: 814222

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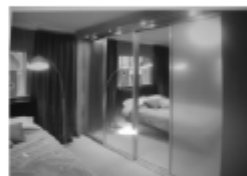
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494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

There has been quite a lot happening since our last article; cadets have completed their syllabus training exams; we have had a new radio mast installed at the Squadron HQ; and representatives of the unit attended the Royal British Legion Carol Concert at Littlebury. We also had our Christmas Party at St John's Hall and our thanks to Daphne Smith for organising the catering and Garry King for the disco.

We had a rather interesting talk given by Squadron Leader Bob Ankerson, who is our Wing Executive Officer. He very kindly gave up an evening to tell us about his experiences as a Tornado navigator during the first Gulf War. His war was rather dramatic to say the least as he and his pilot were forced to eject from their stricken aircraft after one of their bombs prematurely exploded over the target. We listened to a tape of the cockpit voice recorder during the moments leading up to their escape from the aircraft; it really brought it home to us the risks the aircrew took on these missions and how brave and professional they were.

We had some good news from the Stansted Airport Passenger Community Fund Committee. They very kindly awarded us £550 towards the cost of some new adventure training equipment, so a big thank you to them!

One of our former cadets, Rob Hume, successfully graduated from the rather tough RAF Regiment Trainee Gunner Course at RAF Honington. Rob will now be joining 51 Squadron based at RAF Lossiemouth. We wish him the very best of luck in his future career and we are all tremendously proud of him.



We ended the year with a week of bag packing at Sainsbury's in Bishop's Stortford raising £2,532.78 for Squadron funds. Thanks to all who turned out to help with some really good individual efforts by a number of cadets.

If you are aged between 13 and 16 and interested in joining us we have a new recruit intake starting on 22nd February. We meet Monday and Thursday evenings 7.30pm–9.30pm.

Corporal Sophie Stacey (aged 15)
Tel: 681559
Email: 494@aircadets.org

STANSTED LUNCH CLUB

November Lunch

It is always a pleasure to repair for the Lunch Club's autumn meeting to the dignified (and expensively furnished!) Auction Rooms of Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers, as the guests of Guy Schooling. Furthermore, the autumn meeting provides a wonderful opportunity to welcome and meet many of the partners of our members. This was no exception and we owe enormous thanks to Guy and his colleagues. Thanks are also due to members and their guests for behaving so gracefully that 2010's invitation has already been secured! In all this gratitude we should not forget that Small but Perfect Caterers gave us their customary perfection which received many accolades afterwards. Thanks to Marina Baer and her staff for their cheerful service of their excellent fare.

Future Lunches

I am concerned that only one sponsor for this year has so far come forward, so please make your bids for the empty slots as soon as possible!!

March 2010 – Sponsor needed

May 2010 – Savvy Business Community (sponsors)

July 2010 – Weston (Business Centres) and another

September 2010 – Sponsor needed

17th November 2010 – Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers

Visit to Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College

I was invited by Lunch Club member Peter Smith, Deputy Head of MMCC, to an Assembly and tour of MMCC. It was a truly enlightening, uplifting and encouraging experience. Enlightening because I had not realised the extent to which modern teaching methods endeavour to reflect what is going on in the outside world and to prepare students for it; uplifting because of the obvious enjoyment of students in the learning process; encouraging because of the dignified discipline and courtesy that was evident everywhere, and because of the strong and ungrudging mutual respect between teachers and students – virtues so sadly absent in many spheres of our contemporary society. A college well deserving of a visit. I have always tried to foster an interface between schools and the Lunch Club as, on the one hand, the students can benefit from an exposure to businessmen and women and, on the other hand, business can benefit by influencing the educational establishment on the nature of skills it requires from students. If members have ideas of how to orchestrate the interface with MMCC I shall be delighted to explore these with the College.

It may not be widely appreciated that MMCC has excellent IT training equipment and is anxious to allow public access to this equipment for training and similar purposes. For more details contact Peter Smith at the College on 813384 or email psmith@mountfitchet.e-folio.org.uk.



Alastair Richardson
Tel: 07850 295109
Email: amg.richardson@gmail.com

ESSEX WILDLIFE TRUST NATURE RESERVES IN STANSTED

There are two nature reserves in Stansted, both owned by the Essex Wildlife Trust: the Aubrey Buxton Nature Reserve off Alsa Street given to us by Lord Buxton, and Turners Spring Nature Reserve given by Mrs Cawkell in memory of her husband, Edmund, who was manager of Rochfords Nursery.

Long-time residents of Stansted may remember when the Aubrey Buxton Reserve was the Stansted Wildlife Park - a country zoo - which operated for a decade or two, and famously included a booming bittern and a flock of flamingos. Prior to that it was part of the gardens to Norman House and it is believed that the three ponds are very old, being originally fish ponds for a medieval religious foundation. This long history is evident in the landscape, particularly in the trees which give such a special character to the site. There are a number of very old oak trees - probably 300 or more years old - which hark back to its medieval past. Then there are the venerable beech trees, now approaching a couple of hundred years old, (along with some Spanish chestnuts) as testament to its time as a 'wild garden' to Norman House. Then there are more modern elements - poplar trees probably planted in the 1930s, which have largely been removed because they started blowing down in the great hurricane of 1987 and were becoming dangerous, and some lovely weeping willows. Finally there is a belt of pine and spruce trees and some silver birches planted during the life of the Wildlife Park. You can also find a clump of bamboo and some laurel bushes from the same time.



All this gives the site a very special feel, and between it all are a number of sunny grassy areas with some big old ant hills in them. There are unfortunately many rabbits living there and they overgraze these meadows so much so that we are losing the wild flowers. To deal with this a number of rabbit exclusion enclosures have been created, which are having a beneficial effect. If you walk regularly there you will be aware that currently we are pollarding some old multi-stemmed hawthorns. This is necessary to keep them from being destroyed in gales and as a measure to ensure that their lives are extended as long as possible (like coppicing, pollarding rejuvenates trees).

We constantly review the effects of our work and change and adapt what we do to ensure the best outcome for the wildlife on the reserve. In recent years we have made several attempts to improve the ponds and ditches. When funds are available we will do some more work on them. We have a population of great crested newts, fairly common in this area, recognised as important, and internationally an endangered species. We welcome all visitors to the Reserve and hope they enjoy visiting it. Litter is however a problem, as is dog mess, and we would encourage all visitors to tidy up after themselves.

Turners Spring at Burton End is the second Reserve in Stansted, owned by the Essex Wildlife Trust, and is the subject of this quarter's 'Link' cover photograph, taken by nearby resident David Harrison. It comprises two areas of woodland and a meadow adjoining the Bourne and close to the railway line to the airport. Access to this Reserve is by footpath only from Burton End and as you walk across the fields the wood can be seen in front of you. The motorway is on your left across the field and the traffic noise is a constant reminder of the modern world.

Once in the wood you are surrounded by tall trees; some of the oaks are over two hundred years old, but many of the trees are younger, and as this wood was very badly damaged by the great hurricane of 1987 quite a lot of replanting has taken place. Interestingly a boundary ditch runs across the wood at one point suggesting that it used not to be in single ownership in the past. Its name - Turners - refers to a historic owner and Spring in this instance means small wood. We do have a spring line in the wet meadow but this is not likely to be the source of the name. One of the features of the wood are the garden daffodils which bloom in profusion in the Spring. As naturalists we would prefer them not to be there as they are aliens in a natural environment. The second and much more important feature is the presence of oxslips, which also bloom in the Spring. These plants only occur in this area and up into the Suffolk and Cambridgeshire borders, and nowhere else in England. They are to be found on the Continent but we do have one of the important international populations of them. We are lucky to be able to enjoy them locally.

Unfortunately oxslips are eaten by deer, and by other animals, and are not doing very well as a result. A study has been ongoing for a number of years into their situation and efforts are being made to safeguard them. Deer are very active in Turners Spring and not only damage oxslips but also the trees, particularly eating their seedlings which are a favourite food. We will be erecting fencing barriers to protect certain areas from this damage and monitoring the effectiveness of this.

The meadow, with a sedge bog in the middle, is a wonderful haven with cowslips and other meadow flowers and is large enough for butterflies to use it. Along its bottom edge runs the Bourne with an area of woodland beside it. Wood anemones and violets grow here and noteworthy are the hornbeam trees. At one end are three veteran hornbeams - two old pollards and an old coppice - which we are caring for by reducing their height when necessary to protect them from wind damage. We pollarded a big ash tree on the boundary to the meadow and concluded after counting the growth rings that it was last pollarded just prior to the First World War, nearly

100 years ago. Trees which have been abandoned for so long need special treatment and we are careful how we manage them.



Please come and visit our Reserves and enjoy them. Also give a thought to joining the Essex Wildlife Trust via The Jean Elliott Visitor Centre, Abbots Hall Farm, Great Wigborough, CO5 7RZ, or email admin@essexwt.org.uk.

Mike Rowley
Chairman
Essex Wildlife Trust, Uttlesford Branch



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET U3A

'Through sharing our knowledge, skills and experience, we aim to offer a combination of opportunities to study, create, socialise and in general develop a fitter mind and body'.

Firstly, we would like to wish everybody a very Happy New Year for 2010. The Stansted group of the U3A has now been running for about eight months and we now have almost 200 members. Over the past few months we have set up a variety of activities and our trips and outings have included 'Jersey Boys', Pam Ayres, Henry Moore Foundation and a visit in December to the ITV studios to see a live recording of 'Loose Women'. We had our very first U3A Christmas lunch at Much Hadham Golf and Country Club which was attended by 80 members and was a great success. Our U3A singers gave a short performance which was brilliant and as a result they have been approached to perform at other venues in the future.

We have a further number of outings and trips planned for the forthcoming year, so please come along to the next meeting to find out more. Details of all new outings and activities will first be given at our monthly meetings and then will be added to our website www.stanstedu3a.org. This will ensure that those of you that do not have access to a computer will not miss out on any of the trips.

The next meeting will be 2.00pm on Thursday 18th February in St John's Church Hall, when, by popular request, our speakers will be the local PCSO Kelly Roberts and the Essex Police Crime Prevention Officer. Most of you will remember that Kelly gave us a short talk just before Christmas to update us with possible scams and crimes that occur specifically around the Christmas period. Due to the success of her talk it was requested that she return and speak in more detail with regard to the many aspects of policing in this day and age. This time she will be accompanied by the Crime Pre-

vention Officer, who, I am told, has a 'good sense of humour' and may even bring a smile to our faces. So why not come along, meet your local officers and put a 'name to the face' on the newsletters that we get through our doors?

We are a 'young minded group' and welcome new members from in and around the surrounding areas. You will be guaranteed a warm welcome so why not come and see what we are all about; tea and coffee and raffle available along with the opportunity to socialise. If you would like further information about our group please contact me.

Cherry Venn (Chair)
Tel: 817140



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Originally I had proposed to tell you of two meetings of the Society in one report as there was no 'Link' in January, but as you know, the weather of late has proved a little difficult! As a result, our January meeting was cancelled, but I must make a mention of our one in December - our Christmas meeting. This was a very pleasant occasion, accompanied by Tony Wellings' punch together with mince pies organised by Janice McDonald. Our speaker was Stephen Ruff who gave the third part of his talk on the St Margaret's to Buntingford Railway, with his collection of unique photographs and tales of the neighbouring villages and their residents. Although the line has been closed for many years, it is surprising just how much it has influenced the surrounding area. The stations still exist, although in much modified form, and at least one has been rebuilt by the son of the last Stationmaster. One thing Stephen mentioned was the use made of the line by the film and television industry - several stations had been used in ITV's series 'Foyle's War', while one was shown in a Spike Milligan film called 'Postman's Knock'. In all, we had a most pleasant start to the festive season and expressed our thanks to Stephen for his contribution.

Although I sit here gazing at the falling snow, we are hoping that our February meeting will be held in much more clement weather! Owing to a previous change of programme, we will be having our annual Members' Evening. At the moment I am not aware of who has been persuaded to contribute, but if previous years are anything to go by, an interesting and enjoyable evening will be had. This will be at 8.00pm on 4th February at the Day Centre, Crafton Green and I look forward to seeing you then. A Happy New Year!



Ian Seavers



Stansted Conservatives

Pub evening on Friday 19th February at the Rose and Crown, Bentfield Green from 8.00pm onwards

The Branch Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 12th March at the Day Centre, Crafton Green, starting at 8.00pm. Sir Alan Haselhurst MP will attend. More details from Bridget on 814440.

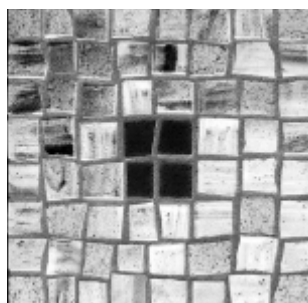
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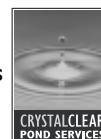
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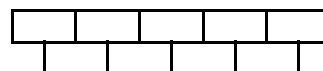


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SKYWATCH

A monthly look at an aspect of the Night Sky



I must start with two corrections from my last piece. Firstly that I shrunk the Sun to 175,000 miles across from its actual 870,000 miles; and, secondly, I reported that the Earth's atmosphere protects us from the random, highly dangerous bursts of radiation that the Sun throws out at us. Whilst the atmosphere does play an important part, by filtering ultra-violet radiation with the ever thinning ozone layer, the vast majority of radiation is diverted away by the Earth's magnetic field; and it is the Earth's magnetism that we will discuss this month.

How precisely the magnetic poles are generated within the Earth is not certain, but we know that there is a lot of iron and nickel in the Earth, each of which are easily magnetised. The magnetic poles are near, but not at, the true North and South poles, around which the Earth rotates once a day. This means that if you are using a magnetic compass to navigate to a pole, the nearer you get, the more out of kilter you are from your planned destination, which may lead to disappointment. The magnetic poles are not static: they very slowly wander in an apparently random route around, and sometimes over, the poles. These small movements are measured in decades or more. Furthermore, there are areas in the Earth's crust which are, themselves, magnetised and therefore create localised distortion. These areas, though, are well charted.

If a length of iron is stroked by a magnet, it becomes magnetised; but if you then heat it, it will lose its magnetism. If you then let that piece of iron cool down in a magnetic field it will become magnetised again. So when, in the 1960s, geologists working in Australia who were analysing prehistoric Aborigine hearths, used presumably to cook and give warmth at night, they almost casually placed a magnetic compass near a hearth and realised that while cooling it had been slightly magnetised by the Earth's magnetic field. However, the poles of the hearth were the wrong way round. Further research suggested, and later confirmed, that the Earth's magnetic field swings 180 degrees every two or three hundred thousand years. We have yet to find out how or why. Finally, you may wonder how we navigate accurately at sea and in the air. There is another way to make a compass and that is by using a giro which, set in a specific direction, stays there.

Martin West
Mooncraft Productions

Stansted Tennis Club



Date for your diary

The Annual General Meeting will take place at 8.00pm on Monday 8th March at 105 Cambridge Road. All members are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to attend.

Membership

If you are interested in joining the Tennis Club at this time of year, membership is 50% of the usual price. Please contact Daphne Lunnon (membership secretary) for further details.

Coaching

The lunch-time adult coaching session will now run for 60 minutes, starting at 1.45pm and finishing at 2.45pm. If you would like to come along and join in, please call Chris Hollis on 319155 (please do not just turn up). You don't have to be a member of the club to join in. Junior coaching with Chris Hollis continues for some junior age groups. More classes will recommence after the February half-term. 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 please contact Martyn if you are interested in joining.

Used Tennis Balls

Priced at a reasonable £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:
Wednesdays at 10.00am and 6.00pm
Friday at 9.30am. Sunday at 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.

Chris Hollis



Huw Johnson Club

As I write this, we are all looking forward to our New Year dinner on 15th January, and we hope that the weather will not spoil the event. We will not meet again until 25th February when we will enjoy a disco with Garry and celebrate Joanne's birthday.

We would like to say a special thank you to the St John's Church Choir who once again have given us a donation instead of sending each other Christmas cards. It is very sad that many of our donations are the result of someone dying and we are remembering especially Denise Lee, the widow of Roy Lee. Mr Lee was the treasurer of the Braintree and Stansted Lodge and each year he sent a cheque for the Club. Although we never met, we were sad to hear of his death, and grateful for the £490 collected at his funeral. We also say thank you to the Embleton family for the donations received both from the death of Betty, Sandra's mother, and another friend Lena. Thank you - our thoughts are with you.

Marion Johnson

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NEWS FROM THE DAY CENTRE

The members of the Day Centre had a most enjoyable Christmas dinner, prepared and cooked by Jo, Vicky and Jill and organised by our manager, Kat. Quite a few of our volunteers helped serve and we all appreciated everyone's efforts.



We were entertained by pupils and staff from the Mountfitchet College who sang with accompaniment some well-known and less familiar carols. Thank you to everyone.

Brenda Scarr

BABY MASSAGE

Do you have a young baby, over six weeks old but not yet crawling? Are you looking for something to do together which will not only be enjoyable for you both but is also beneficial to your health? Why not join a baby massage course? Jan Rickwood and Sue Maloney run baby massage courses in Stansted on Monday and Friday mornings. The classes are small and friendly and will give you the opportunity to meet new friends, whilst furnishing you with a life-time skill. Baby massage is great for helping you and your baby relax; obviously a relaxed baby is more likely to sleep better, which is always a bonus. During the course you will be taught techniques which will help strengthen your baby's muscle tone, enhance their co-ordination and aid their digestive and respiratory systems. You will be shown specific massage routines to ease the pain of colic and constipation, which many parents find invaluable. We use lots of rhymes and movements to keep your growing baby interested, whilst the informal discussion over refreshments allows you to exchange views, ideas and experiences, assuring you that you are not the only one who is confident and on an incredible high one moment and feeling doubts and fears the next. The course is once a week for five weeks and costs £45. For more information please contact me at Lower Street Clinic (number below) or email me. One-to-one classes or small group classes can often be arranged on alternative days or times.

Jan Rickwood
Tel: 815917

Email: jan.rickwood@btinternet.com



The staff at Spangles Children's Centre are always looking to improve the quality and availability of services available to families with children under 5 years. We are currently considering a Saturday morning service for working families with under 5s and a dads' group to run on alternate Saturday mornings. Is this something you or someone you know would use? Or do you have ideas of your own that we could incorporate? Please call in and pick up a copy of our exciting new timetable. We would welcome your thoughts and suggestions.

Deborah Warwick
Tel: 812348

Email: afstanstedcc@essexpsla.com



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We had our AGM in November when the President and Committee were all re-elected. This will be Ruth Rawlinson's 3rd year as President. The other officers also remain the same. We have a very good programme for 2010, when we are planning a car treasure hunt in May, and an outing to London with a blue badge guide to hear about the poor children of the 19th century who were cared for in homes started by Thomas Coram. The speakers already booked include Tim Turner from Sworders speaking about antiques - and he will probably value items we care to bring along. A talk on fingerprints should prove most interesting and we also have Peter Lawrence to talk about London Docklands past, present and future. Our County Federation AGM has booked Ann Widdicombe to speak (this will be non-political in accordance with our rules) and which should be excellent. In July we celebrate our 90th anniversary, having started in 1920. Our scrapbook will be to the fore. Miss Nancy Tennant and her mother were founder members and leading lights.

We are an afternoon WI, the only one in the district, and we warmly welcome new members and visitors, so do come along to Ugley Village Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm or ring me on 813080 for more information.

Brenda Scarr
Secretary

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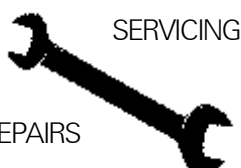
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

20 Brewery Lane
Stansted

Dear Sir

Stansted, Uttlesford's Overspill -
Underfunded and Overtaxed

Stansted during the last decade has experienced massive development, both with infill and the new development at Forest Hall Park. A vibrant community needs to expand and develop. However, to do this, it is not simply a question of housing - massive new estates with no amenities, and flats, diminutive in size with no recreational areas, and no recognisable High Street. Uttlesford has made it clear that all major developments for the future will be in the Southern part of Uttlesford (ie Stansted and Elsenham).

Stansted, whilst the commercial 'Powerhouse' of Uttlesford, with the majority of the development, has been left in a time warp in terms of amenities. Other areas have enjoyed massive funding in terms of medical facilities, leisure centres, swimming pools, open recreational areas, libraries, modern High Street shopping facilities, and highway development. Our District and Parish Councils need to stop 'The Cinderella Approach' to Stansted, and place us into the same level of spend as Saffron Walden, Dunmow, and other areas. Failure to do so, in my opinion, will mean that Stansted will by default become a dormitory village, with a mass of houses and flats with no recreational or shopping facilities, and residents will have to lose out or go elsewhere.

Surveys do not produce results. Action by our elected representatives is what is needed. What are your views?

Crelin Collins



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

Despite a very wet and windy evening, members gathered at the Day Centre to enjoy the last meeting of 2009 – the December Bring & Share Christmas Party. The evening was split into three - hat making competition, followed by the buffet and concluding with a beetle drive. The hat competition only had two rules:

Rule No 1 - only one piece of A4 paper allowed and every piece was to be used ie no rubbish whatsoever.

Rule No 2 – The hat was to be worn throughout the evening!!!

The result was a fantastic mix of pirate hats, Red Indian headbands with feathers, roaring twenties hairbands with flowers and leaves, outer space creations of circles, to a chicken hat!!! There are more photos on our website. The evening ended with a very lively and noisy beetle drive. As normal the drive started very sedately but it didn't take long before the game speeded up with everyone trying to get as

many throws of the dice as possible before "BEETLE" was called!!!



The first meeting of the New Year will be on Wednesday 3rd February when we welcome back Barry Kaufmann-Wright. The subject of his talk is 'British Coastal Wildlife and Landscapes'. Then on 3rd March our speaker will be Mr Richard Gant, talking about the 'History and Development of Madingley Hall Gardens'. There will also be a members' competition: planted bowl of spring bulbs, maximum pot size 8 inches. 7th April is our Mini Spring Show and AGM. Schedules for the Spring Show are available from the Secretary's desk or from Maralyn Harris. Times etc will be announced nearer the date. There will be an autumn trip to RHS Wisley on Saturday 23rd October; bearing in mind the uncertainty of the weather, this visit will coincide with the Wisley Autumn Extravaganza.

Our meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month (with the exception of January), at the Day Centre, which is adjacent to the Library and car park at the top of Chapel Hill. The doors open at 7.30pm with the meeting starting promptly at 8.00pm. Refreshments are served before the meeting. Everyone is very welcome. Membership is available or come along as a visitor (£2 per person).

Maralyn Harris
Chairman

REQUEST

Does anyone have the March and April 1990 copies of 'Link'? These are unaccountably missing from the magazine archive. Please ring 647213 if you have them. We could photocopy and return. Thanks.

Editor

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At last the dreaded day has arrived: 'Retirement'. Ann Howarth has been in Guiding for 46 years, first as a Brownie then a Guide and eventually at 14 years old a Land Ranger in Hornchurch, Essex. After having her children, Lisa and Gavin, Ann was persuaded in 1978 to help her sister Sonia at a Guide meeting. She enjoyed it so much that she stayed for 10 years. After many camps and joint camps with the Scouts, taking her children and dog with her, she retired for a few months.



She was later asked if she would like to help at a Brownie meeting and once again she enjoyed it so much she stayed – this time for 21 years!! There was plenty to do, going on pack holidays every year, taking her Brownies and sometimes another pack with her, as well as the weekly meetings - working on badges or craft items, making cakes or pizzas, playing games, knots and quizzes. As Ann has joined the Trefoil Guild in Saffron Walden, she will still be associated with the Guide Movement and enjoy her retirement with her animals - horses, goats, rabbits, cats and dog and her long suffering husband Les, who has supported her in all her Guiding activities.

Rodney Girling



STANSTED FOOTBALL CLUB

I would like to thank the 'Link' for letting us have the chance to let all the local people know what is going on at Stansted FC. By now I'm sure a lot of you have taken the opportunity to watch our giant new screen for all the big Sky football games. Soon we will be installing a new premier pool table, a quiz machine and new fruit machine so there is now even more to enjoy at Stansted FC. I would like to thank all the new Committee members who have had a massive impact on the Club and for all the people who have donated time and money into giving our Clubhouse a facelift – they have definitely 'turned it around' so thank you for all your hard work

and input into the Club. I would also like to thank Inter-County for becoming our match day sponsors. Any help is much appreciated, so if anyone is interested in sponsoring us please call me.

The weather has wreaked havoc on our fixtures, with the majority of matches being called off. Leading up to the New Year, Stansted were top of the League and have just been knocked off the top by Burnham – but our games had been called off so hopefully we will try and regain pole position. Congratulations to the players and managers and keep it up. If anyone is interested in sponsoring us or becoming involved at the Club please contact me.

Larry Woods
Vice Chairman
Tel: 07866 765175



The fourth and final concert of our 2009/10 season features the Coull String Quartet and takes place on Saturday 6th March at 7.30pm in St John's Church. The quartet will be making a very welcome return visit to Stansted, their having already delighted us with their playing here in March 2006.



They have been Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Warwick since 1977 and have performed and broadcast extensively throughout this country, the USA and Western Europe. They have toured India, the Middle and Far East, South America and Australia. They toured China only last October and at one concert, where they had been asked to include a movement of the Yellow River Concerto, the audience erupted into spontaneous applause as they began to play! The programme for 6th March will be:

Haydn Quartet in Eb Op 33 No 2 'The Joke'
Shostakovich Quartet in D Op 83 No 4
Mendelssohn Quartet in E minor Op 44 No 2

Tickets: adults £12, children £1 are available from Stansted Carpets; Nockolds Solicitors, Bishop's Stortford; Sonia Levy 815282; or at the door. Please visit our website www.musicatstansted.com for more information.

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Select Committee challenges the wisdom of a second Stansted runway

A report published Monday 7th December by the influential House of Commons Transport Committee concludes that the case for a second runway at Stansted Airport has not been made. The 'Future of Aviation' inquiry report questions the need for a second runway at Stansted. Its conclusions are vindication of the economic arguments which have long been made by SSE, whose economics adviser gave evidence to the inquiry, and a rejection of the claims made by BAA and the present Government about the so-called economic benefits of expanding the airport. This latest rejection of the case for a second Stansted runway is particularly welcome because the Transport Committee is dominated by Labour MPs who, up until now, have loyally supported the Government's pro-expansion aviation policy. Furthermore, it comes in a year when the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats have both unequivocally declared their opposition to a second Stansted runway, meaning that BAA and the Government are increasingly isolated on this issue. It should by now be clear to the Government and BAA that they are flogging a dead horse. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find anyone these days who still believes there is a logical case to be made for a second Stansted runway.

SSE also strongly welcomes the Committee's conclusions that the Government needs to revisit procedures for assessing the impacts of aircraft noise, compensation arrangements and the effective enforcement of noise regulations. News that the Committee is calling for a review of the adequacy of research into the effects of aircraft noise, particularly on human health, and for measures to improve air quality around major airports to be brought forward are also to be applauded. There are however some disappointing aspects in the report, in particular, its failure to recognise that the expansion of air travel along the lines proposed by the Government's 2003 Air Transport White Paper cannot be reconciled with the objective of achieving an 80 per cent cut in the UK's carbon emissions by 2050. Hopes now rest on the landmark UK and Aviation Report published on 8th December by the Committee on Climate Change. This is expected to say that aviation growth will need to be reined in if the UK's climate change targets are to be met.

BAA must scrap runway plans now rather than prolong the blight

SSE has called on BAA to withdraw its second runway plans as issues over the future ownership of Stansted Airport threaten to drag on for years, prolonging the blight and uncertainty for the local community. The call comes in the wake of the Competition Appeal Tribunal (CAT) ruling which upheld one of the grounds of BAA's appeal relating to apparent bias on the part of the Competition Commission in reaching its decision that BAA must sell three of its airports, including Stansted. The CAT was at pains to emphasise that there was no suggestion of actual bias by the Competition Commission but that it had to abide by the maxim that justice must not only be done but be seen to be done. The CAT

ruled against BAA's second ground of appeal, namely, that the timetable laid down by the Competition Commission for the sale of the three airports was too short. The CAT considered there was no merit in BAA's arguments on this point.

In terms of the way forward the CAT has said it is for the Competition Commission and BAA to agree this but that if no agreement can be reached the CAT will hear further arguments from both sides before making a decision. One distinct possibility is that the whole Competition Commission inquiry into BAA's monopoly would have to be re-run, a process which could take two years. It remains to be seen how the Government will decide to deal with the second runway public inquiry having previously put this on hold until the uncertainty about the future ownership of Stansted was resolved. The ruling has the potential to blight this local community for many more years despite the fact that the case for a second Stansted runway is dead in the water. BAA should face up to this now and end the uncertainty by announcing the cancellation of its second runway plans.

BAA needs to Smell the Coffee

Figures for 2009 published on 11th January by BAA make a mockery of the airport operator's claims that it urgently needs planning approval for a second runway at Stansted Airport. The full year figures show that Stansted handled fewer than 20 million passengers last year, the lowest annual total for six years. There was an even sharper decline in the number of flights where last year's total of 156,242 made it the quietest year for the Essex airport since 2002. Despite the ongoing decline in passengers and flights at Stansted, BAA bizarrely still insists on continuing with its current planning application for a second runway based on its belief that Stansted will grow to 68 million passengers per annum (mppa) and 495,000 flights by 2030 which, on both counts, is more than today's Heathrow. Stansted currently has planning permission to expand to 35 mppa – allowing scope for expansion of 75% on the current level of passenger throughput – and the full capacity of the existing runway is considerably more than 35 mppa.

BAA needs to wake up and smell the coffee and acknowledge the reasons why Stansted has experienced such a dramatic reversal during the difficult economic climate of the past two years, in stark contrast to Heathrow. It also needs to recognise once and for all that there's no commercial logic in proceeding with a second Stansted runway costing twice the recent sale price of Gatwick and without any guarantee of additional demand. BAA needs to take a reality check with a cold, hard look at the views of the Competition Commission and the way the political wind is now blowing. This would hopefully make BAA see sense. It cannot justify continuing to blight so many lives over a new runway which nobody wants or needs. Any socially and financially responsible company would have no hesitation in ditching the plans forthwith.

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