

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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Editorial



One does not have to be a racing buff to regret the closure, after only a few months, of the Great Leighs Racecourse. Essex needs a central venue for large outdoor events, so we must now hope that, like the Dome, it can be resurrected under a new banner and be a success.

We should take comfort from County Councillor Ray Gooding's report on the County Council's increased budget for road repairs. After this winter's depredations, some of our local highways are prime subjects for the 'Link's' next pothole contest, so it remains to be seen whether the winner will be a private or public road. We are not open to bets on it!

In similar vein it would be foolhardy to speculate on when, where, and how the great Healthcentre saga will end. In the meanwhile, we should thank the medical teams at Redlands and Crafton Green for their forbearance, and plead that all negotiators make the public good their first consideration.

CIRCULATION:

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

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by **noon** on
 11th April for publication on
 23rd April

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DISCLAIMER

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

The Week That Changed The World

The first full week of April this year is Holy Week, the week on which Christians remember the events which led up to and included the death and resurrection of Jesus.

It started on 'the **Sunday** before the Sunday', the Sunday we call Palm Sunday. Jesus and his disciples complete the long trek from Galilee up to Jerusalem, and Jesus enters the city riding on a borrowed donkey. The crowds cry out the pilgrim song, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord" (Psalm 118 v26) as they recognise the fulfilment of the prophecy of Zechariah, that their liberator would come, "gentle and riding on a donkey" (Zechariah 9 v9).

On the **Monday** he went to the temple and saw the way that that had become a commercialised institution which sucked the life out of people rather than enhancing their life. In his anger he confronts those responsible for the degradation of God's house and, by driving out the moneychangers, recalls the Temple to its true vocation as a house of prayer for all nations.

On **Tuesday, Wednesday** and **Thursday** he taught the people, speaking about his future return, warning of the day of disaster which Jerusalem faced if it did not change its ways, and of the day of judgement which would come upon all the world. In the Jewish calendar the day ended, not at midnight but at sunset.

So the **Friday** begins on what we would call Thursday evening. Jesus gathers with his disciples in a secret room and teaches them to take bread and wine to remember him. Then he goes to a garden outside the city to watch and pray. There he is betrayed and arrested. After trial by an illegal court and a biased military tribunal he is condemned to an agonising death by crucifixion. For six hours he is hung up like meat and at last he dies at about 3.00pm. His body is claimed by an influential follower and laid in a borrowed tomb.

On **Saturday** the world stood still and waited.

On **Sunday** those who loved him most went to the tomb to wash his body and lay him to rest. But he was not there. He appeared first to the women and then to many others, physically raised from the dead. Alive.

And because of that the world was never the same. Because of that our lives need never be the same.

This Holy Week he invites you to walk with him. This Easter he invites you to share in the new life he has won. For you this coming Holy Week can be, The Week That Changed The World.



Paul Wilkin
Rector, St John's Church, Stansted

WALK OF WITNESS

Good Friday, 10th April at 4.15pm

From St Therese's to St John's



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minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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

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Preachers for April

5th	10.30 am	New Directions in Worship The Worship Team
10th	10.30 am	Good Friday Service Rev'd Allen Morton
12th	10.30 am	Easter Day Communion Rev'd Stuart Veitch
19th	10.30 am	Rev'd Allen Morton
26th	10.30 am	Denis Walker

New Directions in Worship

From the time that our new church was formed in 2007 we have been varying our style of morning worship on the first Sunday in the month. On the same Sundays we also held afternoon worship in a more traditional style. Since the beginning of this year we have discontinued the afternoon service so that all our Sunday services are now at 10.30am. We are continuing with our monthly informal worship, and we warmly invite you to join us on 5th April, when we shall be exploring Palm Sunday from a new perspective.

Michael Dyer



All enquiries: The Church Office, St John's Hall,
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Assistant Curate: Rev'd Dr Caroline Currer
Tel: 815243
Email: through the Church Office

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

St John's Diary

Sunday

8.00am	Said Holy Communion	Junior Church meets in church at 9.30am.
9.30am	Worship 4 All (1st Sunday)	
9.30am	Choral Eucharist (2nd - 4th Sundays)	The Lazer youth group meets on Sunday evenings at 7.30pm.

Monday-Wednesday

8.30am	Morning Prayer	There are services of Holy Communion on the first Tuesdays and Wednesdays of the month in Norman Court, Hargrave House and Broome End Nursing Homes.
5.00pm	Evening Prayer	

Tuesday

9.00am St John's Tots

Wednesday

10.30am Holy Communion

Thursday

8.30am Morning Prayer

Saturday

9.00am Morning Prayer

Holy Week and Easter Services

Palm Sunday 5th April 9.20am Procession with palms from Church Hall followed by Worship 4 All

Monday-Wednesday 6th-8th April 7.30pm Stations of the Cross and Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday 9th April 8.00pm Choral Holy Communion and Vigil

Good Friday 10th April 9.30am Good Friday Project followed by service at 3.15pm

Birchanger Church will be open for quiet prayer from noon. Service 'The Last Hour' from 2.00pm-3.00pm

Holy Saturday 11th April 6.30pm Easter Vigil

Easter Day 12th April 8.00am Holy Communion (said)
9.30am Parish Communion

From the Registers

February

Funeral

24th Sylvia Stone, age 82 - at St Mary's

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane

Priest Father Joe White
The Presbytery
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High Lane
Stansted
Tel: 814349

Masses	Saturday	6.00pm
	Sunday	9.00am and 10.30am
	Holy Days of Obligation	8.00am and 8.00pm
	Tuesday-Saturday	9.30am

Confessions	Saturday	10.00am and by appointment
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Baptisms	By appointment
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Holy Week and Easter Services

Palm Sunday 5th April 9.00 and 10.00am Mass with distribution of palms

Tuesday 7th April 7.30pm Penitential Service and Confession

Maundy Thursday 9th April 8.00pm Mass of the Last Supper and Vigil to 11.00pm

Good Friday 10th April 10.00am Family Service
Passion of our Lord
4.15pm Walk of Witness to St John's

Holy Saturday 11th April 6.30pm Easter Vigil

Easter Day 12th April 9.00am Mass
10.30am Mass

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

Clerk Mrs Anthea Lee
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Meeting Sunday, 10.30am



Good Friday Project 2009



PRESENTS

DR LUKE AND THE CASE OF THE EMPTY TOMB

Friday 10th April 10am-4pm

St John's Church,
Stansted Mountfitchet

For more details please phone Rachel Pocknell 01279 816215 or
Vertty Begnon 01279 812511 or Church Office 01279 815243

GOOD FRIDAY PROJECT 2009

A great, activity-filled day for all school-aged children

St John's Church is delighted to invite all children from the ages of 4 to 18 to join them for their lovely Good Friday Project, running again this Easter on 10th April from 10.00am to 4.00pm. The Good Friday Project is a village activity, which has been running for many years now, where the children themselves create a play of the Easter story. During the morning, the children learn the music to sing, create the scenery, make their own costumes, learn the acting parts, and have great fun! Everyone gets to do as much as they are willing and happy to do. We had a wonderful time last year, with around 80 local children joining us for the day.

The event is run by CRB-checked adults. All parents are invited to watch the children perform the play in the afternoon, and see the results of the day's work. Primary school children have received more information via the school book bags. However, if you wish for further details or booking forms, please email me. We really look forward to seeing you there!

Rachel Pocknell
rachel.pocknell@gmail.com



Huw Johnson A G M

7.30 pm
Wednesday 1st April
Free Church Hall

All welcome



Stansted Eve WI QUIZ

7.30 pm Sat 4th April
Free Church Hall
Tables of 8 maximum
Tickets £6 incl light supper
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or 813542



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Sun 12th & Mon 13th April
Sun 3rd & Mon 4th May

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VILLAGE EVENTS

April

- 1 Wed Mountfitchet Club
Mountfitchet Garden Club
Huw Johnson AGM
- 2 Thu Local History Society
- 4 Sat SSE Show Time
WI Quiz
- 4 Sat & 5 Sun Skips
- 9 Thu WI
- 10 Fri Good Friday Project
- 12 Sun & 13 Mon Windmill Open
- 18 Sat & 19 Sun Skips
- 25 Sat NCT Nearly New Sale
Pet Blood Donor Day
Conservatives Beetle Drive
- 26 Sun Car Boot Sale
Open Day
Manuden Singers Concert
- 29 Wed NhWatch Meeting

- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Free Church Hall 7.30 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Civic Theatre, Chelmsford 7.30 pm
- Free Church Hall 7.30 pm
- Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
- St John's Hall 7.45 pm
- St John's Church 10 am - 4 pm
- 1.30 - 5.30 pm
- Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
- St John's Hall 2.30 - 4 pm
- Mercer & Hughes, S Walden pm
- Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm
- MMCC 11 am - 2 pm
- Bowling Club 10 am - 3 pm
- St Mary's Ch, Manuden 7.30 pm
- Day Centre 7.30 pm

May

- 2 Sat & 3 Sun Skips
- 3 Sun Red Cross Week begins
- 3 Sun & 4 Mon Windmill Open
- 6 Wed Mountfitchet Club
Mountfitchet Garden Club
- 7 Thu Local History Society
- 9 Sat Table Top Sale
- 10 Sun Christian Aid Week begins

- Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
- 1.30 - 5.30 pm
- Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- Day Centre 8 pm
- St John's Hall 10 am - noon



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Mercer & Hughes Saffron Walden

Pet Blood Donor Day

Sat afternoon 25th April

All donors receive a light meal
and a goodie bag!

Tel 01799 522082 for details

Red Cross Week

3rd - 9th May

Please support the collections
which will be made during
Red Cross Week in Stansted

New collectors welcome
Please contact
Christine Stiles 813172

St John's, Stansted TABLE TOP SALE

10 am - 12 noon
Sat 9th May

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Stansted Conservatives

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Saturday 25th April

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7.30 pm Sun 26th April
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St Mary's CE Foundation Primary School



Caring, sharing, preparing for life

It has been another very busy term, with plenty of events to report. The children all enjoyed a Dance Day, when a pro-



essional dancer came to the school to hold workshops with each class. The styles of dance included Street, African and Aboriginal. The children also worked with music from The Lion King and High School Musical. The outcome was a wonderful performance of dance for parents at the end of the school day.



In support of Comic Relief, we held a 'Back to Front' day. Everyone came in their own clothes worn back to front, lunch

was served pudding first and various back to front activities held in the classes. The children also baked and sold cakes to boost funds.

The PTFA Music Quiz was a fantastic evening as always. It was very well attended with great enjoyment by all. Many thanks due as always to the PTFA for their catering and organisation, and to Bex and Alan Carter for preparing the quiz.

On the sporting front, the football team is enjoying a series of matches in a new league. We had great success in football last year, and our new squad is shaping up well to carry on the tradition! Other sporting success was achieved by Owen Palmer, who represented Uttlesford in the County Cross Country finals held in Colchester. Well done to Owen!

If you are new to the area and would like to have a look at our school, please give us a ring on 812212 to arrange a visit. We are always happy to show you around the school and answer any questions. We also have a website full of information: www.st-marys-stansted.essex.sch.uk.

Christine Tonkins
Headteacher



This half term our topic has been 'growth'. The children have enjoyed watching various things from nature thrive and grow. Firstly, thanks to the supermarket vouchers handed in by parents, we acquired a caterpillar kit. The caterpillars have grown enormously from small specks to wriggling creatures and the children are all very excited about the possibility of them changing into cocoons and then becoming butterflies. The children have also been looking at some related stories including 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and 'The Teeny Weeny Tadpole'. They are also making a large pond to hang on the classroom wall and will be decorating it with painted butterflies, bubble print frogspawn and more tadpoles and frogs. We are planning a visit to a local garden with frogs in the pond and a trip to Saffron Walden so see the ducks nesting on the pond.

Other recent trips have included a walk to the Recreation Ground where the children had a fantastic time with the parachute and enjoyed a picnic. The older ones have also been to the library and had the pleasure of choosing a book each. In the younger group the playleaders have been settling in a number of new children and we hope they will enjoy their time at Rainbow. Rainbow are collecting Tesco and Sainsbury vouchers so please hand any you receive into one of our playleaders.

If you are interested in a place for your child 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 we are now taking names for September entry. Please contact Gill Pursglove on 814701 for further information.



Isabelle Page
Rainbow Committee

MYTHS, LEGENDS, CUSTOMS

HAWTHORN *Crataegus* sp.

Joseph of Arimathea, bearing the Holy Grail, is said to have visited Britain and driven his thorn staff into the ground at Glastonbury, where it grew. One of its supposed descendants on the hill blooms in May and at Christmas time. Thomas the Rhymer, a 13th century Scottish poet, once met the Faery Queen by a hawthorn bush. She took him into the Faery underworld and when he emerged was surprised to find that seven years had passed - quite a common theme in old tales. The hawthorn is the most likely tree to be inhabited by the Wee Folk and should not be cut down without danger of retribution. Bringing hawthorn blossom into the house is very unlucky and illness and death could follow, although it was used for decoration outdoors. The site of Westminster Abbey was once called Thorney Island supposedly after a sacred grove of trees that once stood there. "Cast not a clout 'till May be out" refers to the hawthorn blossom, not clothing as many believe.

Peggy Honour

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40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHURCHES CONSERVATION TRUST CELEBRATED AT ST MARY'S ON 21st FEBRUARY 2009

Congratulations are due to Audrey Rodgers and her energetic helpers for organising this very successful village event. Thanks are also due to the 250 plus people who came to support it. The weather was very kind, and in the sunshine the church and its churchyard looked to be in very good order. The bell ringing was music to my ears, having been away from Stansted for 20 years. The church in my village of Warboys has only five bells, but I still love to hear them, and they make Sunday mornings special. The expert ringing at St Mary's was really good. It reminded me of another day when St Mary's bells were rung with a lot of energy. I was just a choirboy then, and it was the end of the Second World War, when bells all over the country were rung when the good news was announced.

I would like to record my grateful thanks to Keith Ayres for making it possible for me to play a few pieces of music on the organ. He spent many hours working in the cold on the electric action, and without Keith's sterling work my playing would have been like Les Dawson on a very bad day! It would be good if the pipe organ could be restored before it becomes too big an expense to contemplate. Unfortunately 'health and safety' consider it too dangerous for anyone to climb up the ladder to get into the organ chamber. In my 25 years as organist our tuner Mr Reg Lane attended to it on a regular basis without ever coming to grief!

I was pleased to obtain a copy of the new booklet charting the amazing history of St Mary's and I recommend it to anyone who hasn't yet had an opportunity to read it. As far as the History of Stansted is concerned, St Mary's must surely be our most important building. The doors at St Mary's may be closed to the public except for special occasions, and there may be little opportunity to worship there, but it is obvious to me that nobody can take away from the parishioners of Stansted the affection that they hold for this wonderful old church. As far as the older generation are concerned it is probably where they were christened, confirmed and married, and their ancestors are at peace in the churchyard. Whenever there is an opportunity to go to St Mary's the people of Stansted turn up in considerable numbers, and I hope to be one of that number for as long as I am able.

Keith Turner



Photo: Herts and Essex Observer

Wellbeing



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

Spring

• Verb (sprang or sprung; springing) 1. Move suddenly or rapidly upwards or forwards. 2. Arise or originate. n The season after winter and before summer. A device that reverts to its original shape after being pressed or pulled; elasticity. 3. A jump. 4. A place where oil or water flows naturally from the ground. Springboard a flexible board from which a diver or gymnast jumps to gain more power. Springclean clean a house etc thoroughly.

When I read this - my heart jumped and I laughed out loud. I've always felt energised in the spring but suddenly I felt an inner connection - a desire to understand, to be the qualities of spring. I'll explain before you think I'm suffering with early onset midsummer madness, I have recently heard a presentation on 'Qualities' at a wellbeing workshop. It was suggested that we are drawn to people, ideas, seasons that excite us or inspire us, or qualities and attributes which are similar in nature to our own.

Try thinking about your wellbeing this month in terms of qualities, attitudes, perspectives, thoughts and behaviours. Who or what best represents wellbeing for you? Look at the people around you; who could make a wellbeing model for you? Using the definition from above, attach a person, a practice, or a project to it - for example, what will act as a springboard for you? When you get the springclean under way, record your reaction. I expect that you will feel lighter, with a renewed appreciation for your home. If the winter has left you feeling a little squashed, reclaim your true shape again. Enjoy the contradiction that as you lose a few calories you are expanding into wellbeing.

Could you make a commitment to yourself that each day in spring you will do something to move upwards? Each time you raise your arms up in the air you are exercising your body. Lift up your chest; most of us are not breathing to our full capacity, which means that our human petrol tank is running on low. We can move forwards mentally - read the book rather than the critic's column; use optimism, the energy of spring to inject an emotional flexibility into your relationships.

Why does the human being respond and react each year to spring? How do we keep in tune with new growth when physically we tire and begin to slow down? I'm sure you have heard from friends that the spirit grows younger each year. The spring in our step is replaced with a spring in our hearts. Spring originates in our higher selves. A belief beyond reason arises and we joyfully grow towards the sunlight.

Take care for now.

Isobel

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IN MEMORIAM

JAMES BARR GEMMILL

1963-2009

James was born on 11th October 1963 at home in Elms Farm. He attended St Mary's Primary School and then went to Bishop's Stortford College at the age of 11. At 16 he went to Newport Grammar School. It was at this time his father started having health problems so James took on his share of the farm work while studying for his A levels. At 18 James went to Writtle College to study agriculture while still managing a heavy work load on the home farm.

In December 1985 James met me and we were married on 15th May 1988. James adored and dearly loved our three children Rachel (18), Chris (15) and Andy (12) and was so proud of how they all enjoyed the farm and how they all became involved in helping out on it. James took over the farm completely in the early 1990s and began expanding the original 250 acres to its present 1,500 acres in different forms of tenancy and contracting agreements. In 1995 an opportunity arose to make use of the traditional grass parkland, and James built up a successful livery business making use of the redundant dairy buildings, so from an initial 30 horses it grew to 100. James also established Spraytec Ltd, a very successful company well known throughout East Anglia for the supply and servicing of agricultural sprayers and other farm machinery. In 2005 he was instrumental in setting up joint venture arrangements with a number of like minded farmers through Gilston Crop Management which now farms more than 6,000 acres. On 30th September 2008 James achieved his ultimate goal, which was to buy Elms Farm where he was born.



James was very well known in the village and before his illness became too bad he was often seen in the Dog and Duck or the Social Club. He was very keen to help the local community and kindly offered his fields for firework night when the local school could no longer hold it and so for the last six years or more Elms Farm became the official place to be on bonfire night! A keen rugby fan, he played for his school when he was younger but unfortunately work commitments stopped him continuing once leaving school. He remained an avid fan and had a very memorable time in 2003 when he went to Australia for three weeks with three other friends to

witness England beating Australia in the final of the rugby world cup.

James was diagnosed with a very rare form of abdominal cancer in the summer of 1998 which only one in a million people suffer from. He underwent chemotherapy, eight major operations and numerous other procedures which helped to keep his condition at bay. He fought a brave and courageous battle which tragically he lost on 6th January 2009. He was dearly loved and will be sadly and greatly missed by all his family, friends and business colleagues. JAMES was truly ONE IN A MILLION.

Denise Gemmill



Nature Notes

In the next weeks, during a spell of warm weather, you may see slow worms basking in the sunshine. These reptiles, looking like slender snakes, are neither slow nor worms. They are legless lizards, reaching up to 20 inches in length, and are completely harmless. They hibernate during the cold months under heaps of leaves or grass piles, and beneath stones and gravestones, and emerge in April once the sun is stronger. As they are cold-blooded, they need to raise their body temperature in order to become active. Once they have warmed up, they can move surprisingly quickly. During April and May mating occurs and the females give birth at any time from July to October, but usually at the end of August or early September. The young are enclosed in thin sacs called pellicles. Compost heaps, and piles of grass are typical egg-laying places.

Slow worms tend to remain in the same area and are long-lived. They are a beautiful silvery grey, coppery colour. Females have a dark band running along their backs. If males are involved in a fight they may shed their tails. These can sometimes regenerate.

Slow worms are found throughout Europe and in north-west Africa, but are becoming scarcer. They are now a priority species for conservation under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and are protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act from being intentionally killed or injured. They are not often seen because they spend most of their time hidden away, but they come out at dusk or after rain to search for various insects (being especially keen on ants) as well as earthworms, slugs and snails. Gardeners are fortunate if they have slow worms in their gardens but need to be careful when forking over their compost heap!



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Boogie Woogie students from MMCC ...

Quiffs and stilettos were the order of the day as the hall of the MMCC reverberated recently to the sounds of students from Year 7 to Year 11 singing and jiving their way through the popular family musical, *Grease*. The T-Birds and the Pink Ladies, resplendent in leathers and pink jackets, led the audience through the highs and lows of 1950s American high school life. This was a true whole school production with young students, such as Ruben Fourie and Scarlett Alder from Year 7, taking on major roles alongside more experienced students from other years. Year 11 student Ewan Smith's rendition of Frankie Valli's classic *Beauty School Drop Out*, was charming whilst Harry Bullot as Kenickie entertained us with his 'off-beat' sense of humour. The T-Birds wowed the audience with their rendition of *Greased Lightning* complete with a car on the stage! Lewis Edridge, Year 10, broke hearts as Danny, whilst Chloe Nash, Year 11, treated us to a wholesome Sandy before transforming herself into the archetypal vamp in the final scene. The acting of the students was assured and professional; the music was skilfully performed with another student, Mackenzie Telford, showing great vocal and guitar skills.

The production showed the true professionalism of both the cast and the staff in that, despite the passing of Jill McMahon, a dear colleague and teacher, the production was characterised by its ebullient energy and contagious sense of fun. All three performances were dedicated to Jill McMahon with audiences donating over £600 to the Arthur Rank House Hospice in Cambridge. The College staff and students are now looking forward to preparing for their next production.



Kenickie (Harry Bullot) in the foreground, together with the T-Birds. (Photo: Sarah Boggis)

The Margaret Baker Public Speaking Competition

Thursday 5th March saw the College's annual Public Speaking Competition take place. This well established event is now in its sixth year. As in previous years it was sponsored by Stansted Stort Valley Rotary Club. The competition is named after Mrs Margaret Baker, ex Head of English and founder of the competition, in recognition of her contribution to the College, and is a collaborative occasion between the College and local primary schools. Each team entertained

their audience with a biblical reading, a humorous poem, and a two minute talk on one of the following topics: carbon footprint, respect and manners, and my idea of what life will be like in 2050. The standard of the presentations is always very high but this year they were exceptionally good with team after team performing at a level quite astonishing for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. Clearly the pupils and teachers had worked very hard to allow them to speak so eloquently and with such a level of confidence, which impressed the team of exacting judges:

Mr G Lay - President of Stansted Stort Valley Rotary Club

Ms M Miners - Lead Senior Advisor for English in Essex

Mrs M Baker - Ex Head of English, MMCC

Miss J Mullis - Headteacher MMCC

Dr Duncombe, Head of English at the College thanked the judges and Stansted Stort Valley Rotary for their continued sponsorship of the event before asking Mr Lay to present the prizes and certificates. Mr Lay added his congratulations to the teams and pointed out how vital these skills would be to them in their future lives. Particular congratulations go to the winners, Hatfield Heath Community Primary School.

MMCC student volunteers help plant 400 trees

A team of 16 Year 9 students and two members of staff travelled to Marks Hall, in Coggeshall, where they spent the day planting 400 trees and helping with the restoration of fences and hedgerows, working as part of a project with the British Trust of Conservation Volunteers. They worked tirelessly throughout the day and were a credit to the College. A spokesman of BTCV told students "Your efforts have been fantastic; teamwork and determination being the key to success. You exceeded our expectations for the day!" We were delighted to be involved with BTCV, and the College hopes to develop future projects of this nature on a more local level within the community.

PTA News: Quiz Night

The PTA Quiz Night on 7th March was a lively event, with the College hall full of parents, teachers, governors, students and friends. Our Quiz Master, Russ Haselton, returned for a third year to test our knowledge and mental agility on a wide range of topics, keeping everyone on their toes. A tasty ploughman's supper was supplied by PTA committee members Yvonne Hardy and Tina South, and the winning table generously donated their prize of eight bottles of wine to be auctioned, helping towards a grand profit of over £600, which will be used to help fund extra resources for the College. A big thank you to everyone who supported the event and helped make it a success.

Forthcoming Event - Car Boot Sale

The PTA will be holding a Spectacular Spring Car Boot Sale at the College on Sunday 26th April, from 11.00am to 2.00pm, with set up from 10.00am. Hot food and refreshments will be available in the College canteen. Pitches are £6 in advance, £8 on the day. To book, call Sue (504537) or Yvonne (815707), or pick up a booking form from the College.

Ruth Martin
Community & Marketing Administration Assistant

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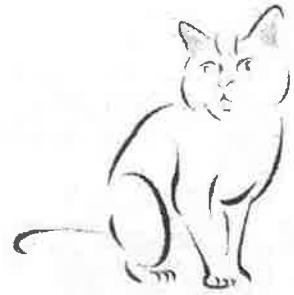
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Back to the drawing board for proposed airspace changes

SSE has welcomed news that the airspace change proposal put out to consultation by National Air Traffic Services (NATS) exactly a year ago is being taken back to the drawing board after an overwhelming thumbs down from people across the region. NATS' plans to conduct a new consultation later this year on revised proposals for flightpaths and holding stacks in the area of south-east England (known in airspace terms as Terminal Control North) were revealed in a letter sent to SSE. The proposal to change aircraft stacking areas, arrival and departure routes for planes using Stansted and other airports in the south east in the years to 2014 caused uproar across Essex, Herts, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire because of the threats posed to the tranquillity of rural areas. Overall, there would have been more losers than winners around Stansted Airport, extra flying miles and increased emissions per flight. Many who had never been overflowed would have seen a radical change in the character of their area.

Of more than 15,000 responses received from members of the public (including 578 from MPs, local authorities, parish councils, environmental groups and other representative bodies), some 86 percent objected to the plans. Even the House of Commons Transport Committee instigated an inquiry into the proposal because of the widespread concerns and interest it sparked. For once, people power seems to have had an effect.

Martin Peachey
Noise Spokesman

SSE SEEKS LEAVE TO APPEAL 'CONFUSING' HIGH COURT DECISION

A High Court Judge has ruled that the Government's decision to approve permission for an extra ten million passengers a year at Stansted Airport was legal. The decision by Justice Sir Thane Forbes follows a four day hearing at the end of February. The wording of his judgment fails to provide the clarification which Stop Stansted Expansion (SSE) was looking for when it brought the case and so SSE is seeking leave to appeal. SSE's primary concern was that the wording of the Government's decision to approve the extra 10 million passengers a year could compromise its case at any future Public Inquiry to consider a second runway at Stansted. There were also wider implications for planning decisions across the UK.

SSE welcomes the Judge's ruling that the impact of the additional aircraft noise which would ensue from the expansion of Stansted is a legitimate consideration to be taken into account during the decision-making process. However, SSE believes it is illogical for the Judge to uphold the original decision when the evidence suggests that the noise impacts were not properly taken into account by the Government when reaching its decision to approve the extra 10 million passengers a year at Stansted.

Regarding the adverse economic impact on the UK trade deficit, on the one hand the Judge appears to agree with SSE that this should be taken into account in the decision-making process but on the other hand he appears to be saying that the trade deficit can be disregarded. SSE is even more concerned about the Judge's decision on the climate change issue because it appears to mean that these wider environmental impacts of airport expansion do not need to be taken into account when

deciding whether planning permission should be granted. This High Court action was never simply about winning or losing. Our primary concern was to ensure that our main battle against a second Stansted runway was not prejudiced by the wording of the original decision. However, today's ruling seems to make matters even less clear than they were before. That is why we are seeking leave to appeal.

Carol Barbone
Campaign Director
Tel.: 07775 523091
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BLOOD DONATIONS AND THE CHOCOLATE HAZARD

We are all getting quite excited at the surgery about our pet blood donor day, to be held on the afternoon of Saturday 25th April at our Saffron Walden surgery. As I explained in the last edition of the 'Link', blood transfusions are used fairly regularly in dogs and can be the difference between life and death in emergency situations. We are looking for suitable dogs to volunteer, or rather for their owners to put their paws in the air for them! Dogs must be between one and eight years of age, be of a fairly quiet disposition and weigh over 25kg. They must also not have travelled abroad. If you are interested in your dog taking part, then please ring Lisa, our head nurse at the Saffron Walden Surgery on 01799 522082. The whole procedure will take about 15 minutes; the donor dogs lie on a table and have a needle inserted into a vein to take the blood, similar to human blood donors. There will be a vet and several experienced nurses there on the day and each dog is fed a small meal after they have given blood and also gets to go home with a goodie bag.

If the day is a success, we will be holding three or four days throughout the year so dogs can become regular donors if the owners wish, and other people have a chance to participate if they miss the first day. Each blood donation can save up to four lives; we think this is a hugely worthwhile scheme and are hoping we get a good response. Please ring Lisa at Saffron Walden if you'd like more details or if you'd like to volunteer your dog. Broccoli is keeping very quiet under my desk while I'm writing this, but he only weighs 5kg so isn't eligible. I haven't told him yet!

The other important issue to remind you of at this time of year is, of course, that chocolate Easter eggs and dogs don't go very well together. Chocolate contains a substance called theobromine, which is poisonous for dogs if eaten in large enough quantities. The darker the chocolate the more theobromine it contains and therefore the potentially more risky if eaten. Symptoms of chocolate poisoning include vomiting, thirst, restlessness, salivation and walking unsteadily. These symptoms can start within two to three hours of eating the chocolate and can last several days. Very severe cases can even result in death but these are rare. To get it in proportion a dog does have to eat quite a large amount (about 20grams/kg) of chocolate to become ill. For a Labrador sized dog this would be about three of the 200g bars of milk chocolate. Mind you, thinking about it, maybe that isn't so much for a Labrador to get through in one sitting! Anyway, keep the Easter eggs out of reach and if you want to give your dog a treat this Easter, take it on a nice long walk instead. Happy Easter!

Ilse Pedler
Partner
Mercer & Hughes,
Veterinary Surgeons



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NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

PARISH PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE – IMPROVED BY DELAY

Given the large size of the questionnaire and given that the returns will form the basis of the Plan, it has been decided to seek external professional help in order to produce a questionnaire which is as concise as can be achieved without losing too much needed information and which is laid out in a form which is user friendly. If this is achieved by the end of March then it should be delivered after Easter. Apologies for the delay but, hopefully, the end product will be worth the wait.

HEALTH CENTRE – AWAITING A DECISION

A statement from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) was given to the Annual Parish Meeting while a meeting with the PCT will take place at the beginning of April. The favoured site at the top of Chapel Hill is still under negotiation. If this is brought to a successful conclusion, then the Health Centre could be in operation by the end of 2010. If negotiations fail, then the other two sites under consideration will be revisited.

MULTI-USE GAMES AREA – NEAR CONCLUSION

Although most of the work has been completed, the top surface cannot be applied whilst there is the risk of frost. As such the final works should be completed in the spring, thus providing a facility much needed on the Mountfitchet Green.

PARKING RESTRICTIONS – FINDING A BALANCE

The piece in The Link last month generated useful correspondence which will be considered by the Highways Working Party. In assessing any further restrictions, the following factors will be important in reaching a conclusion. Firstly, if further restrictions are introduced will these create an adverse impact on other parishioners? If so, what additional action would be demanded? Secondly, if parking is prohibited would this increase speed and thus create a different safety hazard? Thirdly, where could additional off-street

parking be created and could the existing car parks be made available at least in part to meet parishioners needs? Fourthly, unless parking restrictions are enforced then creating lines is of limited help. Discussions with Uttlesford District Council need to be pursued. The Council is conscious of numerous problems and is seeking the best ways to meet conflicting demands.

A COLOURFUL OUTLOOK (WEATHER PERMITTING)

We are pleased to confirm the recent appointment of Peter Sykes & Sons Landscaping Ltd of Bishop Stortford, who are contracted from the 1st March to tend our hedge cutting, hanging baskets, flower beds, troughs and Memorial Gardens.

There are high hopes for a more successful year with the possibility of a new shade of Geranium for the hanging baskets which are hoped to be in fuller bloom by the time they are displayed. Our summer planting in general will be predominantly red, pink, & yellow. The flower beds will be displaying Marigolds and the tubs and troughs will be planted with geraniums to match the hanging baskets.

In contrast our Winter planting for the beds will display a centrepiece of Cordyline, coloured Heathers around the edges, with an infill of yellow Violas. The tubs and troughs will be similar, with the addition of some trailing ivy and silver colour.

AIRPORT INQUIRY – YES (BUT WHEN?) OR POSSIBLY NO!

The Secretary of State, Hazel Blears, has postponed the date of commencement for the G2 Inquiry (second runway applications). No new date will be set until the report of the Competition Commission is published – expected by the end of March. After allowing up to four weeks to consider the report and another eight weeks to reschedule the programme, the original start date of 15 April may now become postponed until early Summer.

Based upon the April start date, the Inspector had estimated that the Inquiry would last until October 2010. Given the slippage this could fall into 2011. If, however, the Competition Commission recommends the sale of Stansted by BAA then the Inquiry may not be pursued at all. What can be said with confidence is that the decision on the second runway will be taken by the next Government, whatever its complexion!

The Parish Council will have its Proof of Evidence in place over the next couple of months so that it is ready for submission if, or when, needed. Once approved by the Council it will be posted on the website or available in the Council Office.

Finally, by the time The Link is published, the appeal by SSE in relation to the G1 report (full use of the existing runway) should be known. If successful this will add another complication to planning the G2 Inquiry.

THE WINDMILL – CARING FOR A LOCAL LANDMARK

The Trustees met in February to discuss the way forward on conserving the Windmill which is regarded as an important and valued landmark. The following resolution was unanimously agreed:

“The Parish Council, as co-Trustee, recognises that it has a responsibility for the proper maintenance of the fabric of the Mill.

“Any additional projects should be funded externally, subject to agreement by the Trustees that they can fund any on-going maintenance resulting from that work.”

Given that the Millers would not wish the Spring/Summer opening programme of the Mill to be disrupted, the works to maintain the Mill in a good state of repair are likely to be undertaken either in Autumn 2009 or Spring 2010. Subject to any adverse surprises in an updated report, the money to fund this programme is available.

At the February meeting, Peggy Honour stood down as our co-Trustee. Peggy was keen to stress that she will maintain her interest in the Mill, but after 23 years as co-Trustee, felt it was time to hand over to someone else. On behalf of the community, our grateful thanks to Peggy.

We are pleased to welcome Molly Clark in Peggy's place. Molly lives in close proximity to

the Mill, and has taken a keen interest for a number of years. We look forward to working with Molly in the years to come.

STANSTED YOUTH CENTRE

Friday evenings are going really well and we have started work on our two projects for this year. The first is a mosaic art project for the garden, and for the second we are looking at how young people have been affected by the unrest in Northern Ireland. This will finish with an exchange trip between young people from Stansted and Belfast.

We are also planning, and applying for funding, to take the younger members to North Wales on an activity break to develop their climbing and kayaking skills and to introduce them to caving for the first time.

Starting on Tuesday 21 April at 6 pm is our new Duke of Edinburgh Open Centre evening for all 14+ young people who wish to get involved in this challenging but exciting project. If anyone is interested in DofE and would like to know more, please come along on the 21 April, or ring Linda Barnes on 07920 466925.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 29 April in the Stansted Day Centre at 7.30 pm.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

Catherine Dean	813579
Gaye Ellington	813933
Jo Freeman	812524
Bridget Gott	814440
John Hudson	814489
Peter Jones	813252
Janice Loughlin	812346
Tudor Owen	812825
Ruth Rawlinson**	814222
Jonathan Rich	813112
John Salmon	814789
Dan Scott	815098
Geoffrey Sell *	815925
Bill Stiles	813172
Valerie Trundle	813433
* Chairman	
** Vice Chairman	

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

March 25	-	Finance
April 8	-	Full Council
April 15	-	Open Spaces
April 22	-	Full Council
April 29	-	Finance

Members of the public are welcome to attend all Parish Council meetings, and may address the Council on any relevant issue at the start of Full Council meetings. These comments are noted but no discussion is entered into. Meetings are held in Crafton Green House at 7.45pm unless otherwise stated on the agenda. Agendas are posted on the Parish Council's website www.stansted.net under Publications.

SAD NEWS

We were very sorry to learn this week of the sudden death of Graham Buttery, husband of former Clerk Janet. Graham was born and bred in the village and his mother lived here until her death. Our thoughts are with Janet and son Mark at this time.

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

From Cllr Geoffrey Sell

Second Runway Public Inquiry Postponement

The announcement from the Government that the public inquiry into a second runway at Stansted has been postponed has been warmly welcomed by Uttlesford councillors from all three political groups. The inquiry was scheduled to begin on April 15 2009.

The main reason the Government has given for the delay is that the Competition Commission which is currently investigating the implications of BAA's ownership of the main airports in the South East, is due to publish its final report little more than a fortnight prior to the scheduled start of the inquiry.

A revised start date has not yet been decided. The Government will make an announcement within four weeks of the Competition Commission's report being published and will then provide at least eight weeks notice before the start of the inquiry.

With Stansted Airport now handling fewer flights than at any time in the past five years I believe it is premature to be holding an inquiry in the first

place. Hopefully the Government announcement will ultimately mean that the application is withdrawn. My view is that it would be a huge waste of public money to have the inquiry scheduled before the next general election. Both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties have clearly stated their opposition to a second runway at Stansted.

Relaunch of Flight Paths Consultation

National Air Traffic Services (NATS) which is responsible for air traffic management have announced that they are going to relaunch its flight paths consultation. They revealed that it will hold a second consultation into proposals for changing the flight paths around south-east England, including options not considered in the original consultation last year.

The District Council believes the move by NATS to hold a second consultation vindicates the council's response to the original consultation last summer, when it criticised NATS for not presenting alternatives to the options being put forward.

If the original proposals had gone ahead there would have been more losers than winners around Stansted Airport, extra flying miles and increased emissions per flight. The Council hopes that NATS will re-look at the best way to minimise the effect of air and noise pollution from aircraft flying into, over and out of this area.

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

From Cllr Alan Dean

I have been in discussion with the developers and council planning officers about the road through Forest Hall Park. This is open at the Forest Hall Road end, but is still closed at the Church Road end. This means that residents in the Walson Way area find it very difficult to walk into the middle of Stansted; it's over a 1km diversion without any pavement most of the way and so is a safety hazard. The Church Road access isn't open because of continuing building work, which means one health & safety risk is being swapped for another. I have asked that as a minimum an early pedestrian access is created. I was originally given a date in June, but the developer is now trying to bring it forward to April or May. There are now over 70 homes occupied and a nice community is beginning to develop at what most of us still call Rochfords.

I visited Stansted library to let the staff know how popular their service is. According to a survey of residents that I helped to organise, around 40% of us use the library service and over nine in ten users are pleased with the service and very complimentary of the quality of service provided by the people who run the library. It's popular to moan about our public services, and so we should when they are not up to scratch, but it's also important that public servants are praised when they do a good job. I was also asked to pass on a verbal bouquet to Uttlesford's housing staff after they did a marvellous job during the February floods to help people who suffered damage.

Several councillors for the Stansted area have raised concerns that Uttlesford has abandoned tourism promotion everywhere in the district apart from Saffron Walden, where district funding is being given to that town council but to no other. Tourism is an important industry for our district. At a time of economic downturn, more and more people in the UK are holidaying at home. As business at the airport is declining at the moment, jobs in local tourism will become more important. There is a local partnership under the banner Uttlesford Futures which is starting to look at creating jobs for the future, which many pundits think will be very different from what we have been used to.

Cllr Alan Dean
Tel: 01279 813579/ 07710 105824
Email: cllrdean@uttlesford.gov.uk

NEWS FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

The good news from Essex County Council is that the increase in Council Tax this year will be 1.9% and that is not only the lowest increase for more than twenty years but is almost certainly the one of the lowest in the country.

In addition to this Essex have offered a series of measures to support people who are struggling in these difficult times and this has included a scheme which offers residents of Essex who are in financial difficulty assistance with their Council Tax. Direct support of £100 will be given to the 30,000 most vulnerable households across the County in a unique support scheme that will assist any Council Tax Payer who is either over 80 or who has a child under 16 and is claiming part benefit of their Council Tax.

We cannot ignore the fact that our roads have suffered badly as a result of the snow, ice and floods this winter and despite having spread more salt and gravel on Essex roads in December and January than in the whole of the last three years

together it has been a struggle to ensure that the roads remained safe. In addition to this the surfaces have suffered badly and a vast amount of repairs are required. In order to address this Essex County Council have set aside an additional £700,000 for repairs in this financial year and the budget has allowed an extra £ 10 million for the repair of local roads and footpaths in the next financial year.

Unfortunately not all of the repairs can be done at once, but we are on the way to ensuring that Essex roads are in the best possible condition.
County Cllr Ray Gooding – 01279 813103
cllr.ray.gooding@essex.gov.uk

ECO-TOWN CONSULTATION

The Eco-town consultation has been extended to 30 April and we urge those who haven't yet done so to respond.

CONTACT US!

Clerk – Ruth Clifford
Admin Assistant – Anne Court
Phone/Fax: 01279 813214 10am – 1pm
E-mail: parishcouncil@stansted.net

OTHER CONTACTS

Uttlesford District Council Members

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

Essex County Council Member

Ray Gooding	Tel: 01279 813103
Email: cllrgooding@essex.gov.uk	

Member of Parliament

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

Police

PC Tom Bastendorff
Stansted Police Station, Hargrave Close
Tel: 812211
Essex Police non-emergency number:
0300 333 4444
Mobile phone carried by PCSO
07801 461666



Hello Everyone

Thanks to all of you who visited Spangles to meet with the staff from Job Centre plus in February. You kept Sue and



Lesley busy with your enquiries and I hope it was useful to have such experienced members of staff to hand. We will have them back again soon so keep an eye out for our posters. Despite the fact that everyone thinks we have been around for ever, 6th March was Spangles very 1st birthday.



We had a small tea party for a number of our local partners and the grand unveiling of our new Spangles sign, putting us firmly on the local map. The children had a great time decorating their own birthday cakes, while the adults had a slice of a beautiful birthday cake, made by one of our staff.

As always numbers here are growing steadily and parents need to keep us informed of their needs so we can try and meet them. Another excellent source of information is The Essex Family Information Service, who give free and unbiased information to parents and carers regarding the different types of childcare and support services available in Essex. Contact them on 0800 0556874, email fis@essex.gov.uk or www.5essexcc.gov.uk for more information on children's services in Essex.

Mandy Fitchett
Co-ordinator

Your local NCT group are a very active, fun bunch of parents who are busy creating and running social events for parents all over Stansted, Henham, Elsenham, Ugley, Manuden, Takeley and the surrounding areas. We have regular get togethers for women with bumps, new parents, parents with toddlers and another group for pre-schoolers. Sometimes these are for specific age groups and at some events all ages are invited. We also always try and organise something extra for the holidays to occupy those little ones (and carers!) that are missing the routine of nursery, like messy play mornings and picnics in the summer.

All NCT events are very informal and friendly, usually held either in someone's home or the local hall, and we encourage everyone to come along and spend some time with us. Not only is it a great outing for the young ones but it can be therapeutic for the parents and carers as well. It's a time to chat with other parents and have a coffee while your child(ren) play.

Coming up we have a cinema trip, an Easter Egg Hunt and a picnic at Audley End where we also get to ride on the miniature railway. These are in addition to our regular coffee mornings that are held every week. We also like to get together without the children, to ensure we are getting our regular quota of adult conversation, so quite often we have nights out for dinner, or maybe pizza and a movie at someone's house.

Don't forget our very successful CHILDREN'S NEARLY NEW SALES. Good quality second-hand clothes, toys and equipment are available at great prices. Our next sale is on 25th April from 2.30pm-4.00pm in St John's Church Hall. Please contact me for further information.

Donna Butler
Tel: 08442 436281
Email: donnabutler2@mac.com
Website: www.nct.org.uk

JAZZ AT ST JOHN'S

I am delighted to be able to report that the February Jazz Evening, our fifth, was another great success both in social and financial terms. The anticipated contribution to Church Hall funds will be around £2,000 compared with £1,600 last year. Thanks go to Paul Wilkin for allowing us to use his beautiful church, Peter Baker and his Crusty Jazzers, Helen Baker, Sonia Levy, Susie and Ray Ball, Steve Morrison, Joy and Fintan Lambe, Rosemary Thomson, Alan and Marnie Tait, Tony Butcher, Nigs Hall, Anthony Minshull, Jane my wife and many others who supported us cooking potatoes and a range of other duties, for their sterling work and support before, during and after the event. Thanks are also due to Britannia Indian Takeaway for sponsoring the event, and to all the 'Punters', who braved the snow and ice to support the evening so generously. It was a wonderful example of a community pulling and bonding together.

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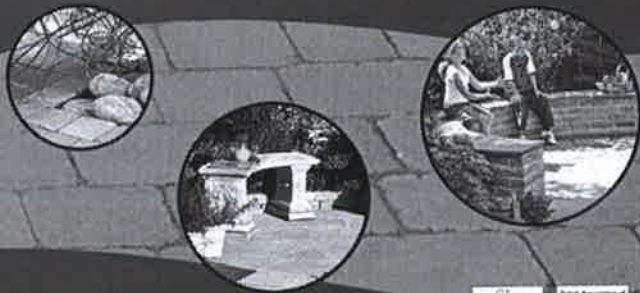
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HATFIELD FOREST HIGHLIGHTS



With Easter just around the corner things are getting exciting here at Hatfield Forest. The gates are now open and the school holidays approach. After a cold winter we are all looking forward to the warmth of spring and summer. In the Forest you can really feel a brand new season starting; the flowers are budding, birds

are nesting and if you listen carefully you can almost hear the trees waking up.

For those of you who came over in the February half term you will know that the forest was full of busy bees, with many of you taking part in one of the events we held here. With it being National Nest Box Week we were taking part by building our very own nest boxes that were grown, felled and milled here in the forest. With over 50 new Hatfield Forest nest boxes being made during that week we look forward to the local bird population soaring. For all of you who took part and have now got a bird box please get in contact to let us know if you've got any birds nesting. Also during that week an intrepid and adventurous group set out to survive for a day in the forest. Led by Assistant Conservation Warden Adam Maher we headed out and learnt about finding clean water, foraging for food, shelter building and fire-lighting. All the teams were successful in completing the tasks set for them and celebrated with a few marshmallows over their lit fires outside their sturdy shelters.

Next time any of you are in St Michael's church, Bishop's Stortford listening to the bells peal then you'll be fascinated to know that the church's new bell stay was made here at Hatfield Forest. Our Conservation Warden, Ian Pease, specially sawed the stay from ash for the church and went to see it installed in the church tower. For those of you that are curious what a bell stay is then I urge you to try and find out before I reveal the answer next month!



Until then I hope to see you all soon in the Forest and don't be afraid to come and say hello.

Laura Slater
Community Warden
Tel: 01279 874043

Email: laura.slater@nationaltrust.org.uk



MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

March Meeting

Our speaker for the March meeting was Ronald Smith, who gave members a very knowledgeable slide talk on 'The National Trust – Coast and Countryside'. Mr Smith has been a volunteer speaker for over 46 years and has visited and stayed at many of the locations he showed us. The National Trust was founded in 1895 by three philanthropists - Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley. Concerned about the impact of industrialisation and development, they set up the Trust to buy and preserve for the nation areas of threatened coastline and countryside – its first acquisition was the Dinas Oleu coastline in Wales. Over the years the National Trust's aims have grown and evolved and it now has five areas of preservation: coast, countryside, stately homes, gardens and industrial heritage.

In our coastline and countryside journey we were shown some of the popular locations along with some very unusual ones, such as the rock houses at Kinver Edge, home to some of Britain's last cave dwellers (they moved out in the 1950s!!).

Next Meeting 1st April

'Safe Gardening' by Stansted Chiropractic Clinic, followed by the AGM. If you have any cups etc from last year's Spring Show, please bring them along to the April meeting.

Future Events:

Bring and Buy Sale – With the spring cleaning season upon us, why not take the opportunity to sell (10% of price donated to club) or donate fully any item connected with gardening – books, tools, planters, plants and shrubs, bbqs, seats, hanging baskets ... the list is endless. If the item is too big to bring along to the 6th May meeting, please take a photo. All items should be named and priced, and collected at the end of the meeting if not sold.

Spring Outing -

Glen Chantry and Hyde Hall on 16th May - cost £12. Members should register their places by the next meeting as any seats left over will be offered to other village organisations. Our summer outing to Harcourt House and Lullingstone Castle is on 18th July.

Membership

Subscriptions for the new season are £11.50 single/£19.00 double (two people at the same address). Our meetings are held at the Crafton Room (Day Centre) adjacent to the library at the top of Chapel Hill on the first Wednesday of the month - 7.30pm for 8.00pm start. Why not come and join us - you will be very welcome.

Maralyn Harris
Chairman





STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We had a very entertaining meeting at the beginning of March, when Fred Feather spoke on 'Arsenic and Old Essex'. Fred was a member of the Essex Constabulary and Curator of the Essex Police Museum until ten years ago and although he has since become involved in editing a genealogical magazine, his talk was principally based on what he had discovered while at the Police Museum.

The Essex Constabulary was formed in 1840 with 100 Police Constables for the county. The Act of Parliament which permitted these forces was passed in 1839 and it was not until 1856 that they were made compulsory for all parts of England. The first Chief Constable of Essex was Admiral McHardy and although other police forces had uniforms of a variety of colours, the fact that dark blue became the standard was in large part due to him and the influence of the Royal Navy - there was a distinct wish to keep away from red, which was the uniform of the Army at the time! Originally, police were issued with rattles to call for help or attention but these were soon replaced by whistles, which were audible over a greater distance.

Fred went on to tell us of some of the murders which took place in the early days of the Essex Police, some of which

happened quite close to Stansted. Indeed, Clavering appears to have been the murder centre of the county for some time and the use of arsenic as the means of death gave this talk its title. This was largely due to one Sally Parker, who was charged on three occasions with child murder but was initially acquitted. Her brother, a pedlar, lived in Wix but came on business to Clavering. He took home reports of Sally Parker's doings but soon he had expired himself. His wife later was hung for his murder and the day before she died, coincidentally, a bill for the control of the sale of arsenic was introduced in Parliament. Fred also referred to William Calcroft of Little Baddow, who became the hangman of all England, except Yorkshire - he could not account for this exception! Fred gave his talk in a very dry and light hearted manner, throwing in little asides and comments, which had us all greatly amused. He had last visited us when he was thinking of retiring from the police and in the intervening years, his sense of humour had not become blunted, as a larger than usual audience can testify!

Our next meeting on 2nd April will be on 'Essex Maps before the Ordnance Survey' given by Peter Walker and we hope to have as large an audience again. See you there.

Ian Seavers

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Stansted Cricket Club

Stansted Tennis Club



We have enrolled with NatWest CricketForce 2009 and are holding a NatWest CricketForce working party at Hargrave Park from 9.30am until 4.00pm on Sunday 29th March. The Club has a number of activities which we hope to complete on the day, involving renovating parts of the pavilion, improving the look of the ground, and building the new sightscreens which have just been delivered. (Our previous sightscreens perished in the big autumn hurricane of 1987!) NatWest CricketForce provides resources in the shape of volunteers and we are hoping to achieve a great deal between our own club members and the volunteers.

Honoured guests who have agreed to turn up on the day include Graham Pryke (Cricket Development Officer from Essex County Cricket Club) plus Les Rowland, a local representative from Lord's Taverners, with whom we are currently negotiating to play a match between Lord's Taverners and Stansted CC in July 2010 to mark our club's 150th anniversary. If anyone from the village wishes to assist with, or sponsor, any activities on 29th March, you would be most welcome. We are providing tea and bacon rolls/sandwiches for all volunteers on the day!

Stansted CC is holding its AGM on Tuesday 31st March at 8.00pm at the home of Keith Ayres, 49 St. John's Road. All existing and prospective members are welcome.

David Hedge
Hon Secretary

Coaching

The popular lunch-time adult coaching session continues throughout the year on a Friday from 2.00pm-2.45pm. If you would like to come along and join in, please call Chris Hollis on 319155. You don't have to be a member of the club. Junior coaching with Chris Hollis continues as usual for the older groups. Two new groups for younger children have recently been created for which there is now a waiting list. If you would like to find out more and get your name on the waiting list, please call Chris. Martyn Taplin (816386) continues to coach adults on Saturday afternoons at the club.

Used Tennis Balls

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

Club Playing Sessions

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

Wednesday at 10.00am and 6.00pm
Friday at 9.30am. Sunday at 10.00am

Contacts

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

Chris Hollis



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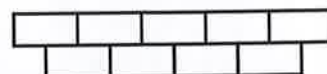
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SKYWATCH

A monthly look at an aspect
of the night sky



The word comet, rather disappointingly I think, means 'hairy star'. But they are fascinating things. There are many comets that are regular visitors, the most famous being Halley's Comet which toddles round every 76ish years. Its most recent appearance was in 1986. There is also Encke's Comet which has a period of about three years and four months. Every now and again a new one comes along and the first person to have been confirmed to have spotted it has the comet named after them.

Comets appear to come from two sources: beyond Pluto's orbit there is a ring of small objects round the Sun called the Kuiper Belt; and much further out from anything we know in the Solar System, there seems to be a complete sphere of similar objects, called the Oort Cloud. Each is named after the discoverer. Comets have been described as dirty snowballs. They are fundamentally rock with an abundance of minerals and water, and being so distant, they are frozen solid.

Every now and again a chance encounter with the gravity of one of the giant planets induces one of these lumps to come out of its orbit and it starts 'dropping' towards the Sun - a drop that may take a couple of hundred years. Because comets have come on such a long and essentially straight journey, they have very elliptic, narrow orbits. It is only when the comet gets closer to the Sun that the tail begins to manifest itself, getting longer as it gets closer, which can mean five or six million miles long. The tail is generated by radiation from the Sun and if a comet manages to go round the Sun (not into it) and starts to retrace its course back to the frozen regions, then the comet is flying tail first.

Amazingly, a few years ago, an unmanned rocket managed to intercept a comet to extract some of the comet's matter. It was successful in two ways: firstly it flew through the tail and captured micro particles, and secondly it fired a large 'bullet' of copper at the head of the comet, also with the aim of collecting ejecta from the impact. These experiments went entirely to plan and the spacecraft returned to Earth with its hard-earned cargo. Historically, comets have been regarded as harbingers of doom, so you had better watch out, especially as this is the thirteenth edition of Skywatch.

Martin West
Mooncraft Productions

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Are you a student looking for some part-time work over the summer holidays? We are looking for someone to help with 3 children (aged 6, 3 and newborn) from June to September but times and dates are flexible when we find the right person. Some experience of childcare essential.

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Congratulations



... to Nicola Martin and Neil Tilstone who were married in St John's Church on Saturday 7th March.
'Love you both' from all the family



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

STANSTED MILLERS

Our AGM was held on 10th March at which the officers and committee were re-elected. The news that grant applications for the refurbishment work were still awaiting a response was received without surprise, but there was the consolation that the Mill has come through the winter without further deterioration or damage. Following drinks and nibbles a short photographic display of nearby mills and their sites was given, together with some historic details and anecdotes. As stated in the Parish Council report, the meeting was told that Molly Clark is to succeed Peggy Honour as Independent Trustee. Thanks for Peggy's 23 years in this role were proposed by Alan Williams.

Readers will also see in the Parish Council's pages that the Council is anxious to undertake maintenance work irrespective of grant monies being forthcoming. The Millers will be pleased to have some action taking place, the only down-side being that site protection and some scaffolding costs are likely to be duplicated if further delay with grants necessitate restoration works being carried out at a later date.

Derek Honour

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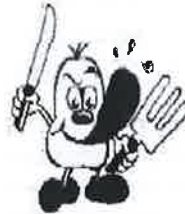
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494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

Our cadets are busy preparing for their training exams with many hoping to gain their Leading, Senior and Staff Cadet qualifications. Cadets study various disciplines whilst on the Squadron including aircraft handling, navigation, communications and flight. These will prove especially useful if they go on to careers in aviation, engineering or the services, but the information learnt can prove handy in a wide variety of areas. The Squadron is also gearing up for the forthcoming Falklands Competition where units from all over Essex compete against each other in a weekend of activities. To help prepare for this challenge, cadets from our team spent a weekend at Skreens Park near Chelmsford honing their archery, navigation and leadership skills. We came third last year so our hopes are high for victory!

Three of our cadets enjoyed a great day's initial gliding at Wethersfield; it was their first time and the weather proved ideal. One is particularly keen to go on to do the Gliding Scholarship - where else do young people get presented with such amazing opportunities! Our new intake of nine junior cadets are progressing well in their initial training - they are a keen bunch and showing plenty of team spirit. They have joined in with the rest of the Squadron for quite a few activities including sports and the missile race, and it won't be long until they are all in uniform and fully involved in all the Squadron has to offer.

The Squadron was pleased to be able to assist Sainsbury's in Bishop's Stortford in its fundraising for Comic Relief. Cadets donned fancy dress to pack customers' bags, with all donations going to this worthy cause. The Store Manager was especially impressed with the Squadron and many thanks go to all those who gave up their spare time with approximately £500 raised.



As you may recall the Squadron was fortunate enough to receive grants from both the Youth Opportunities and Youth Capital Funds. We have now completed the project spend and the equipment gained is really making a difference to life on the Squadron, with new IT equipment, archery gear, radios, flight simulators, adventure training clothing and equipment and fieldcraft equipment - all allowing cadets to take full advantage of the opportunities presented by the life in the Air Cadets.

If you are aged between 13 and 17 and interested in joining, visit our website www.stanstedaircadets.org.uk for more information or give us a call on 681559.

Simon Stacey



Huw Johnson Club

As our opening number, Joanne's disco went down a treat. After our winter break we had eight birthdays to celebrate. As we must sing it to each individual by name it took quite a long time to get through them all but they still had plenty of puff to blow out the candles on the cake made by Joanne's Mum, Hannah, for the occasion. Garry's disco is always a success and we thank him for the interest he takes in the Club. Our members are always glad to see him whenever he appears. If you read this before 1st April remember to come along to our AGM in the Free Church Hall. This begins at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

Helping us at the Club we have several teenagers who are a great help. If you think of teenagers as the papers so often portray them you should come and meet ours. Rachel, Hannah, Caroline and Lauren do a wonderful job and we are very glad to have them on our team. Please give driving for the Club or acting as an escort some thought. You won't regret it.

Marion Johnson



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Ugley WI have recently had the opportunity to enjoy some excellent speakers! Firstly came Mandy Honour, describing, with superb slides, her great sponsored walk on the Inca Trail in Peru in aid of Barnardos, Dreams Come True, Kith Plus Kids and MedEquip4Kids. To hear how much they raised - ask her to *your* meeting! How fortunate that Mandy's school allowed her time off to enlighten and entertain us. The pupils will surely benefit from learning her story, not to mention the children's charities.

In March, some members went by Uttlesford Community Travel minibus to Braintree for the 92nd County AGM, where we were welcomed by Lady Newton, Braintree District Council Chairman. She gave us a little history of the people and businesses who have brought benefit to the district. The guest speaker was Jackie Cheer, Deputy Chief Constable of Suffolk, who has served 22 years in the Essex Police Force, once as head of Stansted Airport Police; another good speaker. The afternoon talk, by Terry Waite, was as good as to be expected, describing his continuing work for former hostages and their families.

We are still looking forward to an eye-opener on 24th March when Jackie Lamberty will give a special afternoon on her Arctic expedition on M/S Explorer; a daughter of Ugley WI is especially welcome.

Edna Wright

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MAINLY A NOSTALGIA PAGE

Older readers will remember Frank Finch who lived here in the '60s and '70s. He was a countryman with a Puckish sense of humour who was to be seen in our local taverns between sessions of writing Odes and Poems, mostly with a rustic flavour. Unknown to many he 're-wrote' some hymns which were passed to Keith Turner who was organist at St Mary's Church for many years. Keith re-visited Stansted in February to play the organ during the Commemorative Bell-ringing, which a large number of residents came to enjoy (see p9). Subsequently Keith forwarded some of these to the 'Link' for wider appreciation. They don't make them like Frank any more!

Ancient & Modern no 573

All things bright and beautiful
Commuters great and small
Council wise and wonderful,
Our village has them all

Dogs of all breeds and sizes
Can everywhere be found,
But not one fertilises
The Recreation Ground.
All things bright ...

We've popies in our taverns
Inflaming youthful lusts,
With eyes like pitch-black caverns,
Short skirts and mini-busts.
All things bright ...

In chintzy-curtained salons
Staid matrons roost all day,
Safeguarding perms with gallons
Of highly-perfumed spray.
All things bright ...

With one accord our spouses
While sunlit hours away
A-tripping round the houses
With chit-chat blithe and gay.
All things bright ...

At eventide returning
From toil, our husbands stroll
To satisfy their yearning
For soothing alcohol.
All things bright ...

Sinners from every nation
Can finally make fast
Safe home from all temptation
In Wardy's Docks at last.
All things bright ...

All things bright and beautiful
In this Celestial spot,
Erring wives and dutiful -
We've got the whole darned lot.

(Can anyone remember who or where was Wardy Docks?)

Ancient & Modern no 225

Brief life is here our portion
So runs the well-known hymn ,
Our hopes of living longer
Each day become more slim;
With lorries on the highway
And cars on Chapel Hill
Our chances of survival
Are virtually nil.

Container vans pass rumbling.
In never-ending stream,
The eyes of demon drivers
Aflame with fiendish gleam;
O God in mercy bring us
Safe home to our retreat,
The refuge we are seeking
Across the village street.

While juggernauts roll madly
At suicidal rate
The miserable pedestrian
Can only stand and wait;
For if he tries competing
Against this speeding curse
He'll make his final journey
Recumbent - in a hearse!

(Written, of course, before the M11 opened)

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Brownies

1ST STANSTED BROWNIES

CONGRATULATIONS

Ann Howarth, Leader of 1st Stansted Brownies

At the District Thinking Day event held in Manuden Village Hall on 24th February, Ann was presented with an award to recognise 30 years' service to Guiding. She was also given a bouquet of yellow flowers by Evelyn Carter, a former Brownie.

During those 30 years, Ann has worked with hundreds of Guides and Brownies, taking them on camps and pack holidays, as well as running meetings every week. Her special talents are cooking and craft, but for the leaders who have camped with her, she will probably be best remembered for always looking immaculate, even whilst cooking on an open fire on the wettest day at camp! She has a few more months before she has to 'retire' from running a pack, but I'm sure she will stay in Guiding as a member of Trefoil Guild, helping out whenever she can. On behalf of all the girls you have 'guided', and all the adults who have become your friends through Guiding, I would like to say an enormous THANK YOU, and, once again, many congratulations.

Glynis Prothero
District Administrator

TO CHINA FOR CHARITY

On 25th September, we are kitting up and heading to China with a group of other fundraisers and enthusiasts, in order to raise money for The Royal Marsden Cancer Campaign. The hospital, situated in Sutton and Chelsea, is providing cutting edge techniques to diagnose, treat and cure over 40,000 patients with cancer every year. The fire suffered by the Chelsea hospital in January 2008 means that the campaign needs more help than ever. Both of Lauren's parents have received treatment at The Royal Marsden, and she has seen firsthand the quality of care and treatment being delivered, and the patients and staff that so greatly need the donations received from fundraisers annually.

Starting in the village of Yanqing, north of Beijing city, we will cycle 400km (250 miles), approximately 50-90kms (30-50 miles) a day, in the shadow of the Great Wall, ending up back in Beijing. It will be hard work, with months of training to fit in whilst we both complete our final year at Oxford Brookes University. We are hoping to raise £6000 for this cause, so would greatly appreciate your support. Donations would be fantastic, and any other way you can help will be greatly appreciated. The easiest way to donate is through <http://www.justgiving.com/giveusyamoney>. The money raised will go towards essential equipment and pioneering research at the Royal Marsden, Europe's largest cancer centre.

Hannah Tomlin and Lauren Poggo
Manuden

KING'S ARMS SUPPORTS BROWNIES

Following on from last month's article highlighting the magnificent fundraising efforts by the King's Arms, we were delighted to hear of their latest contribution to a village organisation. On 17th February Lorraine Moore of the King's Arms handed a cheque for £500 to Rachel Warwick and Kathy Shearman, leaders of the 2nd Stansted Brownie pack.



Kathy, Jacqui, Lorraine and Rachel

This generous donation will enable the Brownies to get involved with some more adventurous activities. In particular, they are all looking forward to the pack holiday at Chigwell Row over the Easter weekend, and will now be able to practise indoor rock climbing and archery without bankrupting their parents!

Meanwhile, the team at the King's Arms, led by Jacqui Dale, would urge local residents to support their various fundraising events throughout the year. If you have anything interesting to donate for their next auction, just drop in to the King's Arms, and ask for Jacqui or Lorraine. On the other hand, you may wish to nominate a worthy cause that would benefit from a financial boost during these difficult times. Contact details for the King's Arms can be found on page 14 of this edition of the 'Link'.

Mike Dyer



STANSTED BEAVERS

The Beavers have been busy having fun, with a hilarious indoor pancake race, an arts and crafts afternoon, playing cricket (yes, we know it's out of season!) and, of course, making cards and gifts for Mother's Day. As usual we have lots more exciting things lined up, and will be continuing to work towards some more badges, including the Faith and Adventure badges. At the end of the month we have the Renewal of Promise ceremony, one of the most important dates in the Scouting calendar, when we join with the District Beavers, Cubs and Scouts in a parade followed by a short service. If your child would like to become a Beaver, please get in touch.

David South (Leader)
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STANSTED CUBS

What a busy few weeks we have had in Cub Scouts. This term, as well as all the individual badges the boys do at home, we have done the Home Safety, the Personal Safety and the Road Safety Badges. These may sound boring to the average eight to eleven year old, but far from it. First we had a visit from Stansted Police Station - the police in the form of Kelly - when we played lots of games and learnt a lot along the way. Next, we marched up the hill to the Fire Station where we climbed over all the engines and got to try out all the equipment. We learnt a lot, and more importantly to the Cubs, did it in a fun way.

A couple of weeks later the Cub Hut was transformed into a judo dojo by Allen Goddard of the East Herts Judo Club, and we did the personal safety and martial arts badges. Of course the boys loved it and after only a few minutes instruction were throwing each other all over the mat.



Next came the frosty camp and night hike where 21 of our hardest Stansted Cubs went hiking late into Saturday night and then got to try out our brand new tents supplied with a grant from the Rural Community Council of Essex. We played games in the woods around the village and told spooky stories about Stansted's haunted witch tree until around 11.00pm then back to base for hot choc and cookies plus more games until midnight. Needless to say they were still up at 6.00am and desperate for their cooked breakfast! I think the Camping and Hikers badge were well earned. Well done Cubs!



There are loads of other things planned before the end of term, including a visit to a local church, a trip to the railway station, wide games in the wood known locally as 'Grippers' - I don't know why, does any one? And lastly, cooking for Mothers' Day. Quite a full end of term don't you think? And next term, the real outside fun begins.

AKELA
Stansted Cubs



The Saffron Walden Police, in conjunction with Uttlesford District Council, are wanting to revitalise the NhWatch scheme throughout their area of responsibility and are reliant on the goodwill of the community to make this possible. They see NhWatch as providing the eyes and ears to stop the activities of unwanted visitors in the village. They also feel that if co-ordinators are 'looking after' the houses near to where they live, instead of trying to cover larger areas, it is more likely this would be achieved. Valerie Trundle, as a member of the Parish Council, is spearheading this and I am helping her with the legwork of finding co-ordinators to cover our whole village.

There are a number of local stalwarts who have faithfully delivered the quarterly NhWatch leaflet for a number of years and we are very grateful to them, but many more deliverers are needed. A large area of the village is now covered with newly appointed co-ordinators, but we need volunteers on Chapel Hill and the roads off it, Silver Street, Old Bell Close, Stoney Common, The Spinney and the Mountfitchet Estate. If you feel you would like to be a co-ordinator looking after your patch and in so doing help our village become a safer community, or would like more information, please come to our next meeting at the Day Centre on Wednesday 29th April at 7.30pm, where you can meet our Police representatives and others already involved. Alternatively please ring Valerie on 813433 or Diane on 813089. We look forward to hearing from many of you in the near future.

Diane Roberts
Tel: 813089

UGLEY FARMERS' MARKET

(every 3rd Saturday of the month)

Saturday 18th April

Ugley Village Hall

10.00am-12 noon

Meat, poultry, eggs, bread and home baking, fruit and veg, honey, cards and crafts, plants

Refreshments

Parking

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If you would like to mark any occasion that is special to you or someone you know, by announcing it in the Link, please email a short message together with your name address and telephone number to: announcements@stanstedlink.org.uk or send the form below to 58 Chapel Hill, Stansted CM24 8AQ. Details must be submitted by the 11th of the month for publication the following month.

Message _____

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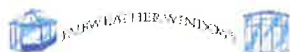


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