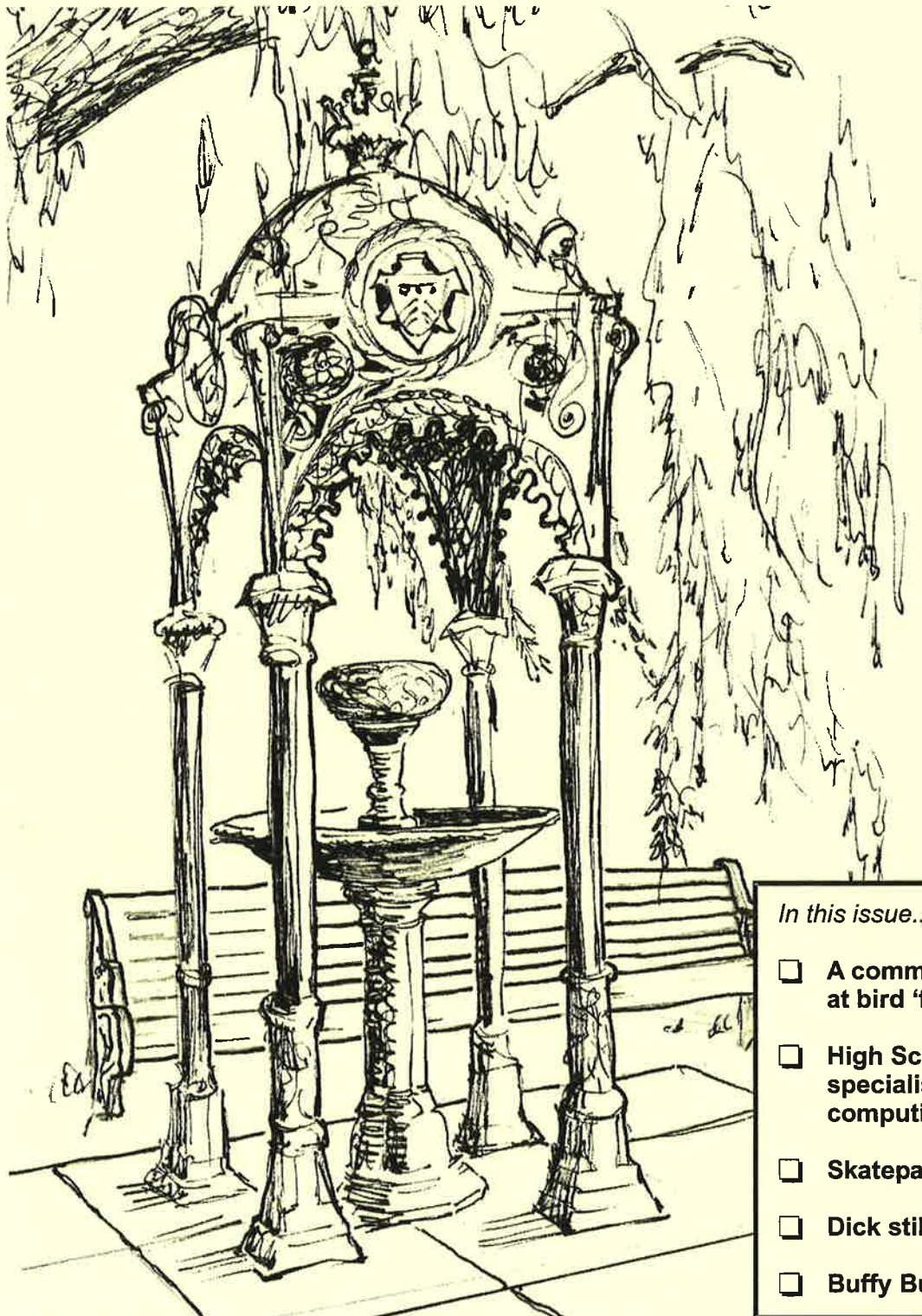


Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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ada

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Rector's Diary

2nd April

Announced I'd be leaving today. Thought it would be straightforward, as we'd been sitting on it for an age and I was tired of being evasive about long-term plans; even had a few gags in the script, and I blew it, blurted out the essentials and cut to the first hymn while I could still speak.

People who call this a job miss the point. Over ten years you can't walk down to get a paper without hearing the latest episode of someone's story, and it becomes part of who you are. You are even bound to the people who dislike you, they are still your parishioners, still people whom God loves.

It'll pass, more quickly than I would like. I guess it's like regenerating Dr Who. The new face will seem strange or wonderful, but it will all be forgotten once the Cybermen or the Daleks show up. Then, all that will matter is that there is someone reliable to hand who knows how to work a Tardis or a sonic screwdriver.

7th April

Conversation with a bishop friend about the absence of much art depicting Palm Sunday. He reckoned it was because Palm Sunday is about us. Later in Holy Week we can lose ourselves behind the bad guys wearing the black hats, Pilate, Judas, Herod. But we can identify with people who want to welcome Jesus because we want to. The down side is that we don't want him to bring any difficulty with him. He mustn't bring children who make a noise in church, or people with learning difficulties, he mustn't bring immigrants or refugees, the yobs who gather at the railway station or diehard *Daily Mail* readers. The problem with Palm Sunday is

we want the bits of Jesus we like and we know that, once the shooting starts, we may change allegiance later in the week, just as that crowd did. We'd rather not paint them, we don't want to know what their faces might look like.

13th April Maundy Thursday

Email from Toby at the *Observer*. He's heard that the diocese posted a deficit of almost a million pounds in 2005, would like a comment.

What I can't get my head around is that the issue is obvious, it just gets complicated when we discuss it in church. For years we've been hearing churchpeople blame The Church for our financial difficulties, as if The Church was somewhere out there. The fact is that the money lost in the property market in the eighties has been more than made up for since then, diocesan administrations have been pared down to the minimum and clergy expenses are about as low as they reasonably can be. We are not being asked to underwrite some bloated bureaucracy in the church out there, we are trying to maintain a presence in every community in the land with declining numbers, while having to pay VAT on the costs of repairs to listed buildings. When the income drops, we combine parishes, so parishioners see less of their vicar, so become disaffected, give less and so more parishes are added to the clergy we can still pay, and the cycle continues.

Those who are comfortable locating the problem with some theoretical Church Out There somewhere would be better being asked if their sons and daughters are regular members of a local parish church. That would bring them closer to the source of the problem, and with a bang more often than not.

It seems to me we either keep combining

contact us

all enquiries

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church.office@stansted.net

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Monday, Wednesday, Friday

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joy@stansted.net

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Revd Andrew Spurr

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rector@stansted.net

Assistant Curate

Revd Dr Caroline Currer

(01279) 815243

curate@stansted.net

Director of Music

Currently vacant

website

www.stansted.net/stjohns

St John's Diary

Sunday

8:00am said Holy Communion

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



Steve Fischbacher and friends

www.fischy.com

These well-established and lively children's musicians, mime artist and schools worker will be coming to St John's to perform in the week of June 19th.

Anyone who feels they would like to help us to manage the event, please call the Church Office on 815243. (CRB clearance required)

more and more parishes, for those who want to keep some semblance of a world they grew up in, while running clergy ragged, or we close parishes and concentrate our efforts and time on developing a few centres and invest in styles of church and spirituality which speak to present day problems. You can't do both on current income.

15th April Holy Saturday

Lying in bed listening to the interview between Fergal Keane and Norman Kember on Radio 4. I'm troubled that I find Kember a difficult man to like. He's doing the right thing, he is trying to look into the eyes of The Other and see a human being, not a statistic or a cause. But I can't help feeling that there is something disconnected about him.

He concedes the irony of being the man of non-violence who had to be sprung by the SAS, but there's something aggressive about his non-violence; you can't hit someone over the head verbally with non-violence, as if violence is nothing at all to do with you.

In the back of my mind there's something in Gandhi's correspondence with his Anglican priest friend Charlie Andrews about non-violence. Gandhi's followers are passively resisting the British, and being beaten up, but there is a sympathy that his followers have for the aggressors which I'm not hearing from Kember. Gandhi goes as far as to say to Andrews that, among his best passive resisters, are the Sikhs who served in the British Army, who know how to kill. Now they do not respond violently, not because they can't, but because they know what it's like, choose not to, while keeping a sympathy for those who are being violent to them.

I think my disquiet is because you can't be non-violent in a way that says that violence has nothing to do with you. You have to begin by acknowledging the violence in the depths yourself, of all of us, before choosing to renounce it. I suppose that takes us back to being in the crowd on Palm Sunday.

AS

From the Registers

There were no baptisms or weddings at St John's in March.

Funerals:

3rd March Alfred Howard John Ansell, 90 - St. Mary's

3rd March Vera Wyatt, 90 - Parndon Wood Crematorium

6th March Roy Snelling, 73 - St Mary's

10th March Hugh James Allison, 54 - St Mary's

MOVING ON

As you will see in his column, Andrew Spurr has decided that, after ten years in Stansted as Curate and Rector, the time has come to move on to another parish. He will become Vicar of Evesham later this year. As yet we do not have a moving date, but it is likely to be after the end of the school term, possibly at the end of July.

Many people in Stansted, Birchanger and Farnham will miss Andrew, Anna and William, but will want to wish them well for the future. We will arrange suitable events when we have firm dates, and there will then be a chance to say what is in all of our hearts.

Alastair Bone
Peter Jones
Gary West



You add. We multiply.

14th-20th May is the week that envelope collectors will be coming to a doorstep near you. Please give generously and if you are a tax payer **please remember to sign the declaration.** 410,000 people (not all in Stansted!) gift aided their donations last year, which meant that the tax man increased those donations by almost a third more.

Start the Week by coming to the Christian Aid Service on Sunday 14th May at 6.30pm in the Friends Meeting House. As well as a time of worship, this is an opportunity to hear more about where Christian Aid spends your money.

Make a cake, turn out your clutter, clear the book shelves, grow a few plants and contribute to the **Christian Aid Market** to be held at the Friends Meeting House on Saturday 20th May from 10.00am till 12 noon. There will also be a Traidcraft stall, a cup of coffee and a delicious fairly traded biscuit.

Enjoy the week!

Catherine Dean 813579



SHALOM

Our next meeting is on 8th May when Alan Wheeler will be leading us through the second part of Gerard Hughes' book 'God in all things'.

This will be followed on 22nd May by a talk from Rev'd Deborah Snowball, curate of Great St Mary, Sawbridgeworth - who entertained the Stansted WI so well a few months ago.

Both meetings are at 7 Blythwood Gardens, and start at 8.00pm. Do join us if you can - you will be most welcome. For more details please contact Catherine Dean on 813579.

ROMAN CATHOLIC

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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

On a sunny Saturday last month, eleven members of St Theresa's Reading Group set out for a two day retreat at the Anglican Retreat House at Pleshey. This was the first such venture for the Reading Group, and a number of us felt rather apprehensive as to whether it would be a success. We needn't have worried - from the moment we set foot inside the door at Pleshey to the moment we left, it was a truly life-enhancing experience. The sun shone, the beautifully kept grounds, surrounded by peaceful countryside, were full of spring flowers, and the house was warm and welcoming; but above all, our two days together enabled us to get to know each other at a deeper level than is possible in our normal encounters.

A small committee had met about two months previously to decide on the programme, which consisted of different sessions led by individual members of the Reading Group. The first session focussed on the book we were currently reading 'The Power of Now; a guide to spiritual enlightenment' by Eckhart Tolle. This is a complex book, and by no means an easy read. While it is difficult to summarise, a key message is that our soul, our true self exists at a deeper level beyond the mind, and that by misidentifying ourselves with our mind, which is constantly revisiting the past and remains trapped in time, we fail to go beyond, to the 'now', where we are forever one with God. The session ended in a game where we were dealt cards, on which were printed concepts from the book, and we each had to talk for a couple of minutes on what these meant to us. Other sessions on the first day were a look at how 'Tomorrow's Christian' should be reacting to the issues facing the world; and a session listening to a lecture on tape by Fr Richard Rohr, a Catholic spiritual teacher. This echoed and complimented the 'Power of Now', in that he discussed the need to let go of our limited minds and to live from a deeper wisdom that comes from the heart and sees everything as a gift from God. After such an intensive day, we were happy to spend the evening after supper just relaxing.

The next day being Palm Sunday, we joined the congregation of the Parish Church in their Palm Sunday service, which began with the procession from their little hall to the

Church, and ended afterwards with coffee and biscuits. We then went back to the Retreat House next door for a short period of meditation before lunch. After a very good lunch, we met for our final session on St John's Gospel, which looked at the unique features of how salvation is presented in this Gospel. John's understanding was contrasted with other interpretations both in Old Testament texts and the Synoptic Gospels.

After tea and cakes, we then said our farewells and departed; we all felt enriched by our time together, and enjoyed it so much that we have already booked to go again next year. The Retreat House is built on the foundations of a 14th century College of Canons, and the field behind is the site of a brick bridge where the canons used to process to the original parish church near the now ruined Pleshey Castle. The field is known locally as the Holy Land, and we certainly felt that we had been that weekend in our own Holy Land.

Ruth Rawlinson

UNITED REFORMED

Chapel Hill

Minister Rev'd David Simpson
11 Church Manor
Bishop's Stortford
CM23 5AF
Tel: 01279 504900

Contact Mrs Janet Townsend
58 Chapel Hill
Tel: 01279 812593

Preachers for May

7th 2.30pm Rev'd David Simpson
14th 10.30am Rev'd Martin Cressey
21st 10.30am With Methodists
Rev'd David Simpson - Communion
28th 10.30am With Methodists - Doug Coulton

Dates for your diary:

4th 8.00pm Joint URC/Methodist Church meeting in the Lecture Hall
7th 3.30pm Afternoon Tea
For lifts telephone 813977 or 812593
8th 6.00pm Pilots for children 5-13 years.
For information telephone 813433
15th 2.30pm Monday Club
For information telephone 815137
20th 10.00am Christian Aid Market,
Quaker Meeting House forecourt

Everyone was saddened over Easter to hear of the death of John Berrett, aged 97. John had lived in the area and worked at Stansted Airport for many years until he moved to Nottingham when he remarried over 20 years ago; but he still kept in touch and whenever they visited his daughter, Angela Finbow, and her family (of whom he was very proud) they came to Church to see us. Even though he suffered with bad legs and failing eyesight he always had a cheerful word when you spoke to him. We remember Phyllis and the family in our prayers.

Janet Townsend

METHODIST

Meets in Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Minister Rev'd Keith Page
2 South Road
Bishop's Stortford
Tel: 01279 654475

Secretary Mrs Catherine Dean
49 Recreation Ground
Stansted
Tel: 01279 813579

Email methodists@stansted.net

All services start at 9.30am unless otherwise stated

Services and preachers for May

Services are at the Friends Meeting House unless otherwise stated.

7th 9.30am Christine Heyhoe
14th 9.30am Rev'd Keith Page
21st 10.30am At the URC - Rev'd David Simpson
Holy Communion
28th 10.30am At the URC - Doug Coulton

There will be a joint URC/Methodist Church meeting at 8.00pm on 4th May in the United Reformed Church Hall to progress the setting up of our new church.

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 11.00am

AN APOLOGY

We are sorry that in our March issue the heading for the Local History Society was mistakenly replaced by that of the Garden Club. We can only hope that the error caused amusement as well as bewilderment! There were also some errors of omission. It was a bad month for gremlins. Sorry.

BUT NO APOLOGY . . .

for requesting copy to arrive on time. Arrival of material after the stated copy date is a major factor affecting our production run. We try to incorporate late arrivals and usually succeed, but it does cause problems for our small and hard-pressed production team. Next month the copy date of **11th May** for the **June** issue will, due to conflicting commitments, be strictly adhered to and late copy will just not appear. If you are one who has fallen into this unfortunate habit please help us by sending your copy on time – but above all, send it. We love receiving your offerings; life wouldn't be the same without you.

Editor

BIRD 'FLU

The important news this month is the confirmation of the H5N1 'flu virus in a dead swan in Scotland. Although at the time of writing no other cases have been confirmed, I thought it might be appropriate to circulate the advice that DEFRA is currently giving us.

A severe form of bird 'flu has affected poultry flocks and other birds in several countries since 2003. As of 6th April this year, 192 people have also caught the infection as a result of close and direct contact with infected birds. The current problem began in South Korea in 2003 in communities where people live in very close proximity to birds; where chickens are allowed inside houses; where standards of health and hygiene may be poor and where chickens are killed in the back yards. However there is no firm evidence that H5N1 can pass easily from person to person. Bird 'flu really remains a disease of birds, and the risk of catching bird 'flu in this country is extremely low. As you can imagine we have had a number of queries from members of the public about bird 'flu. At the moment DEFRA is only concerned with the reporting of dead swans, geese, ducks or three or more birds of the same species found close together, or five or more birds of different species found in the same place. **If you find a single dead bird, you do not need to call DEFRA.** It should be remembered that spring is here and there will be an increase in the number of dead birds seen around, as baby birds often fall out of their nests and cats are more likely to be bringing in young birds at this time of year. The DEFRA Helpline for reporting dead birds is 08459 33 55 77.

If you do find a dead bird, the advice from DEFRA is as follows.

1. Avoid touching the bird with your bare hands
2. Wear disposable gloves and place the bird in a plastic bag
3. Tie the bag, place it in a second plastic bag, and dispose of the bird in normal household refuse
4. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water
5. Alternatively the bird can be buried, but not in a plastic bag.

Up to date advice can be obtained from the DEFRA website www.defra.gov.uk. There is also a really good information page on the Department of Health website, www.dh.gov.uk. We have both of these printed off as information sheets and if you want to drop into the surgery Angela will be able to let you have a copy. Let's hope that the current confirmation of the virus is an isolated one and we can all get on and enjoy spring now it finally seems to be here!

Ilse Pedler,
Partner,
Mercer & Hughes Veterinary Surgeons



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Bill Hardy, who spoke to us at our last meeting is the Historian at St James's Church, Thorley, and has also gathered a fund of information on the Thorley Post Office. Until the Penny Post was introduced in 1840, the cost of sending all letters was borne by the recipient; but with the new system, offices were set up across the country to sort and dispatch the post and, of course, to sell the new Penny Black stamps which each item had to carry. Later the Penny Black was replaced by the Penny Red, as the black date stamps used to cancel them were difficult to read on the darker colour!

The first Post Office in Thorley was established in Thorley Street and was very different to the kind of establishment we expect to see now - and hope to have in Stansted soon. Housed in an ordinary cottage and probably established in the front room, the Postmaster, James Hale, officiated from 1854 to 1901, while his wife assisted by delivering in-coming mail, doing the washing for nearby Twyford House and bringing up four children. James handed over to his younger daughter and after his death in 1902, the Post Office was transferred to the Coach and Horses, just up the road, until 1933. From then until 1948, Mrs Eileen Groom was Postmistress in her modern-looking bungalow, and this must have been a very difficult period. Apart from the normal wartime pressures which Mrs Groom had to face, a German bomber crashed in the garden of the house two doors away! Miss Ruth Clark then became Postmistress after her, the Post Office moving to the cottage next door to the one James Hale originally used, and in 1967, the Thorley Post Office finally closed.

To illustrate his talk, Bill had slides showing James Hale and his family, the buildings which housed the Thorley Post Office, together with several items of post bearing the Thorley post mark. However, he had one letter from November 1786, in which the writer complained bitterly that he had had to pay 3 shillings and 8 pence to receive a letter sent from London by stage coach - a complete vindication of the principle of the Penny Post, if one were needed. Other examples of post which passed through the Thorley Post Offices were shown, but the most touching was a letter from a soldier in North Africa seeking news of his family - he died one month later in September 1943, in the final push to capture Tunis. Bill's talk ended in an interesting discussion between him and members of the audience, who appreciated his wide knowledge of local events and personalities, and which ranged far beyond the story of the Post Office! We are very grateful to him for a fascinating evening.

Our next meeting on 4th May will be the last in our current season and will commence with our short Annual General Meeting. It will be followed by one of Peter Sanders' ever popular presentations when, with the aid of members of the Committee, he will talk on 'Crime in Stansted in the Victorian Period'. Hope you can join us.

Ian Seavers



MOUNTFITCHET HIGH SCHOOL

Mountfitchet High School has recently bid to become a Specialist Mathematics and Computing College. The school sent its submission to the Department for Education and Skills in March after raising nearly £50,000 in sponsorship.

Her Majesty's Inspectors will be visiting the school after Easter to discuss the proposed development plans. If the bid is successful the new status will begin in September 2006. Specialist College Status will bring in extra funding from the DfS for the next four years. The increase in funding will transform the school and will help to drive up educational standards still further. A new joint use school/community Information Communication Technology Learning Centre is planned along with an expansion of the school's partnership work with local primary schools. It is also hoped that local businesses will play a significant part in enriching the school's curriculum.

The Local Education Authority has endorsed the school's bid saying that "The focus on Maths and Computing will add an element of diversity that is particularly welcome in this local area. This specialism will also assist with local employability. The Local Authority believes that it is entirely appropriate that Mountfitchet High School offers Maths and Computing in this locality. The LA views the establishment of Mountfitchet as a specialist MCC college as an important part of the Authority's strategic plan for specialist MMC coverage in the Uttlesford area and within Essex as a whole. We strongly recommend that Mountfitchet High School becomes a specialist Mathematics and Computing school".

Paul Presland,
Deputy Headteacher

PTA News

Our quiz last month was enjoyed by everyone and raised over £450 for school funds. Many thanks to Tony Fagan for being such an excellent quizmaster and to all of you who came along to support us.

The VW event, which was the first of its kind held at School, was a huge success. The weather was cold, but fine, and many different types of VWs were to be seen filling the entire field. We are already looking forward to next year which promises to be even bigger.

The next function to look forward to is the extremely popular 'Millionaire's Night'. This is on 13th May 7.30 for 8.00pm. It is a very special evening with a champagne reception, above average food, bar and enough 'money' provided to make your fortune on the tables. Dress is as formal (or not) as you wish. It really is great fun. Tickets are £12 each available from Yvonne on 815707 or Sally on 321941.

Yvonne Rains



Stansted Windmill
Open Days
2 - 6 pm

Sun 30th April & Mon 1st May
Sun 7th May
Sun 14th May (11am - 5pm)
Sun 28th & Mon 29th May
Sun 4th June

British Red Cross
COFFEE MORNING

Friday 12th May
10.30 am - 12 noon
Old Lane House, Church Road
Raffle & cake stall
Enquiries tel 813172
Part of Red Cross Week
Everyone welcome



CHINESE
AUCTION

7.30 for 8 pm Sat 13th May
St John's Hall
Tickets £6
(incl ploughman's) from
Kate on 814801
Bring your own drink & glass



VILLAGE EVENTS

May

1 Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
2 Tue	Buffy Bus	Rainsford Rd 1.45 - 3 pm
3 Wed	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
4 Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
7 Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
	Afternoon Tea (after service)	UR Church 3.30 - 5 pm
8 Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
9 Tue	Buffy Bus	Stoneyfield Drive 1.45 - 3 pm
11 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
12 Fri	Red Cross Coffee Morning	Old Lane Hse 10.30 am - noon
13 Sat	Lib Dem Ploughman's	Day Centre noon - 2 pm
	Millionaire's Night	Mountfitchet Sch 7.30 for 8 pm
	Rainbow Chinese Auction	St John's Hall 7.30 for 8 pm
13 Sat / 14 Sun	Skids	Lower St car park 9 am - 3 pm
14 Sun	Windmill Special Opening	11 am - 5 pm
16 Tue	Buffy Bus	Rainsford Rd 1.45 - 3 pm
20 Sat	Farmers' Market	Ugley Village Hall 10 am - noon
	Christian Aid Market	Quaker Mtg Hse 10 am - noon
	May Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5pm
	Skatepark Dinner & Dance	Mntfitchet Sch 7.30 - 11.30 pm
20 Sat / 21 Sun	Skids	Lower St car park 9 am - 3 pm
22 Mon	Shalom Group	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
23 Tue	Buffy Bus	Stoneyfield Drive 1.45 - 3 pm
25 Thu	District Council Area Panel	Hatfield Heath Village Hall 8 pm
28 Sun / 29 Mon	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm

June

1 Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
3 Sat	RBL Charity Concert	St John's Church 3 pm
3 Sat / 4 Sun	Skids	Lower St car park 9 am - 3 pm
4 Sun	Windmill Open	2 - 6 pm
	Afternoon Tea (after service)	UR Church 3.30 - 5 pm
5 Mon	Shalom Group	URC Hall 8 pm
7 Wed	Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
8 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm

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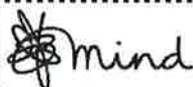
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UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

After the long trudge through the winter months, we are now into the Summer term, when we hope for good weather for events such as Sports Day and the Summer Fayre.

The earlier part of this year has already been busy with many events. Four of our Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in the now annual Mountfitchet High School Public Speaking competition. They found this a valuable experience, which, although nerve-wracking, helped them to develop greater self-confidence and will help them to cope more effectively with similar situations in future. Our Year 3 children took part in the morning service in St John's in February, as a celebration of Education Sunday, when they each received a Bible, kindly donated by the church. Meanwhile, some of our older children worked on their cycling proficiency skills with Brenda Ryan – another of the ways in which we aim to prepare our pupils for the future.

In March, all of the teachers of St Mary's attended the first-ever joint training day for the Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet Federation of Schools. We were treated to an opening talk by Professor David Hargreaves, whose comments were rooted in reality but incredibly inspiring to us all. During the rest of the day, most of the workshops were run by teaching staff from the Federation schools and included a wide variety of themes, developed by some excellent project work that has been ongoing between schools. Next year's date is already booked!

In the last week of term we enjoyed a couple of visits by Year 5 children from a Tower Hamlets school. They were visiting the Gorsefield Centre and wanted to compare their experience with that of Stansted children. Our own children showed them round the school and spent some time talking about life in Stansted and life in an inner-city locality. The children found some unexpected similarities and differences and everyone enjoyed the two afternoons, as this comment from one of our visitors shows: 'The visit to the school was fun. I felt like I was part of the school'.

We finished the Spring term with our Easter Service, in St John's, celebrating new life with some lively songs and in thinking about the sort of qualities that we aim to show to each other in school life. The children used time in their TEAM Talk Groups earlier in the week to talk about these and then shared their ideas with the whole school and parents who attended the service. Here is what Emma shared from her group, about learning:

'Learning is about thinking and listening. Learning is sometimes hard if you don't understand. Learning is fun although it doesn't come free and isn't always easy. In school we show each other our learning by listening; showing teachers good body language; showing teachers that we are interested in the work; using what we know.'

Wendy Wood, Headteacher

It's full speed ahead with the new post office counter service at Y&Z in Chapel Hill. Since last month Mr Alibai has submitted his application to Post Office Counters and has contractors lined up to do the conversion work in his shop. It looks like the opening may be in June or July if all continues to go well.

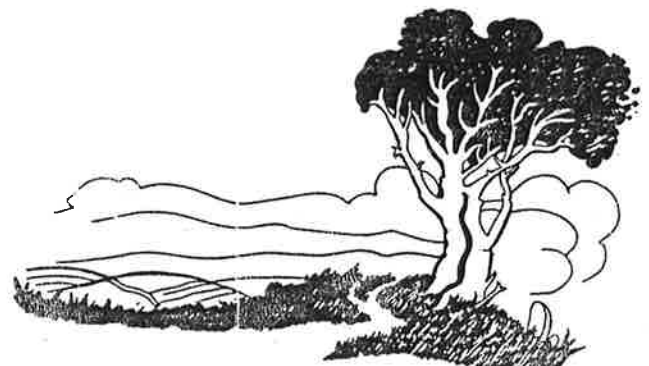
There seems to be some confusion over what journeys are eligible for travel using the new concessionary bus passes for people over 60. In particular, there is conflicting information about journeys outside Essex. I am not going to attempt this month to put the record straight but hope all will be clear in May. If you find you can't use your pass for a trip that you think should be eligible, please report the problem to Alex Stewart or Denise Thoday at Uttlesford on 01799 510555 or 510608.

I am now chairing what is known as a performance select committee. This committee is responsible for overseeing and auditing the Council's performance - its finances, its services and its ability to respond to changing demands from central government and the public. The recently received annual report from the Audit Commission was not as positive as we would have liked. It showed how difficult it is proving to turn round an organisation that has suffered from many years of under investment and which still struggles to cope with day to day services plus big issues like the airport.

A lot of effort is going into improving the environment around the Mountfitchet Green and Stoneyfield Drive. Shrubs were recently planted around the green. A consultation evening is being held at the end of April to test out ideas such as a shelter for young people. This is a scheme that has gone down well in Birchanger.

The next area panel takes place on Thursday 25th May at Hatfield Heath Village Hall. Come along and let local councillors know your views on current issues. Policing matters are expected to feature at this meeting.

Councillor Alan Dean
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NEWS FROM THE DAY CENTRE.

We had a most successful Coffee Morning on 12th April. Six charities had stalls and in total we made £461.10. Hearing Help, Saffron Sight, Carers, Uttlesford Community Travel, Save the Children and St John's Church Hall all benefited. Many thanks to all who helped and all who spent their money!

Do call in to see us - you don't have to have anything to eat or drink but the lunches cooked by Veronica and Bridget are delicious and very reasonably priced. There is Bingo on Tuesday afternoon, a beetle drive on Thursday and whist on Friday, where you will be very welcome.

Brenda Scarr

Stansted In Bloom

At the recent Open Spaces Committee meeting, members considered whether it was appropriate to proceed with local competitions given the hosepipe ban which is now in force. It was agreed that all residents are in the same boat when it comes to the ability to water their gardens/tubs/baskets etc and that we should go ahead. We shall therefore be having the usual Best Garden (front/back/courtyard - anything goes!), and Best Baskets/Tubs. Clearly to be able to judge, we must have access to the appropriate area to view! Entry forms will be circulated in the next edition of our newsletter, Stansted Network, and judging will hopefully take place in early July.

Skatepark

An extremely successful Quiz Night was held in March raising over £1,100 towards funds for Phase 2 of this project - our congratulations to the working party (and their friends!) who put in many, many hours of planning. They are already working on the next event - a 'Colonial' style Dinner and Dance to be held at the Mountfitchet High School on Saturday 20th May. Tickets and further information from Jo 812524 or Mandy 816356. Also see elsewhere in The 'Link' for more details about this event.

Playscheme

Advance warning that the Scheme will run during the summer holidays, commencing Monday 31st July through to Friday 18th August. The Playscheme provides supervised activities/arts and craft and sport for 5-14 year olds. It will be held at St John's Church Hall, with use of the outside facilities at St Mary's School. Lead Supervisor will again be Rachel Butterworth (a local girl who is also a primary school teacher) now in her third year of the Scheme, and she will be ably assisted by others. As we go to print we are applying for registration with Ofsted. If we are successful, this will allow us to open all day to all age groups, rather than the morning-only restriction for under 8's - look out for further details in future editions of The 'Link'.

Ruth Clifford, Clerk to the Council



After a relaxing break, both staff and children have returned refreshed and ready for lots of exciting activities this term.

Our 'Chinese Auction' fundraiser has now been rescheduled for Saturday 13th May at 7.30pm in St John's Hall. Those of you who have attended before will remember how much fun it is. We need to sell lots of tickets to make it worth our while, so please tell your friends about it! If you enjoyed yourself last year, why not come again even if you do not have a child at Rainbow? For further details see the 'What's on' page, or call Kate on 814801.

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)



STANSTED &
DISTRICT LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS.

Our next ploughman's lunches will be on Saturday 13th May, and Saturday 10th June, 12 noon to 2.00pm at the Day Centre. All are welcome.

Our next social will be a Midsummer evening event on Saturday 24th June at Chantry Hall, Henham. Further information will be in next month's 'Link', or telephone 814222 or 813432.

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Stansted Evening Women's Institute

Our meeting fell on Maundy Thursday and that, coupled with April showers, might have meant there would be a poor attendance - not so - more than 40 people gathered to hear our speaker and to catch up on all the latest news! Ann Witchell (now Ann Hardy, she informed us, having recently got married) travelled from Canvey Island to tell us about American Patchwork Quilts and give a brief history of quilting. With the aid of slides she told of the earliest uses of quilting to be found in padding for use under armour during battles, for men as well as horses. Quilted sleeves were a fashion accessory for gentlemen in the 1700s and for ladies in the 18th century in the form of petticoats and skirts for travelling. The Pilgrim Fathers, who set sail for America in 1620, took with them their quilting traditions and were the first to make quilts out of necessity, recycling old clothes and materials which were hard to come by, and padding them for warmth in the cold winters of Massachusetts. These would have been in sombre colours using natural dyes, not the colourful quilts we see today.

Already a dressmaker, Ann was persuaded by an American friend to try her hand at an American Sample Quilt whilst recovering from an operation, as these are worked in easy to handle squares and put together at the end. She brought hers along to show us, each square beautifully worked in a different design, each of which having its own name, in shades of pink and cream. It took her three years to complete, by which time it is hoped that she had recovered from her operation!

In the 19th century Quilting Bees were very popular and women and girls would gather to make a quilt, sitting round the room and the quilt being hauled up to the ceiling on a pulley out of the way when not being worked on. Tulips and roses were particularly popular as motifs, and wedding quilts would be worked in white. As many as 25 quilts could be made in a winter by a group. When a quilt was finished a cat would be placed in the centre and then tossed up towards the ceiling and allowed to fall; the person nearest to whom it landed would have the next quilt to be made. Nice for them, not so good for the cat! Quilt-making very much revived again in the second half of the 20th century, and with the use of sewing machines has become much quicker and more and more inventive in colour and design. Ann was thanked for a fascinating talk by Liz Hedge.

Our stall at the Charity Coffee Morning on 12th April raised £60 for the St John's Hall Refurbishment Fund. It was a well supported event of which we were pleased to be part. Rosemary Minshull gave us a report on the County AGM she had attended on our behalf at Colchester. As well as reports on County affairs she was able to hear our new National Chairman Fay Mansell - we have objected to the new title of 'National Chair' but have been told that we have to keep up with the times! In Essex I think we are sticking to Chairman. Rosemary was very impressed with the afternoon speaker, Paul Whittaker, who, though profoundly deaf from birth, plays the piano, the organ in church and encourages deaf children to make music together. He also does signing for

West End shows and demonstrated this by signing for the National Anthem at the close of the meeting and whilst he was speaking.

Two members have won a bursary of £100 towards the cost of a course at Denman College, which we give every year. Members and friends are welcome to attend the College which has over 500 different courses throughout the year and is a wonderful opportunity to meet with women (and some men) from all over England and Wales. Do come and meet us during the year, our posters are up a week before our meetings.

Judy Colliver 812470



FROM THE SURGERY

Exercise and Diet

With the longer hours of daylight and slightly warmer weather that herald the return of spring, hopefully we all feel ready to shake off the sloth of winter hibernation and start to get active again. I know that my garden is taunting me to start weeding and planting, and I cannot put it off indefinitely!

Perhaps this spring, we could all try to take up some form of exercise. After all, obesity, according to the latest Government statistics, is rapidly becoming a major health risk. Not everyone is designed to run marathons, but most of us (myself included) could find the time to take a brisk daily walk, or join a 'keep fit' class. The real secret is to find a form of exercise that you really enjoy, because we will only continue with a pleasurable pastime on a regular basis. If regular exercise is combined with a sensible, well balanced, low fat, sugar and salt diet, it is amazing how quickly extra calories can be burned up.

The word 'diet' has come to mean to most people, some sort of self denial of foods we enjoy, or even more seriously, a form of starvation! In fact, according to The Concise Oxford Dictionary, it actually means 'The kinds of food that a person or animal habitually eats'.

We all need food to keep healthy and active, but the choice is enormous and, as with exercise, the secret of keeping to a healthy diet is to choose foods you enjoy, from the groups of proteins, carbohydrates, fats and fruits and vegetables. By aiming for an achievable target of 1-2lbs weight loss weekly, success can be within most people's reach.

Not everyone needs to lose weight, but a healthy diet and regular exercise helps to build up a strong immune system, keep joints supple and actually makes you feel better and more in control of your health. I know that when I drag myself out of the swimming pool after my weekly swim, I feel a great sense of achievement, as well as utter exhaustion!

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Plans are now hotting up for this year's event, and by the time you read this, entry forms will have been sent out to previous entrants. Entry forms are also available from our website, or by contacting me, and a form will be included in the June edition of the 'Link'.

As usual we are looking for extra helpers to act as marshals along the route. This is not an onerous task – it just involves being at a particular point along the route to make sure all the walkers and runners are all going in the right direction and to give the necessary encouragement. If you are able to help with this, please contact Brian Quinn on 812109 – he will be delighted to hear from you!

We also need a couple of people to help at one of the water points. This involves pouring water into paper cups and handing to the walkers and runners as they pass by. Again, not a very onerous task - so if you can help, please contact Edna Goreing on 503764. Thank you.

Marion Dyer Tel: 814059
Email: info@stansted10k.org.uk

Stansted Art & Craft Market

Having reviewed the last few years and the decreasing support from the public, it is with much regret that we have to inform you that the Stansted Art and Craft Market has been suspended for this year. This will be looked at again by the Committee in October.

We would like to thank all those people who have given freely of their time and support to us over the years. If you have any constructive comments please contact our Chairman, Brenda Ryan, on 812725.

Linda Gurr

'Lovely and Smelly' was the title of our speaker Aubrey Barker's talk at our April meeting. Hopleys Nursery, Much Hadham was established by his family in their garden in 1968, and is opened to the public each year from March to October daily except Tuesdays. Hopleys have introduced many plants since 1968, including the potentilla 'Red Ace', and they have a policy of using as few chemicals as possible. They have special Open Days for hellebores, pulsatillas, grasses and salvias, and in August an Open Day for the Red Cross. We saw interesting slides, showing that it is not only Roses that have a scent, but some varieties of plants common in our gardens may have scented flower or aromatic leaves. For instance viburnum 'Diana', daphne, mahonia 'Apollo', camellia 'Kramers Supreme' and pelargonium 'Lord Bute'. We shall all be going out to smell our plants, though not all scents are pleasant!

Annual General Meeting

The Chairman David Loynds reported that we have had a mixed year. On the plus side we have had some excellent speakers, for which thanks were due to Evelyn Morgan. Another plus has been the reports of our meetings published in the 'Link' magazine. He thanked the committee members for their work and support throughout the year, and Janet Townsend for organising the shows. Another positive has seen the number of visitors to our meetings increase.

During the year members had been saddened to hear of the death of Colin Horner who had been a very good friend to the club. Having served for one year David then said he would be standing down as Chairman of the Club owing to increasing commitments with a horticultural charity. The Treasurer Sheila Bowles reported on the clubs accounts for last year which were not too healthy. Subscriptions will have to be increased for 2006-7 to single membership £10 and joint membership £16. Visitors will be asked to pay £1.50 per meeting.

At our May meeting, Mr B W Yettes will talk about 'Well Dressing in Derbyshire'. The competition will be a garden photograph.

Sally Stockman

GARDENING TIPS FOR MAY

Mix water retaining granules with the compost as you plant up your containers and hanging baskets to help with water conservation.

Sow herb seeds in a growbag and keep outside the kitchen door ready to use in cooking.

Prune spring flowering shrubs into shape when they have finished flowering.

Slugs and snails look forward to the new shoots of hostas that are now emerging; to protect these new shoots scatter crushed egg shell or coarse grit around the plant.

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Aircraft Complaints Made Easier

Making a complaint about noisy and low-flying aircraft taking off from Stansted Airport has been made easier now that Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) has published on its website an explanation of the 'rules' and an easy to use complaint form. Residents who have been affected by noisy, low-flying and off-track aircraft can record their complaints on the form to ensure that the airport's Flight Evaluation Unit (FEU) has all the information required to carry out an investigation. The detailed notes which accompany the form explain how to complain, which incidents to complain about and what happens next.

The move follows concerns from people contacting SSE that the airport does not reply to some complaints or sometimes does not provide an adequate response. SSE wants people to complain responsibly and to keep on complaining even though they may feel their reports are not having the desired effect. We are reminding people that they have a right to complain about aircraft that are noisy, too low or off-track. Legitimate complaints send a signal to BAA about the impact on the community of aircraft that break the rules. Failure to complain suggests that residents are content with the situation.

The website explains what qualifies as an infringement and lists permitted noise levels through a 24-hour period. It provides details of certain low-flying and other infringements which can result in the offending airline being investigated and fined. Infringements of the rules are, however, comparatively rare, as the website points out. Planes arriving at the airport are not covered by the same rules as those taking off and helicopters do not have to conform to the same rules.

SSE does not agree with many aspects of the noise control system and will continue to press for improvements, including the establishment of an independent complaints handling body. We expect complaints to grow – particularly from areas outside the worst-affected noise zones – as air traffic volumes build up towards the permitted passenger limit on the existing runway. The complaint form and explanatory notes are available at:

www.stopstanstedexpansion.com/how_to_complain.html.

For further information contact: Chris Bennett 01223 892789 or Mike Fairchild 01279 771302 or M 07850 127961
See also www.stopstanstedexpansion.com.

Carol Barbone
Campaign Director
Tel: 07775523091

IN MEMORIAM

Kathleen Elvira Stevens

Kathleen was born at Amblecote on 13th November 1920 to strict Methodist parents, her father being a Lay Reader. In January 1939 she joined the ATS, serving mainly at Chilwell for the duration of the 2nd World War. It was there that she met Frank Stevens, a serving soldier, and they were married on 16th May 1942. After the war they moved first to Walthamstow and then Buckhurst Hill, at which time Frank started his own refrigeration business. In 1959 they moved to Stansted where they quickly became involved in village life. Both her and Frank worked with the Scouts and Kath was on the Carnival Committee and the Day Centre Committee.



In 1963 Kath joined The Royal British Legion, becoming Stansted Branch Chairman in 1970. It was due to her efforts at this time that the Branch survives today, as for four years she was unable to form a Committee. Since 1970 she has variously held every Branch Office and from 1979 until her death was, despite health and family problems, C (Uttlesford) Group Secretary and Carol Service Organiser. Her loyalty to the RBL did not go unrewarded; she was made a Life Member in 1990, and in 1996 was awarded the RBL's highest Honour, The National Certificate of Appreciation. She is survived by her husband, Frank, and her two sons, Roger and Deryck. She will be sorely missed by family and friends, and for the work she did for the RBL.

"We will remember her."

Deryck Stevens and David Challis

I LOVE SOUP

I was presented with 'The Soup Bible' about three years ago and was challenged by my big brother to produce a summer soup as my contribution to a self-catering holiday. So I am passing this one on to you (believe it, summer will come!).

Summer Minestrone

This brightly coloured, fresh tasting soup makes the most of delicious summer vegetables.

Ingredients Serves : 4

45ml / tbsp olive oil
1 large finely chopped onion
15ml / 1 tbsp sun-dried tomato purée
450g / 1lb ripe Italian plum tomatoes, peeled and finely chopped
225g / 8oz green courgettes, trimmed and roughly chopped
225g / 8 oz yellow courgettes, trimmed and roughly chopped
3 waxy new potatoes, diced
2 garlic cloves, crushed
about 1.2 litres / 2 pints / 3 cups vegetable stock or water
60ml / 4 tbsp shredded fresh basil
50g / 2oz / ½cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan, add the onion and cook gently for about 5 minutes, stirring constantly until softened.
2. Stir in the sun-dried tomato purée, chopped tomatoes, courgettes, diced potatoes and garlic. Mix well and cook gently for 10 minutes, uncovered, shaking the pan frequently to stop the vegetables sticking to the base.
3. Pour in the stock or water, bring to the boil, lower the heat, half-cover the pan and simmer gently for 15 minutes or until the vegetables are just tender. Add more stock if necessary.

Ann Marchant



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Japanese for Continuers - Newport - Wednesdays (3 years Japanese study required)

Russian Taster Next Steps - Harlow - Mondays (some knowledge required)

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LOOKING BACK Part 4

I am indebted to the recollections of a 75 year old Stansted resident for a lot of this article. Several pages of recollections were passed on to me giving some vivid memories of Stansted going back many years.

Mention is made of Lew Conway who was a livestock dealer. His daughter Kitty married Cyril Spalding who had a furniture business with a workshop in the basement of the police station then called 'The Chestnuts'. I recall my parents saying they got their furniture through him when they married.

Next door in Silver Street was Albert Tyler the harness maker. His shop was later a seed shop run by Mr Bass which later became Irene Mant's sweet shop. Further down was Harry Maskell the butcher; also there was Grey's Cycle Shop, later owned by my good friends John and Jane Smith, whose sons Will and John were my boyhood mates. We got up to some real scrapes! The boys were rebuilding a car and we took it out for a spin; at the time it was nothing more than a chassis. If we had been stopped by the police goodness knows what trouble we would have been in. Later on it became Peter McRory's Garage. Peter was a gifted mechanic and a smashing chap. He sold me a Mark 1 Ford Consul which was a lovely car and of which I have fond memories.

There was the Parringer Nursing Home run by Sister Horton which is now Linden House, selling antiques. Next to Nipper Player's cobbler's was Choppins, the taxidermists with a pair of reindeer antlers hung over the door. Further down was the doctors' surgery with Drs Platt and Gabb. I remember Dr Platt chain smoked; there wasn't the same worry about the dangers of smoking then!

Mr Bunting of the greengrocers in Lower Street told the tale of a lady who asked for two pounds of potatoes. "Do you want small or large potatoes?" she was asked. She said "I'll take the small ones. Two pounds of small potatoes won't be so heavy to carry round as two pounds of large ones". In Station Road there was an ironmongers called Handscombes which later moved to Bishop's Stortford. Also there was Thurgoods shoe shop.

I have some happy memories of Stansted Station. There was Mr Pryke's paper shop in the station. I remember we lads were often chased out of the station by porter Ron Perrin when we got a bit too cheeky. The gardens of the station were beautiful. I recall that Doug Hudgell, amongst others, maintained them to a very high standard. In Lower Street there was Mumford's fish shop. I believe they used to do fish and chips once a week and they were beautiful! Wren's fish and chip van used to visit Lower Street each week and was very popular. It then went on to Stoney Common as Mark Gerber recently wrote.

In the centre of Lower Street was Robinson's builder's yard which was also a timber merchant with their own saw mill. The saw mill was a familiar sound in Lower Street. They had a timber wagon pulled by four horses. Cecil Smith and Cordy Powell used to drive the horses and collect the trees. It seems that Cordy Powell was knocked down and trampled by one of the horses and died of his injuries.

The Central Hall, which was the hub of entertainment in the village, also had a court held there once a month. The maximum sentence that could be given was six months. It seems there was one local magistrate who had no scruples in giving a spell inside. If he cleared his throat twice before he spoke that was a bad sign and you knew what was coming!

My father worked for Robert Levey, builders and undertakers. He used to tell me how he cycled to jobs in the surrounding villages. The first break they had was breakfast – they certainly were different times! His recollections of the undertaking side were very interesting, especially what went on behind the scenes in the crematorium. Robert's son, Aubrey, ran the undertakers business for years. He was a wonderful character with a very dry sense of humour. Many villagers can remember him walking in front of the coffin with measured tread really looking the part. At a family funeral we were all waiting to go in convoy to St Mary's Church. As we left the house, Aubrey came to me saying 'get them back in the house Richard, the hearse won't start'. In the end Concorde Garage was called to tow the hearse which fortunately started on being towed. I had visions of the funeral procession arriving at the church headed by the hearse being towed by a breakdown truck.

Again I must thank the 75 year old Stansted resident. His recollections contain a wealth of memories which I am sure will feature in future articles.

Whilst writing this I would like to put a plea in for any recollections of Stansted Carnival and, if possible, anybody who has copies of the Carnival Magazine. The Carnival was a week long event in the village and I would like to write a piece on this. One humorous story I recall was when we hired, through an agent, a death defying motorcycle acrobatic act which looked really good in the blurb. It turned out to be a chap who was getting on a bit and his female partner, who can best be described as also getting on a bit, but wearing a very fetching costume. They chugged round the field with her performing various positions on the pillion of the motor cycle. It didn't really match the build up on the promotion material but was quite hilarious.

Dick Pollard

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BENTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

As always at Bentfield we welcome parents interested in either a Nursery or Reception place to come and see the school in action. Please give us a ring and we would be very pleased to arrange for you to visit. Our school offers both a Breakfast Club (from 7.45am), and an After School Kids Club (until 6pm). We also have our wonderful Messy Play. This is great fun, and runs in the Nursery on Mondays from 1.45pm to 3pm. It is open to children 18 months and older. If you are interested contact the school or just turn up!

PTA News

Bentfield School Cookery Book

Production is well underway of the very first *Bentfield School Cookery Book*. We have gathered together a wonderful collection of recipes and illustrations sent in by Bentfield children and their families for this very special book which we hope to launch at our May Fair. We ran a competition to design the cover and the response was fantastic! The standard of entries was very high and it was extremely difficult to choose between so many wonderful works of art submitted by children from Foundation Stage to Year 6. We are sure that the finished book will be a real gem – and in time take its place among the culinary classics!

May Fair - Saturday 20th May, 2.00pm–5.00pm

This year our theme is 'Around the World' and we can promise you the usual great mix of entertainment, games and refreshments. Among the huge list of attractions are an inflatable fun run and padded sumo wrestling! Each class in school has chosen a country to represent in our colourful parade of nations. There will be stalls and activities for all ages, including the raffle, tombolas, plants, cream teas, barbecue and bar. Admission: £1 per family.

Music in the Park - Saturday 15th July

This year sees our fifth annual **Music in the Park!** Once again, we are delighted to have been able to book a fantastic line up of bands, along with a bouncy castle and fun run for the children, not to mention ice cream, popcorn, a licensed bar and barbecue (and fabulous weather, of course!).

Please put these dates in your diary now. Look out for further publicity around the village for these great family events and we really look forward to seeing you there!

Alison Thompson PTA



Nature Notes

Early this morning I watched a pair of tree creepers busily feeding on the trunk of a birch tree. These little birds only go upwards and usually one's view of them is limited to a few seconds before they disappear into foliage or round to the other side of the trunk. This time the birds worked their way up from the base to the first branches about six feet above, and then fluttered down to start again. They continued in this manner for several minutes and I had to leave them to it because I was supposed to be making the tea.

The birch tree was planted a few years ago to replace a eucalyptus tree. This latter was a flourishing tree, but because it was not a native species, very few insects lived on it and therefore birds spent little time there. It is a different story with the birch. In no time at all it has grown to nearly 50 feet tall, its lower trunk has matured enough to produce rough fissures in the bark, and a whole variety of birds find food on the trunk and amongst the leaves.

The warmth of spring, although arriving later than in recent years, brought out the brimstone yellows and the occasional peacock butterfly. These will soon be followed by a profusion of less visible insects and creeping things, which are the staple diet of the hedgehogs about to emerge from hibernation. The reason for their hibernation is because their food is not available in the winter. Many of us have come across hibernating hedgehogs under heaps of leaves or in compost heaps and no doubt carefully covered them up again. If one does wake up in winter it can use up precious reserves of energy in a fruitless search for food and this could seriously hamper its chances of survival until the spring.

During the summer a hedgehog spends the day under a paving slab placed on bricks to form a step into our house. He is catching up on his sleep after spending the night foraging, but I sometimes hear him scratching energetically. Masses of fleas and ticks take refuge amidst his spines. If a dog is led up to a hedgehog one can see the fleas run up its spine when the dog comes within two feet, and then they will disappear again when the dog moves away. If your pet suddenly acquires fleas, the chances are that it has come upon a hedgehog.

Felix



Stansted Open Gardens Sunday 9th July

Please make a note in your diary. We are busy planning this year's event and have contacted all our usual gardening friends. If you are interested in opening your garden for a worthwhile cause, please telephone me. Any type of garden is suitable, large or small, landscaped or cottage. I can guarantee that every garden has at least one feature that other gardeners can take inspiration from.

Ian Neville
813710

MAKE YOURSELVES KNOWN!

In any community there is an ebb and flow in its voluntary organisations and events. In the last month or so we have regretfully seen the departure of Sideways Pre-School and now we face a year without the Art and Craft Market. We should, however, acknowledge that others have come in. Recent years have seen the emergence of, amongst others, the Stansted Lunch Club, Stop Stansted Expansion, the Village Music Club, the Karate Club and Ugley Farmers' Market. This conveniently leads me into a direct appeal to all local secretaries to make their organisation's details known to Stansted Library. David Loynds has announced that the Library wishes to publish a comprehensive list of village organisations and has made his e-mail address dave.loynds@tesco.net available. This is an opportunity too good to miss, so whether yours is a well established or new body please let him or the Library know of you. With a good response we can compile and up-date a comprehensive listing.

Editor

MANUDEN SINGERS

Village Glydebourne

The Manuden Singers will be holding their Sixth Village Glydebourne in the gardens of Wilford House, Manuden on 23rd July. Bring your picnics and relax and enjoy music on a summer's evening. Gates will open at 6.00pm. Proceeds to Manuden Church and its related charities.

Ian Priest



Huw Johnson Club

The Easter bonnets were really spectacular this year and it was very difficult to decide the winner. Fortunately we had lots of Easter eggs as prizes so no-one went away empty handed. We welcomed a young man named David to the Club. David is on the Duke of Edinburgh course. We are always willing to help any teenager who would like to do the same as David.

The main topic of conversation at the moment is our holiday. We set off on 2nd June and all our members are very excited.

My request for escorts was answered by one lady but we do need more. If you are not sure about what being an escort means do pop along and visit us at Club or talk to me. With the summer months ahead I'm sure someone would enjoy a gentle minibus ride into the country.

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The Plaint of the 'United Christian'

For those, like me, who can look back
To when this group was known as 'SAAC'
The choice of title 'CTS'
Has not the same attractiveness;
But, whether more or whether less
We aim at some togetherness.

At Harvest time we join(ed) in praise
(I love(d) those Pie and Salad days!)
And Christmas would not be complete
Without our carols down the street.

For yearly scraps with Chevetogne
The 'Abbey-Habit' has caught on,
And Cherubim (with Seraphim)
Have taught us one stupendous hymn!

I seek it here, I seek it there
In eager action, fervent prayer,
In Lenten Group – where can it be
This damned elusive **Unity**?
For all my zeal, is something lacking?
Must I repent in ash and sacking?

Shall I be known as one who lurches
Between the various Stansted churches?
Drunk with United Service wine
Hardly aware which church is mine?

Helping with Helpline, Link or RAP
But, stepping further – 'MIND THE GAP!'
Am I 'together' with my neighbours?
What do **they** think of Christian labours?

Lord, as to Burns 'the gift to gie'
to see ourselves as others see us':
'Standing united'? 'Oft in prayer'?
'In times of trouble, always there'?

BUFFY BUS

We visit Stansted on a Tuesday between 1.45pm and 3.00pm, and we alternate our stops between Stoneyfield Drive and Rainsford Road. Our next visit to Rainsford Road will be Tuesday 2nd May followed by Stonyfield Drive on Tuesday 9th May and so on throughout state school term time. We are a free service but are happy to accept donations. If you would like any more information please contact me.

We have two fundraising events planned. Firstly, 7.30pm for 8.00pm on Friday 12th May we have a Fashion Show (women's, men's and children's fashions) at the Millennium Barn, Wendens Ambo. Tickets £8 to include a glass of wine.

Then on Saturday 13th May, also at the Millennium Barn, we are holding a Barn Dance (fun for all the family). Tickets £10 to include a fish and chip supper.

Rosie Juhl



WINDMILL FUNDRAISING PROJECT UPDATE

We have had an encouraging response to our appeal for your unwanted items for us to sell on eBay in aid of the Windmill and we offer our sincere thanks to those who have contributed so far. It takes a little time to turn things into cash and we must wait until next month to publish a running total. Meanwhile, keep the goodies coming in. Anything will be considered. Please call me to arrange collection.

Tony Wellings 813614

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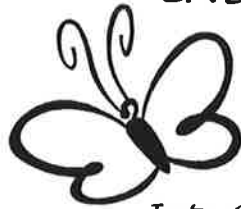
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PROFILE JACK ALLWRIGHT

SCHOOL BUZZ

Youth Co-ordinator, Vicki Felgate helped hundreds of schools be part of Friends of the Earth's Shout about climate change week 2005. The project gave youth educators and teenagers the chance to learn more about climate change – and how to tackle it. Here she talks with one participant, eco-conscious 14-year-old Jack Allwright

Let's "show the Government and world leaders that we are trying to do something about the future, that we want it to be better and we want them to help us out." Jack Allwright

By kind permission of Friends of the Earth

Jack is a pupil at Mountfitchet High School, Essex and it's late afternoon by the time we meet up. To grab an interview with him I've had to pull him away from the rest of his class who are busy painting messages about climate change on to a giant canvas. Jack seems laid back, but mention climate change and it quickly becomes apparent that this is something that concerns him a great deal.

"People take for granted what they have now and don't think about the future," he says. "They don't think about the fact that everything they have now could vanish and that they could make it better for us so that we don't have to live in a polluted world."

The school is just a stone's throw away from the noise and pollution of busy Stansted airport so its interest in environmental issues is hardly surprising – in fact, it's won several eco awards, including the Mary Porter Award for Environmental Awareness, from the local district council.

Like many teenage boys, Jack loves football (he supports Watford FC) and enjoys listening to music. But he also has a keen interest in green issues – he's hoping to be made a prefect soon in order to secure a coveted place on the school's environment committee. It's a value that is reflected in his home life

where his family now recycle their waste automatically. "We only have the heating on when we are at home, we recycle all of our waste, and all of our light bulbs are energy-efficient," he says.

Jack has spent the morning learning about the greenhouse effect and causes of climate change. Obviously shaken by this he is nonetheless looking forward to a week of activities being organised at the school as part of Friends of the Earth's Shout about Climate Change project. Highlights include visiting a renewable energy sources company and a paper recycling mill; carrying out home and school energy surveys and a non-uniform day to raise money for the school's wildlife garden. He is particularly excited about the competition to design an eco-car powered by renewable energy – but keeps his ideas closely guarded...

When I ask him why schools should run an activity week about climate change, his answer is loaded with intensity: "So that the children here are more aware of what's going on, and to show the

Government and world leaders that we are trying to do something about the future, and we are trying to do something to make it better for our kids; that we want it to be better and we want them to help us out." He also has a firm grasp of the cause of global warming: "We should stop producing harmful gases that cause climate change."

I leave Jack, and his school friends, feeling better for meeting up. If his generation has as much vision finding solutions as it does identifying the problems, then there is a great deal to be optimistic about.

Jack's lesson on climate change was given by Paul Garland from Saffron Walden Friends of the Earth. Paul is a member of Friends of the Earth's education network which aims to inspire and engage young people in environmental issues. To find your nearest local group, and maybe get involved in annual educational projects go to <http://community.foe.co.uk> or call 020 7490 1555.

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ROCHFORD ORIGINS

We are on the threshold of a new era for the land we have known as Rochford's Nursery. The story of the nursery itself has been told in past issues of the 'Link' and in Margaret Silvester's account, but less is known of the family origins. The following is a short summary.

In 1840 Michael Rochford left County Clare to come to England to find work.

In the Chelsea Census for 1841 he is described as a gardener, age 20, living in Symons Street in a crowded house with others from Ireland. It seems quite likely that he worked in Joseph Knight's Nursery in Chelsea where many exotic plants were grown.

Michael must have been a bright young man with an aptitude for growing things and soon moved on to work on a large estate, where a wide variety of fruits and flowers were produced in the walled gardens and hot houses for the big house.

In 1948 he was working for Lord Nugent near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire when he married Sarah, daughter of Joseph and Charlotte Mumford, who then lived in the house in Chelsea where Michael used to lodge.

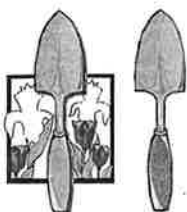
Michael and Sarah had a son in 1849 and named him Thomas after Michael's father back in Ireland. Thomas had a son in 1877, who was called Thomas, who had a Thomas in 1904, who had a son he named Thomas in 1947. I don't know if the tradition continues.

Altogether, Michael and Sarah had 10 children, most of them surviving into adulthood; and it seems that most of these entered the horticultural business in one way or another. Not surprising I suppose, being brought up with such a back-ground and no doubt having to help father at times.

Michael's eighth child, Elizabeth, born in 1861, married William Cawkell and Charlotte, born two years later, married John Cawkell, the last manager of the Stansted nursery.

Their third son, Edmund, who was born in 1854, founded the Rochford Tomato Gardens and the largest houseplant empire in the world, based at Turnford near Cheshunt. Of course that has all gone now and although there is a Rochford Landscapes, the company has no family affiliation. However, near Hertford there is still the thriving Joseph Rochford Gardens nursery, run by Paul Rochford, largely dealing in trees and shrubs for the trade.

Peggy Honour



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The General Epistle of Jude 12

However the occasional downpour may tempt us to think otherwise there is no doubt that the south-east is drying up. Serious doubts have been voiced, even in the humble Link, about the critical - almost prohibitive - difficulties which further mass development in this corner of England would bring for this reason alone. Even if no further building were to take place we would be facing increasing restrictions on water use. It is most unlikely to end with the present hosepipe ban, so for those of us without a water meter there is a strong incentive to consider having one. Social responsibilities apart, there is a financial inducement for smaller families to pay for just what they use. Installation is free and you gain another (and effective) cut-off valve for your property. A leaflet issued by Thames Water answers most of the questions. Oh, and I haven't any shares in a water meter company!

The Editor

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