

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



In this issue...

- Remembrance in Stansted p8
- Two sad losses p11
- Brownie News p19
- Scouts in the money p23
- Police latest p23
- Dick is back p27

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<i>Editor</i>	Derek Honour	☎ 647213
<i>Distribution</i>	Janet Townsend	☎ 812593
<i>Advertising</i>	Wendy Moss	☎ 812797

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Index to Advertisers

	<i>Page</i>		<i>Page</i>
Animal Care	fin 'n' fur 24	Household Services	Grenville Construction BC
	Mercer & Hughes 28		JDW Gas Heating Specialist 20
Community & Care	Alzheimer's Society 20		Knights Windows 26
	Hearing Help 20		Mark Robinson (handyman) 24
	Helpline 26		Nicholas Cahill 28
	Stansted Day Centre 24		Ray Morton (painter/decorator) 32
	Uttlesford Carers 12, 18		Tim's Tiles and Interiors 26
	Uttlesford MIND 28	Leisure	Elsenham Golf Centre 26
Computing & Office Services	Alan Horsley 12		Graham School of Dance FC
	Gina's Business Services 12		Mitchell School of Dance 22
	Shadowfax 32		Stansted Angling BC
	Women in Business 18	Motoring	D Bonney & Sons 10
Education	Adult Community Learning 25		David Nunn's Garage 20
	Birchanger Nursery Unit 26		Elsenham Taxis 10
	Montessori Day Nurseries 14		Larry Jolley Driving Tuition 24
	Rainbow Pre-School 20		Rowland Ridgwell (van hire) 12
Electrical	Albury Electrical Services 28		Sterling Chauffeur Service FC
	Zelta Batteries 20	Personal Services	Back to Basics(Pilates) 22
Financial & Legal	Genesis Financial Services 18		Barnet Fayre (hairdressers) BC
	Greenways Financial Planning BC		Beauty Elements BC
	Pothecary Witham Weld 22		CK Men's Room 32
	Siemens Motor Contracts 20		Fancy Fingers 18
	TaxAssist Accountants 12		Glynis Cheers (hypnotherapist) BC
Food & Lodging	Bada Bing! 21		Jan Rickwood 10
	Chimneys Guest House 32		Jennie Eriksen (aromatherapy) 24
	Eddie Ho Fish & Chips 12		Jenny Wood (hypnotherapist) 32
	Royal Tandoori 10		Lower Street Clinic 10
	Star of India 12		Mobile Hairdressing 28
	The Laurels Bed and Breakfast 28		Newwin-E Ltd 14
	Yummys sandwiches and coffee 10		NLP Solutions 20
Funeral Services	D C Poulton & Sons BC		Once Upon a Time 26
	Daniel Robinson & Sons BC		Slimming World 22
	Grave Concern 12		Stansted Chiropractic 17
	J Day & Son 12		Stansted Reiki 32
Furniture & Furnishings	Fabrications 28		Sue Leech (chiropody) 28
	Kate Harrison 28		The Park Clinic FC
	New Look (upholsterers) 32		H C Williams (osteopath) 14
	Valley Carpets 14	Printing & Publishing	Copyzone 20
	You're Furnished 18		Millway Stationery 14
Garden Supplies, Services & Floral	Christmas Trees 26	Property Services & Auctioneers	Aldwych Construction 14
	D Honour & Son 18		Bareham Overy Partnership FC
	Garden Design 12		Inter County 28
	Green Thumb 22		Mullucks Wells BC
	J R Johnston 12		PHD Associates (architects) 12
	Mayfair Ponds BC		Sworders BC
	Perry's Garden Centre 29		The Kenneth Mark Practice Ltd FC
	SimplyLawns 32	Retailers	Family News 12
	Steve Hall Garden Services 18		King's Family Butchers 26
	The Mower Shop 24		R & K News 12
Household Services	A Better Aerial 18	Other	Knot Toys 12
	ada Decorating 32		Parklands - Quendon Hall BC
	A&M Collins Roofing 22		Stansted All-Steel(gates,railings) 18
	Bubbles Bathrooms BC		Ugley Village Hall (for hire) 18
	Do-It-4U FC		
	Foster Plumbing & Heating 24		



Churches Together in Stansted Christmas Services and Activities



St John's (Church of England)

Christmas Eve

9.30am Parish Communion (Sung)
3.00pm Crib Service
11.30pm First Communion of Christmas (Sung)

Christmas Day

9.30am Parish Communion (Sung)

Sunday 21st January

3.30 pm Christingle Service

Stansted Free Church (Methodist / URC)

Sunday 17th December

10.30am Gift Service- Faith Paulding

Christmas Eve

10.30am Morning Worship - Ros Page & the Music Group

Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Service - Rev'd David Simpson

St Theresa's (Roman Catholic)

Sunday 17th December

2.00pm Children's service in Church followed by party in Parish Centre, concluding at 4.00pm

Tuesday 19th December

8.00pm Penitential service with visiting Priest helping

Wednesday 20th December

7.30pm Carol service followed by light refreshments in the Parish Centre

Christmas Eve

9.00am Mass
10.30am Mass
6.00pm First Mass of Christmas for all the family
Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

10.30am Mass

Tuesday 26th December

9.30am Mass of St Stephen

Quakers (Society of Friends)

Christmas Eve

10.30am Meeting for Worship

Village Carol Concert

The traditional Village Carol Concert will take place once again at St Mary's Church on Saturday 16th December at 4.00pm. Andrew Bruce has kindly agreed to be choir master this year. Please bring family and friends to this popular village event. There will be a retiring collection for Uttlesford Crossroads and the Churches Conservation Trust. Everyone is most welcome. Choir members are urgently wanted! Rehearsals are at 8.00pm in St John's Church on Wednesdays 6th and 13th December and Thursday 14th December. Please join us – there are no auditions!!

Carol Singing around the Village

Everyone welcome. We meet at 7.30pm each evening - Friday 22nd December, junction of Croasdaile and Cambridge Road; Saturday 23rd December, junction of Church Road and Maitland Road. Singers welcome – also recorder / flute players but please telephone 814059 beforehand so that we can bring sufficient music. We will be collecting for Uttlesford Crossroads. See the 'What's On' page for further details.

David Morson,
Chair of CTS





St John's
STANSTED

contact us

all enquiries

The Church Office

St John's Hall
St John's Road
Stansted CM24 8JP

(01279) 815243

church.office@stansted.net

Office hours

9:00am-12:00noon
Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Adminstrator

Mrs Elizabeth Jennings

Church Hall Bookings

Mrs Joy Lambie
(01279) 817937
joy@stansted.net

Rector

Currently vacant

(01279) 812203

rector@stansted.net

Assistant Curate

Revd Dr Caroline Currer

(01279) 815243

curate@stansted.net

Director of Music

Lorraine Everett
church.music@stansted.net

website

www.stansted.net/stjohns

Christmas is really for the children ...

December again. Advent. One of God's great song and dance moments. It's as if the angels had practised all year: an unrivalled display of happiness for the first and greatest Christmas present, the baby Jesus.

Of course, it didn't actually start just a month before the birth; the bit when the angel appears to Mary and tell her that she is going to have a son and must call him Jesus. Must have been at least five or six months previous. But we do the abridged version.

Now, it's customary to recognise the amazing trust and virtuous obedience that Mary shows at this point: her readiness to say 'yes' to God is an example to us all. So I will.

But one benefit of wrapping it into a shortened version is that we can see something of the completeness of the Christmas story. And it starts with a hint about creating a child that turns out to be unique and precious, should you too want to rear one...

Firstly, there's the Angel that tells Mary about the nature of the child that she will bear; "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Big announcement!

Now, I've got a five year old girl who I think is great. She does too, which can be a bit of a problem, but in general I want her to. But she never got the kind of fanfare that Jesus got. In fact, at first she was just a blue line

on a Boots pregnancy test kit, but she came on quickly from there to be a warm feeling in my heart and a kind of nauseous feeling in her mother's stomach. Then I lay awake at night wondering who was coming and if I could ever do honour to the business of rearing another human being. Terrifying and wonderful.

But here is Mary getting the special treatment. Firstly, years ahead of the ultrasound scanner she knows it's a boy, and then she is told how very, very special he will be.

And so here's my thought. Imagine if we all got that message? How does it sound to you? The child in your house is a child of God ... unique in every way, special, a child of the Highest ... You would treat them as amazing wouldn't you? You've got a special task, you need to let them grow into their awesome potential, help them understand their destiny, their powers, their importance.

One way of reading the Advent stories is to see how they illustrate God's knowledge of human affairs. That to give a child the best start in life the parents need to hold them in the highest esteem. And there could be something of a universal thing here – kids may be no angels, but when you raise them as children of God, precious and full of hidden potential, then they may just save the world.

Andy Thornton

St John's Diary

Sunday

9:30am Choral Eucharist
11:00am Open Door Service

(all age worship)

1st and 3rd Sundays
9:45pm Night Prayer

Wednesday

10:00am said Holy Communion

7:30pm Ecumenical Prayer group

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. Junior Church meets each Sunday at 9:30am. *(Children return to church halfway through the service.)* The Lazer youth group meets on Sunday evenings at 7:30pm

From the Registers - October

Funeral

26th Keith Edward Gibbs, age 75
- at St Mary's

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



For details please see opposite - page 2



Pilots and Harvest Help

On 15th November, the Pilots were treated to an enjoyable evening given by a young person by the name of Rebecca Sentence. Rebecca and her father had travelled by car from the Brentwood area to Stansted. They arrived at about 6.50 pm, having been held up by traffic. Despite a working day at school and the journey to Stansted on top, Rebecca and her father were really pleased to join in the fun that is always present at our Pilot evenings. Rebecca told the children of her visit to Africa (Zambia) and how she joined in the life of the people there, and endeavoured to help make a difference in their lives. She was full of fun and all the children enjoyed listening to her, also asking questions. Some extra refreshments were available on this special occasion. Thanks to Marion Dyer, the talk was illustrated with colour photographs via a laptop and projector.

I am writing this account from Harlow Hospital (yes, I am here once again) but only overnight hopefully. As I was unable to be at Pilots for this enjoyable evening, the children and helpers have filled me in on the activities, and I thought that it all sounded so great that I must let you know all about it. Our thanks go to *Harvest Help* for putting us in touch with Rebecca and her father. My thanks also go to all the Pilots for the lovely cards sent to me in hospital. It took me almost an hour to read through all of them! My room was full of good wishes from friends. Many thanks also to Rachel, Michelle, Rosemary, David, Peter and Arthur (who is now recovering from a stay in hospital) for all the support given to the Pilots and to me personally at a difficult time.

Pilots is open to all children aged 5 to 13, not just those connected with our church, and we would like to welcome new members. We have an exciting programme arranged for next term. Please telephone me for more details.

Valerie Trundle 813433

Services and other activities

Preachers for December

- 3rd 10.30 am Mike Dyer & Alan Wheeler
New Directions in All Age Worship
- 3rd 2.30 pm Rev David Simpson
- 10th 10.30 am Rev John Buxton - Communion
- 17th 10.30 am Faith Paulding - Gift Service
- 24th 10.30 am Ros Page with the Music group
- 25th 10.30 am Rev David Simpson - Christmas Day
- 31st 10.30 am Joan Kennett

Other December activities

- 3rd 3.30 pm Afternoon Tea
- 11th 6.00 pm Pilots for Children 5-13 years Tel 8134338
- 11th 8 pm Shalom Christmas Party 7 Blythwood Gardens
- 16th 4 pm Village Carol Concert St Mary's Church
- 18th 2.30 pm Monday Club Christmas Entertainment Tel 815137
- 22nd & 23rd 7.30pm Carol Singing round the village (See CTS page)

Preachers for January

- 7th 10.30 am Mike Dyer & Alan Wheeler
New Directions in All Age Worship
- 7th 2.30 pm Rev David Simpson
- 14th 10.30 am Betty Kime
- 21st 10.30 am Rev David Simpson
Covenant Service & Communion
- 28th 10.30 am Rev Keith Page

Other January activities

- 7th 3.30 pm Please note **no** Afternoon Tea
- 15th 8 pm Shalom Social at 7 Blythwood Gardens
- 24th 7.30 pm Ecumenical Wednesday Prayers at St John's for the
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity
- 29th 8 pm Shalom 7 Blythwood Gardens

Pilots dates to be confirmed. Tel 813433 for details
 Monday Club dates to be confirmed. Tel 815137 for details



STANSTED FREE CHURCH (Methodist / URC)
Chapel Hill
www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

Joint Ministers

Revd David Simpson
11 Church Manor
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 5AF
Tel 504900

Revd Keith Page
2 South Road
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 3JH
Tel 654475

Lettings

Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill
Stansted
CM24 8AQ
Tel 812593

Secretary

Betty Francis
Tel 813977

Celebration Service

The church was packed for our joyful inaugural celebration service on Sunday 5th November, during which both congregations, Methodist and United Reformed, committed themselves to continue the journey together, seeking God's purpose for our church

'giving thanks for all that we have in common, and acknowledging each other's traditions.'

In a symbolic gesture, two candles representing the Methodist and United Reformed congregations were used to light a new shared candle, and the individual candles were extinguished.



A covenant document, containing the above words, was signed by members of the local and wider Methodist and United Reformed churches, including church secretary Betty Francis, joint ministers Rev Keith Page and Rev David Simpson, representatives from the Methodist Circuit and URC District Council, and the District Ecumenical Officers.

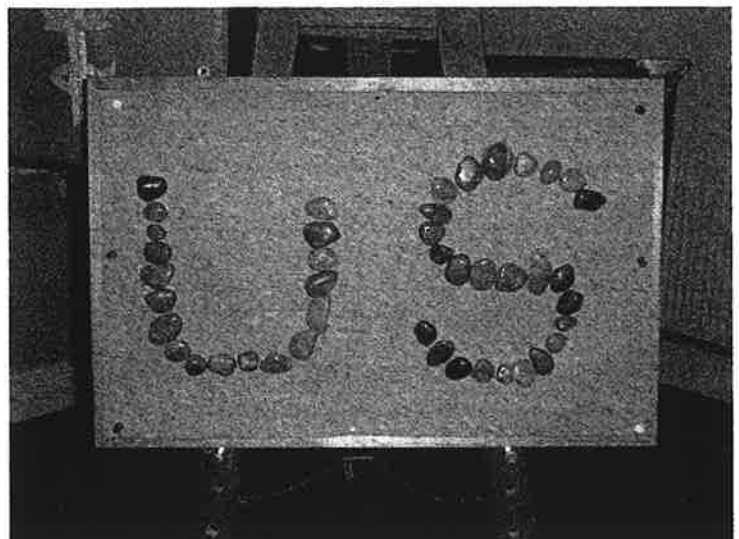
The covenant was also signed by Rev Anne Brown, Chair of the Beds, Essex & Herts Methodist District, who led the main prayers and responses during the service, and Rev Elizabeth Caswell, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church, who gave the address.

Pilots, our weeknight children's group, brought into the church a large frieze of a tree, whose branches represented the various aspects of church life. The children told the congregation which branches they had made, and what they meant.

They then led short prayers whilst making the word *US* from pebbles.

Before and after the service, there was a time of praise, led by the music group.

For more pictures please visit our website:
www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk



Marion Dyer



SHALOM

At our meeting on 30th October we welcomed the Rev'd Carrie Pemberton from the ecumenical charity CHASTE - Churches Alert to Sex Trafficking across Europe. In recent years we have become increasingly aware of enforced prostitution, with women and young, even very young, girls being preyed upon widely across the world, but it is frightening being faced by the numbers involved, and the violence, humiliation and intimidation to which they are subjected. Unbelievably, it is not unknown for some to be duped or betrayed by acquaintances, friends or even relatives. The extent to which this trade has impacted upon the UK is startling. To quote our visitor 'they can be found in cities and towns across the UK - even in places like Bishop's Stortford'. That brought it home to us.

Some of you might have seen two recent episodes of 'The Bill' when two of the Sun Hill officers went to Eastern Europe following leads from a local investigation. Hearing of the reality of the situation in the world today brought the action and scenes from the programmes to mind, and very sharply into focus. Apart from being directly involved with women rescued from their captivity, CHASTE liken their work to that of those who sought to gain abolition of the slave trade two hundred years ago, by generating a wider public recognition of this vile trade by sustained discussion and lobbying. The range and scale of their efforts has increased steadily since their origins in 2002, but space does not allow for more details here. However, if any reader is interested to learn more of their work please contact me for a copy of a comprehensive booklet or visit their website www.chaste.org.uk.

Harry Goreing 503764

On 13th November, Eileen and Brian provided us with a wonderful evening of contrasts. Being so near to Remembrance Day they had chosen some very moving poetry written by service men and women during the first and second world wars. Between each of the poems being read, we reflected quietly upon the words and remembered all the lives lost then, and in the wars of more recent times. It was sad and sobering. In contrast to this quiet time, the second half of the evening was dramatic. Each of two teams received a scenario with little more than a cast list, a scene and a bag of 'props', and it was our job to come up with ideas and produce a playlet. This was great fun - who would have guessed that such ideas and talents resided among us? We found the results hilarious. I for one will remember the delicious moment when the postmistress assured the vicar that she was the soul of discretion, and I certainly will not find waiting in a post office queue at all boring in future. The character of the recently deceased 'Nan' in the other sketch was unforgettable too - who needs television?

Edna Goreing

Future Meetings

The only meeting in December is our Christmas Party, which is at 8.00pm on 11th December at 7 Blythwood Gardens. This is a 'bring and share' - both in terms of food and entertainment!!

On 15th January, we begin the new term with another 'bring and share', but this time the food will be preceded by a discussion on ideas for future programmes. On 29th January Alan Wheeler will lead a discussion evening.

Both the January meetings start at 8.00pm and will be at 7 Blythwood Gardens. Everyone is most welcome - please join us.

Catherine Dean
Tel: 813579

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

Early Quakers didn't bother too much with special celebrations at Christmas because they thought we should promote peace and goodwill and be loving and giving every day of our lives. Nowadays we do join in and I have to confess that I love Christmas. I enjoy buying and wrapping up interesting presents for friends and family. I like the challenge of trying to produce special Christmas treats for my family, who comprise vegetarians, coeliacs, and people like my husband and I, who eat most things. I like carols, some of which I find moving and illuminating, even if they are churned out repetitively over the whole Advent period.

I know that Christmas can be a time when lonely people feel even more lonely; when people with large families find the whole shebang too hard to cope with, too tiring and nerve-racking by half; when people with slender means get into debt because, in our consumerist society, they want to give the same expensive presents to their children as will flow into the large stockings of some of their richer school friends. However we are all free to choose the level of our involvement in all the festivities, and over and above the rush to buy and consume, there is a spirit of goodwill abroad over the Christmas season, whether we choose to get onto its wavelength or not. We can all experience this "spirit that delights to do no wrong", as early Quakers termed it. Once, this spirit of goodwill enabled a cessation of hostilities during the first World War, when soldiers were able to play football together and forget the bloodshed, fear and carnage for a few precious hours.

Nowadays it is difficult to imagine a spiritually-driven cessation of hostilities in some of the war-torn parts of the world. The fifth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks and the perceived terrorist threats over the summer have each brought to the surface many thoughts of mistrust and fear, but the spirit of goodwill that inspires so many peaceful and humanitarian acts over the Christmas period could be prolonged throughout the whole year, could perhaps become a life-habit in the way, for instance, that RAP (Regular Aid for the Poor) has taken root with so many people in Stansted. We can all enjoy the colour, fun and special treats of the Christmas festival at the darkest part of the year and yet we can also resolve to keep the loving kindness flowing in our hearts well beyond the time of New Year resolutions.

Anthea Lea

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane
Stansted
Tel: 01279 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

One of the sessions during our recent Mission was entitled 'Making Sense of the Bible'. The principles of interpretation were emphasised – getting to know the context and the background to the passage we are reading, being consistent, and looking for a deeper, spiritual meaning beyond the literal. In medieval times scholars looked for four different sorts of meanings: the first was literal and the other three were moral – guidance for life, a meaning pointing to some future hope and fulfilment, and a spiritual meaning. Above all, the Bible leads to and is witness to the living person of Christ. Any interpretation that depicts God as vengeful, vindictive or exclusive, falls short of the truth that 'God is love' and is mistaken.

Shortly after the Mission, we had a Deanery Day of Reflection, which brought together people from the seven parishes of the Deanery for a day of study led by Father Adrian Graffy, a priest and scholar of our Diocese of Brentwood. His main topic was the Gospel of St Luke, from which the gospel readings will be taken during the coming year. His reflections on the infancy narratives of Luke were especially interesting and, of course, very relevant at this time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Father Graffy pointed out that Luke's infancy stories in their own way reflect Luke's whole gospel. The exemplary conduct of Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, and Mary, and the presence of Anna at the presentation of Jesus in the temple, prepare for the significant role of women in this gospel. These women listen for God, as Mary, the sister of Martha, will listen to the words of Jesus later in the gospel. They do the will of God as an example to all disciples. The gospel, which emphasises the outreach of Jesus to the poor and marginalised, shows the good news of the birth of the Messiah being proclaimed first of all to the shepherds, people who were generally despised and considered dishonest. The divisions that will be brought about both by the work of Jesus and by the preaching of the church are also reflected in the words of Simeon at the presentation in the temple. Jesus will be 'a light for the nations', but also 'a sign, which is contradicted' and a sword which will pierce the heart of Mary.

Both the Mission and the Day of Reflection have left us with much food for thought, and renewed interest in deepening our understanding of the great gift of the scriptures.

Ruth Rawlinson

St Therese's players present *The Importance of being Earnest* at The Parish Centre, High Lane on Friday 19th January and Saturday 20th January 7.00pm for 7.30pm start. The cast is drawn from St Therese's Parishoners, directed by David Morson. Tickets £5, concessions £3, family ticket £12. Please contact Mary Warnett 814190 or Wendy Moss 812797. Refreshments served from 7.00pm to 7.30pm: wine £1 per glass, fruit juice 50p. Please join us for some New Year humour!

Dave Morson

HELPLINE

As the season of Christmas festivities gets under way, if there are any of our more senior or less able bodied parishioners who require transport to attend Christmas lunches, concerts, etc., please give Helpline a call on 07704 553727 and we will do our best to ensure that you are able to join in the seasonal activities.

If you are interested in volunteering your services to Helpline, or would like more information, please contact, evenings only, Yvonne Ayres (Organiser) on 814706 or Francine Cope (Chairman) on 814562.

HELPLINE – STANSTED'S COMMUNITY CARE SCHEME

Francine Cope

WEA WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

The course for Spring 2007 is to be led by Peter White and is entitled 'Girdle round the earth: Exploring and mapping the surface geography of the earth.' The course sets out to identify, outline and evaluate key stages in our coming to terms with the broad features of the surface geography and topography of our planet, picking out key contributions in the history of exploration, the technological advances in ship design, in techniques of navigation, and in map-making. It will conclude in providing the basis for recognition that the geography of the globe is not static but dynamic. We live on a changing global surface.

As usual, the course will be held at 8.00pm in the Day Centre on ten Monday evenings, starting on 15th January. Enrolment on the first evening will start at 7.30pm. The full fee for the 10 week course is £40, concessions £28. Please contact me for any further information.

Harold Thistle
Tel: 813250

UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

By the time this Link is dropping through letterboxes a decision will have been made on BAA's expansion planning application. The Council's planning officers' report was published on 21 November. It recommended that the councillors on the development control committee REFUSE the application. I sent in my own representation urging refusal on the grounds of aviation carbon emissions and the effect on climate change. This is one of eight or nine reasons why a refusal is being recommended. In the past month the Stern Review on climate change has been published showing that the economy would be badly affected by climate change far greater than the cost of dealing with it. I expect the application will be refused, in which case there will be a public enquiry and, unfortunately, more cost to the local taxpayer. Democracy does not come cheaply.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Following the problems experienced in the summer the Parish Council decided to begin the process of designating the public open spaces in the village as Designated Public Place Orders. This means that alcohol could be consumed in these areas but if anti social behaviour was caused, police officers or community support officers would have the powers to cease this and move people on. The next steps will be for the issue to go before the South West Area Panel and from there to full council for ratification. It is regrettable that this is needed, but our neighbours Elsenham and Bishop's Stortford have both had problems with alcohol abuse in public spaces.

Stansted Skate Park

I am pleased to report that the Community Committee has decided to allocate £16,000 towards phase 2 of the skate park. This will be a big boost towards the project. The Council has also financially helped Saffron Walden and Dunmow skate parks. Councillors were very impressed with the way young people at Stansted were involved in the fund raising for our skate park. They were also pleased with the professionalism of the business plan.

Remembrance Sunday

Along with many other organisations, the Parish and District Council laid wreaths. I always find this a moving ceremony as I think of those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our liberties. Like many families in the village, mine has been touched by the two world wars of the 20th century. A great uncle lost in the first and a father wounded in the second.



Photograph courtesy of Ted Pretty

I was impressed by the number of young people present from the local schools. The Air Training Corps as usual were a credit to those who lead them. Their discipline and pride in what they do stood out.

Councillor Geoffrey Sell
Tel: 01279 815925
Email: cllrsell@uttlesford.gov.uk

The County Council is now starting a consultation through Stansted Parish Council on the street lighting switch off proposal.

I have been chasing Royal Mail about the derelict post box in Lower Street. They have promised to reinstate it round the corner, outside the post office in Chapel Hill.

The District Council is carrying out a review of conservation areas in Stansted. The idea is to produce a plan aimed at making improvements. The whole Woodfields area is a conservation area; so is Bentfield End and Causeway.

Local people have the chance to grab some free compost in Stansted on Saturday 6th January 2007 between 9.00am and 3.00pm at the Lower Street car park. We are starting to see some benefits back from the new recycling scheme. Also, you can take your Christmas trees to the skips in Lower Street on the same day.

Councillor Alan Dean
Tel: 01279 813579
Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk



Huw Johnson Club

Have you put 15th December in your diary? - because that is when our Christmas Concert will take place. The doors will open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start at St Mary's School. We are very grateful to the school for allowing us to use their premises. As well as our usual scenes from the Nativity we will be enjoying 50 years of song as we celebrate a 'Golden Wedding'. There will be a raffle with the chance to taste mince pies during the interval. Admission is free.

We all enjoyed our firework party which took place on 9th November at the kind invitation of Hannah, Chris and Joanne. Everyone 'oohed and aahed' in all the right places and were equally appreciative of the hot dogs which followed. We always have a great time whenever we visit Hannah's home at Great Easton.

See you all on 15th.

Marion G Johnson



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Stansted Carpets; Sonia Levy 815282,
or at the door



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

7 for 7.30 pm
Friday 15th December
St Mary's School
Admission Free

All welcome - raffle & mince pies
Proceeds to the Huw Johnson Club



Village Carol Concert



Carols, Music, Readings, and Poetry
4 pm Saturday 16th December
St Mary's Church
(parking at Mountfitchet College)
Retiring collection for Uttlesford Crossroads
& Churches Conservation Trust
All Welcome

VILLAGE EVENTS

December

1	Fri	Christmas Market	St John's Church 7 - 9 pm
2	Sat	Christmas Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
		Conservatives Christmas Party	Day Centre 7.30 pm
3	Sun	Afternoon Tea (after service)	Free Church 3.30 pm
		Village Music Club Concert	St. John's Church 3 pm
6	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
7	Thu	Local History Society	Manuden Village Hall 8 pm
9	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
9/10	Sat/Sun	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
11	Mon	Shalom Party	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
14	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
15	Fri	Huw Johnson Carol Concert	St Mary's School 7 for 7.30 pm
16	Sat	Village Carol Concert	St Mary's Church 4 pm
20	Wed	Carol Service	St Theresa's Church 7.30 pm
22	Fri	Village Carol Singing	Croasdaile/Cambridge 7.30 pm
23	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		Village Carol Singing	Church Rd/ Maitland Rd 7.30 pm

January

3	Wed	Mountfitchet Seniors	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
4	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
6	Sat	Skips & Christmas Trees	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
11	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
13	Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
15	Mon	WEA begins Shalom	Day Centre 7.30 pm 7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
19 Fri/20 Sat		Importance of Being Earnest	St Theresa's Centre 7.30 pm
20	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
27	Sat	Music Quiz	St Mary's School 7.30 for 8 pm
28	Sun	Village Music Club Concert	St. John's Church 3 pm
29	Mon	Shalom	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm

February

1	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
3	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm

Skip Dates Please Note Saturdays only from 23rd Dec



Anna Stéphanie
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Jonathan Beattie
Piano

3pm Sunday 28th January
St John's Church

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Saturday 23rd December
corner Church Rd / Maitland Rd

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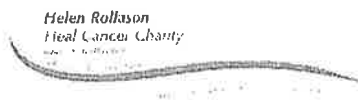
Stansted Art & Craft Market

It is with much regret that the Committee has come to the decision to disband the Art and Craft Market. We have not taken this decision lightly, but due to the lack of visitors, sales, circumstances beyond our control and having very little response to our request for feedback from the village last year, we feel that the Market has come to the end of its life as a village event.

As you may remember, we lost all our display boards in a fire at the Youth Centre and we had to replace them. We will have no further use for them and we should like, if possible, to find a good home for them, and at the same time recoup some of our expenses. We also have all the lighting which clipped onto the boards, along with all the fittings. If anyone is interested in these please contact Brenda Ryan on 01279 812725.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank everybody who has given their time and support to help over the many years with the running of this event.

Linda Gurr



As you may have read in the local press that the Stansted Group of the charity is ceasing operations, at least for the present. We are grateful to the local population for your generous support over the past nine years, which has enabled us to raise over £60,000 for the charity. We stress that the Helen Rollason Heal Cancer Charity is continuing, and anyone needing advice on any related matter is welcome to contact the main office at St. John's Hospital, Wood Street, Chelmsford, CM2 9BG, phone 01245 513350. There is also a website: www.helenrollason.org.uk.

It is hoped that the Open Gardens event, which we feel has become a part of village life, will continue under other stewardship; no doubt details will appear in the 'Link' in due course.

Ian Neville

Conservatives

STANSTED CONSERVATIVES

A very successful Annual Constituency Dinner was held at the Radisson Hotel, Stansted Airport on Tuesday 7th November with our guest *before dinner* speaker, The Rt Hon David Cameron, MP.

Our next event is the Christmas Party at the Day Centre on Saturday 2nd December 7.30pm for 8.00pm with Christmas Fayre – Musical Quiz – Raffle – Magician all for £12.50 including glass of wine. Further information from Bridget Gott on 814440 or Tony Barrett-Jolley on 814300.

Tony Barrett-Jolley

FROM THE EDITOR

Two sad farewells

November saw the demise of two Stansted institutions. One was the Art and Craft Market which was experiencing difficulties that proved terminal. These arose from a decline in helpers as well as increasing competition with other markets in the area. The past few years have seen a number of these either springing up or spreading from neighbouring towns and villages. Stansted Art and Craft Market was able to help fund local organisations for two decades and in its heyday was a highly popular event with many exhibitors, helpers and visitors. Thank you Art and Crafters past and present – you have a place in local history.

The other loss is Stansted's branch of Helen Rollason (formerly HEAL), the cancer charity. The impression is that a small core of dedicated people found the going increasingly hard and felt that a space in time is needed to give an opportunity for new enthusiasts to come forward. Many of us have happy memories of the quizzes and dances which the group ran and, of course, the Open Gardens Scheme. Possibly the latter will be taken over by others until, as we hope, there is a revival of Helen Rollason. The absence of local fund raising will leave a gap which we can only hope will be filled from other sources. Thank you, Stansted Helen Rollason, you too will be missed.

Lest you forget

This issue of 'Link' covers both December and January, so please don't expect a copy next month. Just contain your patience until February.

Last month's photograph

The window shown in the uncaptioned photograph is in the former Primitive Methodist Chapel, now a private house just north of the shortly-to-be-closed Three Colts pub in Cambridge Road.

'Link' email address

We understand that one contributor has had trouble sending copy to 'Link' by email. On checking, it has been found out that the correct email address is:

StanstedLink@aol.com

Please note the capital letters. Would contributors please use this address in future (we have altered it on page 1 of 'Link').

Thank you.

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BENTFIELD SCHOOL

An invitation:

At the end of this term we sadly have to say farewell to

MRS GLYNIS PROTHERO

Glynis has been with the school for the past 17 years

Many of you will have fond memories of either being taught by her or having a child in her class

We are having a special assembly, followed by a tea party on

15th December at 2.30pm
and cordially invite you to attend

RSVP

School News

The school has, as always, been busy. Class 4 has visited The Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge and Class 3 visited The British Museum. Both classes have been studying the Ancient Egyptians and enjoyed the visits greatly, especially seeing the mummies. Our Reception class have been to the fire station; as they have been looking at People Who Help Us. We celebrated Science week by looking at 'Our Environment'. RAPTOR visited bringing with them some beautiful birds of prey including the ever-popular barn owl. Parents were invited, with their children, to a Family Fun Flight Evening which was a soaring success.

As usual the school is looking forward to a fun packed Christmas season. We are having a Glitter Morning for the younger ones and a craft day for the older ones. Both Foundation and Key Stage One are working on their Christmas productions, which I'm sure will be thoroughly enjoyable and fun as well! We are planning our usual celebrations for the end of term; we have a lovely lunch cooked by our wonderful kitchen, which all the children eat together in the main hall, and there is our famous Staff Pantomime – for children's eyes only! The classes will each have a party with food and games and finally there will be the Christmas Celebration before we all head home, exhausted, for the holidays.

If you are interested in either a Nursery or Reception place in September 2007, and would like to visit the school, please give us a ring and we would be very pleased to arrange one for you. Have you heard about our Messy Play? This is great fun, and runs in the Nursery on Mondays from 1.45pm to 3.00pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you are interested, contact the school or just turn up!

PTA News

We would like to start by saying a very big thank you to all those who supported our Sparkler Party in November. It was a fantastic turn out this year, and we were particularly pleased to see so many friends from other schools, as well as all the Bentfield families who were there in strength as usual! I do have to mention Olly's superlative soup and Garry's lovely sausages and the wonderful team of volunteers who worked very hard from 5.00pm until after 9.00pm to make it happen. Thank you.

Christmas is coming, the goose is getting fat, and the Bentfield Christmas Fair is upon us, Saturday 2nd December from 2.00pm–4.30pm! All the old favourites are there: the raffle, bottle tombola, sweet tombola, second hand toys and books, our perennial visitors Darley Plants, homemade cards, face painting and wonderful homemade cakes. There are also plenty of fun games and activities for the young and young at heart, including bat the rat, lucky dip, pick a pop and the Scalextric challenge – and of course, all the children love having the chance to beat the Head Teacher at Connect 4!

This year for the first time we welcome local postman, Tony Jolley, making balloon models for the children, and Eileen Westcott's *Fuschia Heaven*, who will be taking orders for a selection of their fabulous jewellery and accessories. Take a break from shopping and sit down for a nice cup of tea or mulled wine with a delicious mince pie in the hall – while the choir and school musicians entertain you with carols and seasonal music under the Christmas tree.

Outdoor Classroom

Work commenced on Bentfield's outdoor classroom during the half term holiday and was completed recently. We are all thrilled with the result and delighted to be introducing our new baby to the world at the Christmas Fair in the enchanting guise of 'Santa's Grotto' – a truly magical fairy-lit setting in the woods to make the children's visit to Father Christmas even more memorable this year! Thank you very much indeed to everyone who has supported our activities in any way during the year and helped us to raise so much money for the school. We would like to wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Alison Thompson,
Bentfield PTA Co-Chairman

MOUNTFITCHET SENIORS CLUB

On 6th December we have our usual meeting with Arthur and David Law entertaining us with Christmas music which we are very much looking forward to. Then on 20th December we are having our Christmas Dinner at the Day Centre, Stansted, 12.30pm for 1.00pm. We have been very fortunate this year. We have received a sum of money which will go towards this event. We must therefore give a very big thank you to the Kings Arms Charity Committee for this donation which is very much appreciated.

The Mountfitchet Seniors Club re-opens on Wednesday 2nd January when we look forward to seeing all the familiar faces – there is still room in the Day Centre for some new ones if you would like to drop in on any first or third Wednesday. If you have a problem with transport, please telephone and we will help out wherever we can. We will publish our programme for 2007 in the 'Link' very soon, so look out for meeting dates and outings for next year.

May I take this opportunity to wish all of our members and friends a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

John Robinson, Chairman
Tel: 01279 812755

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MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

The Mountfitchet Garden Club meet on the first Wednesday of the month (with the exception of January) at the Day Centre in Crafton Green (7.30pm for an 8.00pm start). We have a very varied programme, and as you can see from the write-up below, the club tries to cover the many aspects of gardening.

At our September meeting members and visitors were given a very informative talk by Mr Richard Ford of Park Green Nurseries, in Stowmarket on growing hostas. Using a collection of slides he explained and showed how hostas are very versatile and can be grown in all situations from full shade to full sun. One of his favourite varieties 'June' can be grown in both situations but the colour of the leaves changes dramatically with the amount of light it receives. He explained that new hostas have to be registered and Park Green Nurseries have introduced several varieties - 'Delia' (named after Delia Smith), 'Sarah Kennedy', 'Gay Search' and Royal Golden Jubilee to name a few. The nursery grows over 200 varieties and a selection of the most popular were brought to the meeting for members to see and purchase. A lively question and answer session (particularly regarding slugs and snails) followed.

Members and visitors were introduced to Herbal Medicine at October's meeting. Working alongside General Practitioners and various hospitals (including Addenbrooke's in Cambridge) Ms Neville explained to members how various teas and syrups can help with circulation, ward off winter colds, aches and pains and generally aid a person's well-being. Using ingredients found in the hedgerows and grown in gardens (elder flowers and berries, hawthorn berries, rose-hips, yarrow, peppermint) herbal teas and syrups were offered to the members to try. Ms Neville explained that these teas and syrups worked alongside prescribed medicines and helped the body over a period of time. When making herbal teas the trick is to let them infuse in hot water for about five minutes before drinking - using a modern cafetière is ideal for this. Rose hip syrup (made from the hips of the dog rose) was remembered by many members. However a smile crossed many faces when fond childhood memories were revived when we were reminded that the discarded seeds of the hips made the best itching powder you could get! However not all memories were good - one member remembered suffering the cane when he was caught putting the seeds down the neck of the girl in front of him at school!

In November, Margaret Easter of Harpenden gave members a tour of 'My Garden through the Year'. Starting in February, and using colour slides, members were shown around a true plantswoman's garden. She explained that as she only has a traditional sized back garden she grows 'in layers' so that there is a continuous show of plants, bulbs and shrubs giving different vistas and colour throughout the year. Against normal recommendations of growing three or five plants of each type, she tends to only grow one so that more varieties can be grown. A list of plants shown was provided

so that members could make their own 'wish list'. Mrs Easter also holds the National Collection of Thymus (Thymes). A selection of plants from her garden were for sale.

Looking forward, our next meeting is on Wednesday 6th December and is our Christmas Bring and Share Buffet and Members Evening. The Club has its own 'Home Grown Speaker' this month, our Treasurer, Mrs Sheila Bowles. Sheila and her husband had the holiday of a lifetime recently visiting Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands, and they are going to share the highlights of their holiday with us. Members/Visitors are asked to bring something along for the buffet table to share after Sheila's talk. For the New Year, just a reminder there is no meeting in January so our first meeting will be on Wednesday 7th February. Look out for the posters and remember, you are all very welcome to come along to our meetings. Last but not least, all the members of the Garden Club wish the readers of the 'Link' ... 'a very happy Christmas and a prosperous new year'.

Maralyn Harris



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

November's meeting consisted of an illustrated talk by Derek Honour on Capability Brown, the eighteenth century landscape designer and architect. His humble origins and formative years at Stowe were outlined and the presentation went on to show his work in many of the best-known gardens in England and the influences which are still with us today. After the interval some present-day examples of his surviving work in Hertfordshire and Essex were displayed. These included Moor Park, Beechwood, Ashridge, Audley End, Youngsbury and Shortgrove. The evening enabled a wider appreciation to be gained of one of the outstanding personalities of the age.



A Capability Brown bridge somewhere near you.

In December there will be a visit to Manuden Local History Society so no meeting in Stansted. The speaker on 4th January will be Jeffrey Page, who will be giving a brief history of Essex coaching days.

Derek Honour

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD



The hall was buzzing with activity on 8th November, with everyone packing shoe boxes.

At the end of the evening 157 boxes were filled with a large assortment of goodies that had been given by many generous people.

Some items had been left anonymously in my porch; some were from people who have been knitting hats, scarves and gloves throughout the year; and some from others who have taken advantage of 'buy one get one free' offers on stationery and toiletries.

I am also very grateful for the donations of money given to help with the transport costs.

By the time the boxes were dispatched the number had risen to 260 including 65 from the Catholic Women's meeting.

This year, once the boxes have been checked at the Harlow centre, they will be packed straight into a container ready to be dispatched to Romania.



If anything is removed from the boxes at this stage because it is unsuitable (chocolate, talcum powder, clothing etc) or too big to go in a box (such as large cuddly toys) it is sent to a central warehouse where it is either sold and the money used for transport costs, or packed into boxes to go direct to children's homes, orphanages or hospitals. ***Nothing is thrown away!!***

On behalf of all the children who receive the boxes and the Operation Christmas Child team, I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to make this year's appeal so successful.

Janet Townsend



Nature Notes

A jay caught my attention when it flew down out of the oak tree and alighted on the flimsy point of an ornamental conifer growing out of the rockery, an unusual and insecure perch for this fairly large bird. It had an acorn in its beak and after looking around for several seconds it descended to sit on the fence, then to the head of a small statue, then down to a rock and on to another rock, taking time at each perch to look all around. It then went to ground between the two rocks and buried the acorn. Having achieved this it retraced its route via the various perches to the top of the conifer once more. It must have been fixing in its memory the exact location of where it buried the acorn. It is well known that jays are responsible for the spread of oak trees, so just like the best of us, their memories are not always perfect.

We saw another interesting example of bird behaviour recently when watching a gull catching worms. It would stand on the grass tapping the ground with its foot and, sure enough, the worms popped out for lunch. A bit later a whole flock of gulls were all doing the same thing. I have seen gulls on that grass many times but they had not performed like that before. Presumably conditions such as the moistness of the soil had to be just right for the trick to work.

Still on the subject of birds, when I was walking with a small group the other day along the road at Savenend, near Farnham, we found ourselves passing through the middle of a pheasant shoot. The birds were being flushed out of a small plot close to the road where they had been reared, and the line of guns actually straddled the road. One of the shot birds fell wounded and fluttering on the road near us, rather upsetting some members of our group. I have commented before on the activities of the local shooting fraternity and how they do not do themselves any favours with the way they 'carry on'. However, to be fair to the shooters, I suppose they are no better or worse than most of us in this age of change.

Continuing with the feathery theme and changing times, I come to those mythical creatures referred to last month, ie. the angels. Maybe it is only the wings that are mythical as we now know that there are other ways of sending messages. On numerous visits to churches up and down the country one comes across many paintings, carvings and sculptures of angels, and the earlier of these depict them fully feathered apart from head, hands and feet. Some have four and even six wings, with the lower pair emanating from the hips. I recently saw a picture of a fully clothed angel whose robe was parted at the bottom exposing a feathered leg. There was no doubt that these angels could fly like the birds.

Felix



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Brownies

2nd Stansted Brownie Pack

I enjoyed getting enrolled. I like making the things for the puppet show, we made the heads for the puppets with papier maché, then we sewed the bodies and we made the backdrop. Then we did a real show, it was really fun. Once we went to the rec and we went in a tepee and made sweetie animals.

- by *Rebekah*

I have enjoyed lots of things about Brownies, but I will tell you about a few things. First, about chocolate night. We stuffed our faces with chocolate mmmmmm! And also the puppet show. We made our own puppets and performed to our parents, it was really fun. Also we did a catwalk show, where we got bin bags and wigs and other stuff and did a catwalk!! Please join! - by *Laura*

I went bowling before Rachel, our Brownie leader joined us. Badger, our old Brownie leader took us bowling. We were bowling for children with leukaemia. It was fun! - by *Taylor*

I have been at Brownies for six months and I came in May. We went into the tepee. We made sweet monsters. We played rounders and football - by *Alicia*

I have been a brownie for three years. I have enjoyed going on a Pack Holiday. We went on a walk at night and looked at the stars. All the time we were there we ate lots of food. Shortly after our Pack holiday we went swimming. It was fun. - by *Stephanie*

We learnt about Fair Trade. I enjoyed when we worked as a team to make bracelets. For every bracelet we made we got a penny. From time to time we got a note for example it said: 'One of you is ill, the person that is ill must stop working, plus you must pay 10p for medication.' At the end of the game we had to count our money. - by *Ellie*

I enjoyed the puppet show because we did it all. First, we made the puppet heads, painted them and then made a backdrop. Then, the next week we made the glove part and joined the head to it. We practised and practised then we had the show. Our parents came early to watch the show. It was great. - by *Kristin*

I enjoyed making cakes and biscuits. We iced the biscuits with green and blue icing. My second thing I loved was being enrolled. We made marshmallow people in a big tent called a tepee and I loved going swimming at Grange Paddocks. - by *Lily*

I have been a brownie for about two years. We do lots of great stuff. We go on trips. We made cakes and do puppet shows. Making the cakes was very fun because we got very messy. We play games and they are very fun. When a girl leaves, that person can choose what to do for that day. If you want to come to Brownies you have to be 7-11 years old. We once had a chocolate night, which was really yummy. - by *Ella*

I enjoy playing games at Brownies. I like it when we can choose games to play. We had a Crystal Maze evening, and Brownies had to do an activity each in teams. I had to guess

the Disney characters and other people had to pick up crystals with sticks and hit a shuttlecock ten times without it touching the ground. - by *Meg*

If you haven't drunk chocolate, made puppets for a puppet show or played games for an hour and a half or made sweet monsters, you should be a Brownie. If you are 7-11 and you are free on a Friday night, then come to Brownies. - by *Jess*

There are spaces at 2nd Stansted Brownie Pack in January 2007. If you are interested in a place, please contact me.

Rachel Warwick
Tel: 01279 815851



www.villagemusicclub.co.uk

Sunday 28th January 2007 will see Anna Stéphanie (mezzo soprano) and Jonathan Beattie (piano) in Stansted to perform the third concert in this, our 11th Season. Winner of the 2005 Kathleen Ferrier Award, Anna graduated from King's College London and later gained an M.Mus in singing from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama before joining the National Opera Studio in September 2005. Anna has appeared as a soloist with numerous choral societies, including the Bach Choir, the London Chorus and the Philharmonia Chorus in performances in Exeter Cathedral, at the Royal Albert Hall under Sir David Willcocks and at the Barbican in London. As an accomplished Lieder singer, she has given recitals at the Oxford Lieder Festival and the Wigmore Hall with pianist Jonathan Beattie, who will be her accompanist in Stansted. Jonathan himself is no stranger to Stansted. He was educated at Bishop's Stortford College and has performed for the Village Music Club on previous occasions. He too was a winner at the 2005 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, winning the Accompanist's Prize.

Their programme for the concert which is at 3.00pm in St John's Church will include songs by Franz Schubert (including 'Gretchen am Spinnrade'), Robert and Clara Schumann, Renaldo Hahn and Roger Quilter; as well as folk songs by Grainger and songs by Cole Porter and Noel Coward. Mulled wine will be served during the interval. Tickets £10, children £3 are available from Stansted Carpets, Chapel Hill, Nockolds Solicitors, Bishop's Stortford, Sonia Levy, 31 Chapel Hill, tel 815282, or at the door.

Our fourth and final concert for this season will be at 7.30pm on Saturday 17th March and will feature The London Concertante Chamber Ensemble in an evening of Strauss and Beethoven.

Alan Corbishley



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School and PTFA News

There has been plenty of activity at St Mary's this last month and we continue to be very busy as we begin to plan and prepare our Christmas celebrations here in school. Everyone has been involved – children, staff and many of the parents, too, have given of their time and expertise. Mrs Jean Brownlee organized a Book Fair, and all classes had a chance to browse. It was wonderful to see the children's enthusiasm for books of all sorts. Sales were good and we were able to add £150 worth of fiction books to the Year 6 class library.

The PTFA Christmas Shopping Evening was another success and a healthy profit was added to the PTFA funds. Simon Wilson played carols on the trumpet to welcome everyone in, and our newly-formed school choir sang seasonal songs to put everyone in the mood to shop! There are some very good singers in the school and we are aiming to develop a strong choir to support our school events, assemblies and performances and also represent the school in the community.

We were proud to see so many of our pupils at the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 12th November, whether in school uniform or representing Beavers, Cubs or Scouts. All the classes had worked on the theme of Remembrance during that week. Mr Challis was a welcome guest at one assembly,

where he explained the work of the Royal British Legion and the symbolism of the Standard.

The School Council organised a Bring and Buy sale on 21st November. They are continuing to raise funds for the new outside classroom; this will be ordered this term and completed in the New Year.

Music Quiz

The ever popular Rebecca Carter, our very own Year 5 teacher, is the quiz master at another of her renowned and popular music quizzes on **Saturday 27th January** here at St Mary's. It starts at 7.30pm for 8.00pm and costs £7.50 with a Ploughman's Platter – tickets and further details from the School Office. You are welcome to bring your own drinks.

Future Events

The PTFA also have a programme of events for spring, so do check the Village Events page for dates and times.

From all at St Mary's school, we wish you a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Christine Tonkins,
Headteacher

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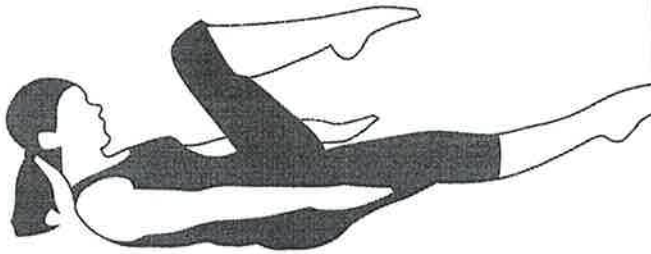
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GOOD NEWS FROM STANSTED SCOUTS

The 1st Stansted and Tortoises Scout groups are very happy to be able to update you on the future of the Scout Hut in Water Lane. For some time the groups have been working to raise funds to carry out urgent repairs to the fabric of the Hut and with the generosity of a number of benefactors we can now proceed. We would like to take this opportunity to pass on the thanks of all of the children and young people using the hut to the following organisations:

- The Clothworkers Foundation
- The Essex Local Network Fund for Children and Young People
- The Essex Playing Fields Association
- The Treloar Fund

With further support likely from the Scout County Grant Board, we are ready to proceed with the most urgent work to replace the roof covering before making improvements to the toilets and access to the building, in particular to improve access for disabled scouts.

The hut was opened in 1964 and is used for Scouts, Tortoises, Cubs, Beavers and Brownies and around 100 children, young people and leaders benefit from using the building every week. Without the support of our benefactors the facility had faced an uncertain future but we can now take the building forward for another generation. Below is a picture of the building before work commences, we will keep you up to date on the work as it proceeds and on future fund-raising events. If any local organisations would like to support us in this, please contact Dave South or Ray Franklin.



The scout hut as it is now - watch this space!

Dave South,
Group Scout Leader
1st Stansted Scouts
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Ray Franklin,
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Bonfire and Fireworks

We had a super evening for this annual event, and a great attendance. Our grateful thanks to Peter Deeks and his team for organising the firework display - we have had several complimentary remarks about this; to Ray Ball and his skatepark working group for handling the catering; to Doug Wilson and his helpers for building a massive bonfire and to the ATC for turning out to marshal the event.

Remembrance Day

Thank you to all those who turned out to join in the Parade or just to come along and watch in the Memorial Gardens. We were particularly delighted to see the number of youngsters who attended this year.

Anti-Social Behaviour

We suffered quite badly through the summer months with anti-social behaviour in the village, particularly at the Recreation Ground and railway station. We are working with other agencies to find ways to tackle the causes of this behaviour, and will be looking in particular at the effectiveness of lighting and CCTV.

Skatepark

We are delighted to announce that we have secured a grant of £16,000 from Uttlesford District Council towards Phase 2 of the Skatepark. We are currently awaiting the outcome of two other applications which, if successful, could mean that we will move towards Phase 2 early in 2007.

Police

Changes again at our Police Station - we welcome Sargent James Gilchrist, who has been posted to replace Tim Enstone - Tim has moved to Chelmsford. At the time of going to print, we believe that our other officers, and Support Officer, remain unchanged! Don't forget to report incidents which you may see - without a Police Incident Number, there has been no incident!!

Airport

By the time the next edition of the 'Link' is published, we should know the outcome of the planning application to allow passenger throughput at the Airport to increase beyond 25million per annum. Our working group meets regularly and is considering the Council's position should planning consent be granted.

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HAVE A GOOD NIGHT!

One of the least favourite parts of the veterinary surgeon's job is being on call. We all have to do it at some point in our career, but I don't think any vet ever looks forward to it. Those vets living in more urban areas may be lucky enough these days to pass their night duties on to special night emergency clinics. However for a lot of rural vets these just aren't feasible as clients would have to travel long distances in an emergency to get their pet seen and large animals have to be treated as well as small animals. At Mercer and Hughes, there is a vet on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Also, unlike many practices, we also have a nurse on duty at our Saffron Walden surgery, so our in-patients are looked after during the night. We provide a 24 hour emergency service to give our clients and their pets the best possible veterinary care; however, some of the things that people ring about in the middle of the night do amaze me.

For example, the midnight call from the man worried that his budgie had lost its voice; the 3.00am call from a lady wanting a pet passport NOW because she was going on holiday in the morning; the 5.00am call from the client wondering what time we opened in the morning! Of course there are many genuine emergencies that we are only too happy to deal with. You must forgive us sometimes if we are a little sleepy when we answer the phone or if there is the occasional yawn in the morning when we have been up all night, we do try not to let it show.

So, the 365 days include Christmas day and this year I've drawn the short straw. There are usually a few calls but in some ways it's not too bad because everyone is usually very apologetic and quite merry! Bob Mercer was on call on one Christmas Day and received a call from a distressed owner saying she was sure that her cat had broken its back as it was writhing around at her feet crying out in the most alarming manner. When he rushed to the surgery and examined the cat, he found a perfectly normal six month old female that had come into season. In theory cats aren't supposed to come on heat between November and February, but this one obviously hadn't read the text books! I hope your Christmases are all splendid and I hope mine doesn't bring too many of the following. Have fun!

Twelve veterinary days of Christmas

On the twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me ...

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DICK'S YOUNGER DAYS

More disconnected jottings about life in Stansted when I was a boy and teenager.

My first car was a 1934 Austin 10 which was 22 years old when I bought it from Mayhews Garage for £35. I eventually sold it for £10 but still remember the fun and pleasure it gave me. As we didn't have a garage I used to leave it in St John's Road. Although I was not of his flock, being a member of the Congregational Church, the Rev'd James very kindly let me leave the car in the vicarage gardens. I am sure many people will remember Rev'd James and his wife Pam. They were lovely people. Their son Nicholas was one of my Cubs. He was a smashing lad but was no angel. I have vivid memories of the episode when a stink bomb was let off at the start of a Cub meeting. I well remember the chaos of lots of little boys running round with scarves over their noses and making the most of the situation. I said that if I knew who perpetrated the deed stern action would be taken (a very polite version of what I actually said). Nicholas piped up that they were only 1/6 for three and my super sleuth powers led me to the conclusion that he was the culprit, which he did not deny. He was duly sent home (you couldn't do that now!).

Back to the car. One Sunday I went to take the car out and noticed smoke pouring out from under the door in the vicarage. On investigation a room was well alight. I called the fire brigade and then ran to the church where the morning service was in progress. One of the men who came running out was our editor Derek. There must be a moral here that a good turn often has its reward as the good deed the vicar had done for me probably saved the vicarage from a serious fire.

Sue and I have the distinction of being the last couple married by the Rev'd James at St Mary's Church before he left for pastures new. Another clergyman I well remember was Canon Barrow. I recall his commands of SIT ... STAND, delivered in stentorian tone.

Nowadays one often hears of the young people who congregate in Station Road area. This used to happen in those days but I recall there was very little trouble. There used to be a group of older lads who met outside Stan Scrivener's Off Licence. I was only a small boy but they tolerated me and were always very kind to me. I remember the leader as being a really nice guy who everyone respected. One evening they organised a cycle 'race' round the triangle. Each rider set off at intervals and was timed round the route which was along Lower Street, up High Lane, back through Stansted ending up in hurtling down Chapel Hill to where we started. I only had a very small cycle but they let me participate and I recall pedalling furiously round the route.

A lot of our time was spent in the Social Club known then as the Working Men's Club. It was very much geared up for men then. I served on the committee and am pleased to say was amongst the group who campaigned for the ladies to be given equal voting rights as we reckoned that the ladies did more for the club than lots of the men.

A landmark I recall was the large gas holder situated in Water Lane. The land led to the black bridge, still in use

today and a well known Stansted landmark. It was a bridge we used a lot as children linking the lower part of Stansted to Stoney Common and Grippers. Grippers was a great area to play. I often used it for treasure hunts, etc. with the Cubs. My mother, who as a girl lived at Forest Hall Farm, used to tell me how they had to cross the bridge on the way to school. This was quite a distance to walk to get to school. Also they had to walk to Chapel on a Sunday; and to make sure that they had actually attended the Chapel and not skipped off somewhere else, they were required to tell their parents the theme of the sermon. I remember as a small boy having to sit through very long sermons. The minister used to say firstly, then secondly, then thirdly. I recall the relief when he said and finally as I knew the end was in sight!

Talking of stink bombs I vividly remember one little rascal in the choir rolling a stink bomb along the floor and another little rascal stamping on it. To his credit the minister carried on as if nothing had happened, which wasn't easy! Several of the hymn books had 'beautiful drawings' in the back as we used to sketch the minister as he delivered his message! Eventually the younger members of the choir used to file out of the Chapel before the sermon to do something else in the vestry I believe, so we were spared the long and riveting message from the pulpit.

Readers might recall a piece I wrote some while ago about the time Keith Turner organised a get together in Stansted for his birthday. The 'Last of the Summer Wine' set wandered round Stansted reliving our youth which included having great fun in swinging across the river in Grippers on a rope we found attached to a tree, just as we used to do when we were lads. I am pleased to say no serious injury resulted from this rather reckless act.

Stansted was a very decent place to live in and I recall coming back on leave from my national service and thinking that there were plenty of worse places around!

Dick Pollard

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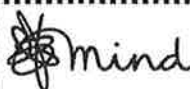
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Recycling

It would be very useful if members could help with taking the bottle boxes to the recycling skip.

Presentation Dinner

This, as you may have realised, was postponed, but we now have a new date, which is Saturday 13th January 2007; more information to follow on this at the AGM.

Club AGM

The AGM will take place on Thursday 7th December 2006 at 7.45pm and I hope to see as many members there as possible.

Social events

Do not forget you are very welcome to attend the darts evenings on a Wednesday night. We have one team playing at home and one away. Likewise, Friday night is still a social night at the Club and all are welcome.

Doreen Scraggs
Hon Secretary
Tel: 01279 815036
Email: doreenscraggs@tiscali.co.uk



Save the Children

UK

Thank you, everyone who supported the Coffee Morning which raised over £300, with a further £100 profit made at the Save the Children Fund marketing stall.

The Save the Children Fund is one of the 'old' aid agencies and is not only concerned with natural disasters, though the plastic sheeting, blankets, water purification tablets etc are all there, ready to be rolled out at a moment's notice when the need arises. The organisation is concerned with the welfare and education of children everywhere. A recent campaign was dubbed 'OUCH' and highlighted the plight of sick children in developing countries who, even if their parents take them to hospital, often many miles away, lack the money to pay for their treatment.

In this country, the Save the Children Fund has set up 'EAR'. This campaign is dedicated to children who truant or are excluded from school for any reason. Firstly, the children themselves are approached and invited to give their 'story', then the parents and schools are involved and hopefully the child is able to return to mainstream education - this may include, with parental consent - a change of school. Thank you for all your support and we look forward to seeing you at next October's Coffee Morning to carry on the good work.



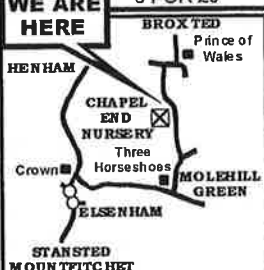
Joan Mercer

All the new children have settled in well and we now have 38 on roll. The current topic, leading up to Christmas, is 'The Seaside'. The children have read the story 'The Fish Who Could Wish', which has led nicely into finding out about creatures that live in and around the sea. The children have been on lots of local walks and regular visits to the library are planned. The last few weeks have been busy getting ready for Christmas ... making Christmas cakes and the older children preparing for the Christmas performance.

The new committee has been elected and we have been busy gathering lots of ideas for fundraisers. Our first one is selling Christmas puddings from the award winning 'Ultimate Plum Pudding' company in Cumbria. These puddings are being sold with a customised label featuring drawings from some pre-school pupils. They cost £4.99 for a 1lb pudding, which serves four adults and are DELICIOUS! We have already taken lots of orders, including some at the fabulous St Mary's School Christmas shopping evening. If you would like to support Rainbow Pre-school by ordering a pudding, then please get in touch. (They are suitable for vegetarians and have a shelf life of two years.)

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

Kate Maginn,
Rainbow Committee

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**'Cheap Flights cost the Earth'
is message at Climate Change Rally**

Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) supporters rallied and marched in central London on 4th November. They were among 20,000 people calling for urgent action on climate change. The event was one of many which took place around the world on the eve of the United Nations climate change talks in Nairobi. Aviation, the fastest growing source of the global warming gas carbon dioxide (CO₂), was uppermost in their minds because of the added burden that the proposed expansion of Stansted Airport would have on climate change. Many of the SSE supporters carried placards and banners to make clear that cheap flights could, quite literally, cost the earth.



Airport developer BAA has stubbornly refused to quantify the emissions of CO₂ that would result from increased use of Stansted's single runway, the application for which was due to be decided by Uttlesford District Council on 29th November. SSE has estimated that if expansion were to be approved, CO₂ emission levels would rise from the current seven million tons a year (including the effect of radiative forcing at altitude) to 12 million tons. A second runway would take this figure to 23 million tons. The time has come for the Government to radically rethink its aviation policy. It must stop pricing people onto planes and ensure that the real cost of flying and its impacts on climate change are acknowledged and addressed with meaningful action.

Other organisations with a strong presence at the day's events included umbrella group AirportWatch, the RSPB, Woodland Trust, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and Christian Aid. A number of Uttlesford and Braintree district councillors also took part.

Stansted passengers take to the roads as rail use tumbles

Half a million fewer airport passengers used the train to get to and from Stansted Airport last year compared to 2004 according to the latest statistics from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) published on 9th November. The CAA report shows that a total of just 4.8 million airport passengers used the train to access Stansted Airport in 2005 compared to 5.3

million in 2004, despite an overall 5% increase in the number of passengers using the airport. At the same time, the number of Stansted's passengers who arrived at or departed from the airport by road increased by 700,000 to 11.7 million – a 6% increase. Almost three quarters of Stansted passengers (74.6%) now use the roads to access the airport and only a quarter (25.0%) use the rail service, down from 28.8% in 2004.

BAA's increasing reliance upon road rather than rail travel at Stansted is directly contradictory to the Government's policy which calls for a "radical change in transport policy" based on reduced dependence on the car and greater emphasis on public transport. Government policy makes clear that airport operators, such as BAA, are expected to play a full part in achieving this. At Stansted however, the proportion of passengers travelling by rail has been declining over the past five years. Local people need very little reminding about the growth in road congestion or of the overcrowding on many of our train services to London arising from the rapid expansion of the airport in recent years. BAA has consistently failed to keep pace with the airport's expansion by investing in the proper rail infrastructure needed to cater for the rapid growth we have seen in passenger numbers. The annual number of passengers using Stansted Airport has grown from less than 5 million just 10 years ago to more than 23 million today. It is astonishing that even in the case of BAA's present planning application which, if approved by Uttlesford District Council, could eventually enable Stansted to handle 45 million or even 50 million passengers a year, BAA continues to claim that there is no need for any new investment in rail infrastructure or road improvements.

Uttlesford District Council is due to decide the outcome of the present planning application at a special meeting of its Development Control Committee on 29th November.

Amongst all the other appalling implications, if BAA's latest expansion proposals were to be approved they would amount to a recipe for more traffic congestion and pollution and more overcrowding on our trains. In short, a recipe for grid-lock.

Carol Barbone, Campaign Director
Tel:0777 552 3091
Email: cbarbone@mxc.co.uk
www.stopstanstedexpansion.com



**STANSTED & DISTRICT
LIBERAL DEMOCRATS**

Our next Ploughman's Lunches will be on Saturday 9th December and Sat 13th January at the Stansted Day Centre, 12 noon to 2.00pm. All are welcome.

The Constituency Annual Dinner will be held on Saturday, 9th December at Elsenham Village Hall, 7.30pm for 8.00pm. Tickets are £29.50 and the speaker will be Chris Huhne (one of the candidates for the leadership election earlier this year). For further information and menu choices, please ring 814222 or 813432.

Ruth Rawlinson



Stansted Evening Women's Institute

There was quite a good turn out for our Annual Meeting in November even though we had no advertised speaker for this month. This gave us the chance to let members remember some of the things that we had done during the past year and to hear some of the things that we can all look forward to in the next. The coffee morning in October for the Save the Children Fund, where we had a cake stall, raised over £300 pounds in total, and our stall £60. It was well attended by our members and other organisations in the village and we enjoyed this opportunity to see everyone. Unfortunately the shopping trip to Peterborough had to be cancelled as there were not enough people to fill the coach and make it viable. Perhaps next year we will try a different destination. Members were asked to support the George Mills Campaign by sending items of toiletries to County Headquarters, where they will be sent out to Chernobyl in the Ukraine, for the children's rehabilitation centre, which George and his wife visited for many years, driving across Europe to deliver the goods. Essex WIs have been involved with him in this venture for a very long time. Marion suggested that we collect money and buy the items in bulk and we were given a total of £41, which should produce quite a lot of toilet rolls and soap powder and soap tablets! We also collected £25 for the British Legion for the poppy wreath laid at the War Memorial on Remembrance Sunday in our name.

I attended the Essex Half-Yearly Council Meeting in Thurrock and was able to give a report on a really good day. Our main speaker was James Wight, son of James Herriott (real name Alf Wight - it doesn't have quite the same ring to it as his pseudonym!). His audience was 700 strong and he entertained us with some wonderful stories; he must have had a very good rapport with his father. His father actually came from Scotland and went to live in Yorkshire when he first qualified as a vet. Life was very tough in the early days as he was never quite sure when and if he would be paid. As we all know his life took on a real turn of fortune when he began to write, which came about after he suffered a nervous breakdown. His son said that fame and fortune never changed him and he is still remembered all over the world 12 years after his death. We also heard from David Williams, Essex Press & Publicity Officer, for the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE). He gave a very interesting talk on the development of the Society since its inception in 1928 and the need to preserve what we can of our countryside particularly here in Essex.

Pearl Wellings then told us of the trip to London organised by our County Federation called 'Cosmopolitan London' on which she and 11 other members went early in November. The coach picked them up at the Birchanger Services and they were joined by their guide at Liverpool Street. First stop was for coffee at 'Dirty Dicks' the tavern in Bishopsgate, a tourist attraction once owned by Nathaniel Bentley a man of fashion, who after a broken engagement allowed it to become dirty and decayed. After his death it was allowed to remain so - a little like 'Miss Havisham's' house in Great Expectations. From there they went on foot to many of the

more unknown streets of London, and were given the history of all the different immigrants that have settled there and then moved on, such as the Romans, Normans, Jews, Huguenots, and Eastern Europeans. Some of the streets they walked still have signs of these past inhabitants. Artillery Lane, White Street car park and Fournier Street still have houses and buildings preserved and, of course, they particularly enjoyed Chinatown. After lunch they were taken by coach to Neasden - not generally known for its architectural beauty - but now the home of the magnificent Hindu Temple, which can accommodate over 42,000 people. This apparently took only two and a half years to build and they all said perhaps the architects of that should have a go at Wembley Stadium! The roof is unsupported by pillars and the internal decorations are quite overwhelming. Pearl made all of us wish that we had been on the trip with them.

Our AGM began with the review of our Bye-Laws which all relate to Denman College for which we give two Bursaries a year and they were quickly dealt with. Sue Holland, our Treasurer for many years, gave her report on our finances, which continue to be good. The Annual Report was given by the secretary; this is a summary of all that we have achieved during the year and this is sent to County where it is filed along with all the others in Essex. Over the country as a whole there must be a great archive of life in the countryside during the last 90 years. We were taken back into the past - September 1963 - when Marion Pretty read out the Minutes of the meeting for that month and we were intrigued to find that the bursary for Denman (now £100) was just being raised to £10, and that would have paid for travel, accommodation and tuition. We were reliably informed that one member bought a hat out of it as well! Sadly our £100 these days pays for only about half of this (and without the hat). This year our President for the past seven years, Marion Pretty, is standing down but staying on the committee with us, and Barbara Trigg is joining us. Marion was thanked for all the hard work and interest she has given to the WI. Brenda Ryan is the new President and was wished every success in her new role. 14th December is the next meeting when we have a talk entitled, 'I don't have ... Christmas decorations' so come along and find out with us what she does have!

Our January meeting is the start of a new year when subscriptions become due - prospective members are welcome to attend three meetings before deciding to join. January is also our New Year Party and this year we will be having Line Dancing to watch or join in, as well as our usual food and wine. In February Peter Lawrence makes a welcome return to tell us and show with slides some of our Essex Medieval Churches. This might appeal to others in the village and they are welcome as visitors - male or female!

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