

Stansted Mountfitchet

The Link



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

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

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Editorial



Early Christmas presents have arrived for Stansted's long-suffering bus passengers, in the form of replacement bus shelters. These handsome structures are just in time to shield its users from the coming winter weather. May they remain intact for many more winters to come.

The new illuminated '30' signs at the entrances to the village seem to be having the desired effect of slowing down the traffic. It's all too easy to exceed 30 mph, especially on the downhill approaches, and the signs provide a useful reminder to motorists of the speed limit through the village.

Whilst on the subject of transport, 'A Reminder to Cyclists' by a Stansted resident inside this month's 'Link', is a salutary lesson to us all. It underlines the necessity for everyone to exercise care, and safe practice whether on two wheels or four, or indeed two legs or four! Cycling, and parking, on pedestrian occupied pavements should be avoided at all times.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

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DISCLAIMER

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

Stansted network is compiled by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council.

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

When I was a small boy, the run up to Christmas would not be complete without writing a letter to Father Christmas, asking for the toys that I hoped would be in my stocking come Christmas morning. Now that I am older, I am more concerned to find the appropriate presents to give to those dear to me so as to make their Christmas special. But it is not always easy to find that well-chosen gift that will be met with genuine surprise, joy and approval. So to help me with my present shopping, I often ask the question, "What do you want for Christmas?" What is it that we want for Christmas? At one level, there is so much that we could put on our 'want' list: designer clothes, the latest electronic gadgets, toiletries and perfumes, books, CDs and DVDs – there is no end to the possibilities; we are spoiled for choice and all these things are good in themselves. And yet for all the enjoyment that such presents may bring, we know deep down through experience that they don't really answer our deepest needs. A much desired item, once acquired, soon loses its power to satisfy. So what will really make the difference in our lives?

It is said that when the author, Rudyard Kipling, lay seriously ill, his kindly nurse enquired after him, "Do you want anything?" But she did not bargain for his answer. "I want God!" he replied. It is entirely natural for us, as human beings, to have wants and desires for the enjoyment and everyday pleasures that are open to us. And yet, there always seems to be a gap that can't quite be filled, a satisfaction that eludes us, and which points beyond ourselves and beckons us to go further in our desire for what really matters.

St Augustine puts it like this: *"You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you."* Christmas is the time when, like the wise men of old, we are offered the possibility of letting our restless hearts follow 'the star of our desire'. God's gift is there for us this Christmas, not only in a manger bed, but in every circumstance of our lives. In Jesus, 'God is with us', and no matter how dark our path, his light will guide us, his love hold us, and his presence transform us. God is the ultimate giver to whom we may trust our lives without reserve.

To quote St Augustine again, *"More than his Son he could not give. Less than his Son he would not give."*

Happy Christmas.



David Mullins
Stansted Free Church



Churches Together in Stansted Christmas Services

St John's (Church of England)

Sunday 6th December

9.30am Christingle Service

Christmas Eve

3.00pm Children's Crib Service

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

9.30am Holy Communion for
Christmas Morning

Stansted Free Church (Methodist/URC)

Sunday 20th December

10.30am Gift Service and Carols

Christmas Day

10.30am Christmas Day Service

St Theresa's (Roman Catholic)

Wednesday 16th December

7.30pm Carol Service

Sunday 20th December

2.00pm Children's Service and Party

Tuesday 22nd December

7.30pm Penitential Service and Confessions

Christmas Eve

6.00pm First Mass of Christmas for all
the Family

Midnight Midnight Mass

Christmas Day

10.30am Mass

Saturday 26th December (St Stephen)

9.30am Mass

Quakers (Society of Friends)

Sunday 20th December

10.30am Meeting for Worship



STANSTED FREE CHURCH

Methodist / URC

Chapel Hill

www.stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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

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

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

Preachers for December

6th 10.30am New Directions – The Worship Team
7.00pm Rev'd Stuart Veitch - Café Worship
13th 10.30am Rev'd John Buxton - Holy Communion
20th 10.30am Rev'd Allen Morton – Gift Service and Carols
25th 10.30am Rev'd Janet Tollington – Christmas Day
27th 10.30am Rev'd David Mullins

Preachers for January

3rd 10.30am Julie Finbow
10th 10.30am Rev'd David Mullins – Covenant Service
17th 10.30am Rev'd Allen Morton
24th 10.30am Faith Paulding
31st 10.30am Rev'd David Mullins

Café Worship comes to Stansted

On the evening of Sunday 6th December, we are holding our second Café Worship. This is an informal service where the congregation are seated around small tables in the church (café style!) and coffee is served during the service. Why not come and experience something different? All welcome – the service starts at 7.00pm. For more details please ring 814059.



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY STANSTED FREE CHURCH PILOTS

Once again the Pilots took part in the Remembrance Day Parade and Service in Stansted and joined with other groups around the War Memorial to lay a wreath on behalf of the Free Church Pilots. The Pilots walked with the main procession, starting at Crafton Green, arriving at the Memorial Gardens just before 11.00am.

From the Memorial they processed with the Pilot Flag into St John's Church and during the service, Stephanie Cohen presented it at the altar, where it was received by the Rev'd Allen Morton, Minister at Stansted Free Church. This was the



seventh year that our group have been involved in Remembrance Sunday. Pilots participating were Stephanie Cohen, Scott Cohen, Adam Cohen and Helen Carter.

Valerie Trundle
Captain

ROMAN CATHOLIC

St Therese of Lisieux
High Lane

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

Masses Saturday 6.00pm
Sunday 9.00am and 10.30am

Holy Days of Obligation 8.00am and 8.00pm

Tuesday-Saturday 9.30am

Confessions
Saturday 10.00am
and by appointment

Baptisms By appointment

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

Quaker Meeting House, Chapel Hill

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

Meeting Sunday, 10.30am



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

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

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Giles Tulk
Tel: 817155
Email: stansted.curate@googlemail.com

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

St John's Diary

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

Monday-Tuesday and Thursday-Friday

8.30am Morning Prayer There are services of
Holy Communion on Tues-

day the first Tuesdays and
9.00am St John's Tots Wednesdays of the
month in Norman

Wednesday Court, Hargrave House
9.00am Morning Prayer and Broome End
10.00am Holy Communion Nursing Homes.

Saturday
9.00am Morning Prayer

Monday-Friday
5.00pm Evening Prayer

Celebration of Christmas

The traditional Celebration of Christmas concert will be held on Saturday 19th December at St Mary's Church commencing at 3.30pm. With Christmas carols, readings and songs, including participation from all three of our local schools, it promises, once again, to be a fantastic village occasion. In addition, 50% of the collection taken will go to the local charity, Grove Cottage in Bishop's Stortford, the local Mencap Branch, which provides activities for children and adults with learning difficulties and respite for parents and carers. All singers in the village are most welcome to join the choir for this village event. Rehearsals will be held in St John's Church on the following dates:

Tuesday	1st December	8.00pm
Thursday	10th December	8.00pm
Wednesday	16th December	8.00pm



It would be helpful if all those interested could telephone Kathy West (816293) or Liz Jennings (815243) before the first rehearsal date in order that we can ensure that there are sufficient copies of the music available.

Francine Cope

Carol Singing around the village

Come and join the fun! We meet each evening at 7.30pm – Tuesday 22nd December at the corner of Cambridge Road and Croasdaile Road, and Wednesday 23rd December in St John's Road by St John's Church. We are particularly looking for more singers – there is no rehearsing, just come along! Flute and recorder players are also welcome, but please telephone 814059 beforehand so we can bring sufficient music. The singing is followed by warm refreshments at around 9.00pm. We will be collecting for Grove Cottage (see above). Please support us – thank you!



Helen Baker
Tel: 814865
Michael Dyer
Tel: 814059

CTS AGM and Open Meeting - Whitechapel Mission

On Tuesday 26th January we will be holding the Churches Together in Stansted AGM in St John's Church. The meeting will begin at 7.30pm with a talk about Whitechapel Mission given by Tony Miller. Please join us.

From the Registers

October

Baptism
25th Daisy Hattee

Wedding
2nd Donna Christine Sands
to Andrew Neil Kirk

There were no funerals

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

Christmas Caroling is a great way to celebrate the wonder and joy of Christmas. You are invited to join the Mountfitchet Carolers who live in the Maitland Road- Mountfitchet Road-Manor Road area. Old and young are welcome. All manner of singers welcome. We'll pick a day and time that suits everyone best. Call Phil on 07771 432351 if you would like to participate.

Phillip Gneiting
Email: philgneiting@googlemail.com

Bentfield School PTA

Christmas Fair

2 - 5 pm Sat 5th Dec

Start your Christmas Shopping

Games for all ages ~ Cakes

Toys ~ Refreshments



Father Christmas

Entry £1 per family

Manuden Singers

Haydn's Creation

7.30 pm Sun 6th Dec

St Mary's Church, Manuden

Tickets £10 Children £5

from Fiona 812157 or on the door

Proceeds to Cecily's Fund -
educating Aids orphans in Zambia



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

7.30 pm

Friday 11th December

St Mary's School

Admission Free

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

VILLAGE EVENTS

December

2	Wed	Mountfitchet Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
3	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
5	Sat	Christmas Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
6	Sun	Manuden Singers Concert	St Mary's Ch, Manuden 7.30 pm
10	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
11	Fri	Huw Johnson Concert	St Mary's School 7.30 pm
12	Sat	Christmas Fayre	Norman Court 2.30 - 4.30 pm
		Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		Conservatives' Supper	Day Centre 7 for 7.30 pm
13	Sun	Music@stansted	St John's Church 3 pm
14	Mon	Shalom Party	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
15	Tue	MMCC Christmas Service	St Mary's Church noon
19	Sat	Celebration of Christmas	St Mary's Church 3.30 pm
22	Tue	Carol Singing	Cambridge/Croasdaile 7.30 pm
23	Wed	Carol Singing	St John's Rd by Church 7.30 pm

January

6	Wed	Mountfitchet Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm
		Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 8 pm
7	Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
9	Sat	Skips & Xmas Tree recycling	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
11	Mon	Shalom	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
12	Tue	S Uttlesford Community Forum	Mountfitchet College 7.30 pm
14	Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
16	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
		St John's Quiz	St John's Hall 7.30 pm
17	Sun		
21	Thu	U3A	St John's Hall 2 pm
22	Fri	Conservatives Cava & Caviar	Day Centre 8 pm
25	Mon	Shalom At Home	7 Blythwood Gardens 8 pm
27	Wed	Neighbourhood Watch Open Mtg	Free Church Hall 7.30 pm
23	Sat	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm
30	Sat	Quiz	St Mary's School 7.30 pm

Norman Court Christmas Fayre

2.30 - 4.30 pm

Saturday 12th Dec

Afternoon Tea ~ Raffles



Admission 50 p



Tel Audrey on 812162 for details

music@stansted

Cambridge Choral

'Joy to the World'

3 pm Sun 13th December

St John's Church

Tickets £12 adults, £1 children
from Nockolds, Bishop's Stortford;
Stansted Carpets; Sonia Levy 815282,
or at the door



Celebration of Christmas



Carols, Music, Readings, and Poetry

3.30 pm Sat 19th December

St Mary's Church

(parking at Mountfitchet College)

Retiring collection for

Grove Cottage &

Churches Conservation Trust



Village Carol Singing

in aid of Grove Cottage

7.30 pm Tues 22nd December
corner Cambridge Rd / Croasdaile Rd

7.30 pm Wed 23rd December

St John's Rd by St John's Church

Followed by refreshments

Singers & collectors just turn up!

Recorder & flute players also

welcome but please tel 814059

in advance to arrange music

This is a combined December / January edition.

To advertise your **February** event please tel 814059 or email
events@stanstedlink.org.uk before 11th January

music@stansted

Andrew Booth

Guitar

3 pm Sun 17th January

St John's Church

Tickets £12 adults, £1 children
from Nockolds, Bishop's Stortford;
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Stansted Conservatives

CHRISTMASTIDE SUPPER

7 for 7.30 pm Sat 12 Dec

Day Centre ~ Tickets £12.50

* * *

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After 15 years as Headteacher at Bentfield Primary School it is with sadness that we announce the retirement of Patrick



Draper, owing to ill health. During this time he led and managed many changes, maintaining a positive learning experience for our children. He also oversaw the introduction of our highly regarded enhanced provision and two large building projects, resulting from the growth of the school over this time, which has led to a very popular and over-subscribed

school. He was also very active in the local federation of schools, and regarded highly by fellow headteachers and the Local Authority. He will be missed by children, staff and parents of the school, and by the wider community, and we wish him well with a long and satisfying retirement

The Governors

School News

Classes 3 and 4 had a visit in school from a Roman soldier in full uniform, a sight not often seen in Stansted but a great experience. Classes 5 and 6 donned Victorian costume for a visit to Braintree Museum where they spent the day learning about the era and being educated in the Victorian way! They had a very enjoyable day but were relieved to get back to 21st century schooling! We are now looking forward to our Christmas celebrations; again this year we are taking the whole school to the pantomime at Rhodes Centre which will be followed by a special pantomime lunch. This will mean a lot of work for our cook, Sue, and her assistant, Caroline, as they will have given all our children and staff a traditional Christmas lunch the day before. Our Foundation Stage and Classes 1 and 2 are both preparing festive productions and together with the classes' Christmas parties will all make this a joyous time of year in the school. We wish you all a Happy Christmas.

PTA News

Once again we spent the week watching the weather forecast and hoping for the best, and once again we had no rain on the night of our sparkler party. Olly Pocknell's soup and sausages, Sue Pollard's mulled wine and the doughnuts all disappeared very quickly. The glow stalls and sweets also did a good trade and, most importantly, the children were able to enjoy their sparklers safely. We made around £300 and would like to thank all those that helped on the night. We often have difficulty getting helpers for this event. However, this year the setting up and dismantling was done in very quick time; so thanks to you all, and we may even do it all again next year.



The PTA committee have moved rapidly on to planning the Christmas Fair on 5th December 2.00pm-5.00pm and the shopping is well under way. Letters will soon be going out to the parents at school asking for donations of cakes, toys and bottles. Santa will be paying us a visit, and we will have toys, cakes, jewellery and much more to buy, lots of games to play and refreshments in the form of mince pies and mulled wine. Everyone is welcome to join us in our usual festive celebrations and get Christmas off to a flying start.

Susan Scott
PTA Co-Chair



Airspace changes to be postponed - yet again

National Air Traffic Services (NATS) has announced yet another postponement of plans to change flight paths and aircraft stacking areas across East Anglia. The official reason given for this latest delay is the lack of urgency for the changes as a result of the downturn in the air travel market over the past two years, but there is no doubt that the overwhelming strength of community opposition to the plans is also a key factor.

In February last year NATS published the first round of highly controversial proposals for new flightpaths and holding stacks across East Anglia. Billed as 'the biggest ever consultation on airspace change' its proposals caused uproar amongst communities in Hertfordshire, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Suffolk. Overall, there would have been far more losers than winners across the region and many towns, villages and rural areas which had never previously been overflown would have found themselves directly beneath the new flight paths and stacking areas, radically changing the character of their area and shattering the tranquility of local communities. So great was the opposition that NATS agreed to go back to the drawing board and re-consult. Although scheduled for July this year, the consultation was subsequently pushed back to the end of 2009. Now, it is understood that it will be another year before revised proposals emerge.

Tuppence – The Price of a Sleepless Night

Analysis carried out by SSE has revealed that the controversial new departure procedure being used by airlines at Stansted Airport which is causing noise misery for thousands of local residents produces a cost saving for the airlines of less than two pence per passenger. The increase in aircraft noise which is being felt most by residents in Hatfield Heath, Hatfield Broad Oak and the Hallingburys stems from cost saving measures introduced earlier this year by airlines using Stansted. In order to save fuel, aircraft are flying lower for longer during the take-off phase, which increases their noise impact upon local communities.

Carol Barbone
Campaign Director
Tel: 07775 523091
Email: cbarbone@mxc.co.uk

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Ninth Annual Trust Fund Dinner

The ninth annual dinner of the MMCC Trust Fund was held recently at Weston Homes Business Centre in Takeley. Over a hundred guests, including many from local businesses, enjoyed a dinner, auction and an excellent speech from Craig Brown, former manager of the Scotland football team. Chairman of the Trust Fund, David Earl, was delighted that over £2000 had been raised for the fund which supports the fostering of individual student talents within the College.

Mr P Smith
Deputy Headteacher

Christmas Concert

The College's Christmas concert is taking place on Wednesday 9th December at 7.00pm in the College Hall. The concert will feature the Junior Choir, Percussion Ensemble, Junior Orchestra and the College Choir, as well as other instrumental and vocal performances. Tickets cost £3 for adults and £2 for concessions and are available from the College reception.

Christmas Service

For the first time, the College will be holding a Christmas service at St Mary's, Stansted on Tuesday 15th December at 12 noon. The service will be for students in years 7 and 8, although parents and members of the community are more than welcome to attend. The service will include readings, choir performances and congregational carols and will be a perfect way to get into the mood for Christmas! Please come and join us for what we hope will be an annual event for the College.



Mr M Rowlands
Head of Music

Oliver!

After the huge success of 'Grease' last year, MMCC are staging the Lionel Bart musical 'Oliver', which is taking place on 24th, 25th and 26th February 2010, starting at 7.30pm. Over 60 students are taking part in the production with another 15 forming the student-only backstage crew and technical teams. Ticket prices are yet to be confirmed, but most nights in previous years have been sell-outs, so get your tickets quick! Look out for posters around Stansted in the New Year.

Barrister Visits MMCC

Adrian Williamson, QC, visited the College and talked to 30 of our aspiring Year 10 and 11 students. He gave them information on higher education, completing a law degree and becoming a barrister. It was an extremely interesting talk and evoked many questions from students. The students themselves were complimented on their engagement and enthusiasm.

Mrs F Barvé
Work Related Learning Co-ordinator

Hello Everyone,

"We did it!!" Spangles Children's centre is official. In October 2007 the building that currently houses Spangles was designated as 'a children's centre', by agencies acting on behalf of the Government. After much cleaning, painting and purchasing of equipment and furniture, the doors were opened to the public in March 2008. However, whilst much has been going on to deliver services in the Centre and surrounding areas for families with children under five years, behind the scenes the staff were ensuring compliance to some strict Government guidelines. We are now very pleased to announce that the criteria have been met well within our two year time limit. We are very grateful to all the families who have used us and taken part in our Parents Forum and fed back their comments, suggestions and encouragement for the Centre. May we also take the opportunity to thank all of the agencies who work with us and have made achieving our 'Full Core Offer' status possible. Personally, I would like to thank the staff at Spangles, who have and continue to work so very hard.

Speaking of which, we have a new member of staff. Nichola is a recent addition to our growing team and has taken the role of our Family Support Worker; she will be able to provide 1:1 support for families with under 5s within their homes. It is not intended for Nichola to replace any of the existing services but to work in tandem with them, providing that extra time to have a cup of tea and a chat and help make some plans. If you know anyone who is in need, please call Spangles; apart from Nichola, there are a number of other staff who could help. Did you come to our Hallowe'en party? If not, you missed a good time. Organised with St Clare Hospice and funds raised going to the charity, everyone had a great time. Over £700 was raised for the charity. They are having another family event in Harlow on 6th December, have a look on their website for details.



What does the future hold for Spangles? Well, apart from a new entrance to be built in the New Year, the rest could be shaped by you! Is there something you would like to see here? Are you a working mum or dad, who wants services to be available when you are? If so please email me with your ideas on afstanstedcc@essexpsla.com and let me know what would make bringing up a family a more positive experience for all the family.

Amanda Fitchett
Spangles Co-ordinator

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We have had some exciting visits recently, and wanted to share them with you. Three of our older guides, Evelyn Carter, Heather Reeves and Sian Thompson, completed their Baden-Powell Challenge Awards at the end of last term. This is the highest award you can achieve as a guide, and we wanted to present their certificates in a special place. So, on 27th September a group of us went up to London where, at their suggestion, they were presented on the London Eye - a memorable occasion for us all.



At the beginning of October we took to the heights again when we went to the Cambridge Gliding Centre to learn about gliders and how to fly them. The instructor on the ground made all the theory understandable and fun, whilst we took it in turns to go up in a glider. The thrill, after some careful instruction, of controlling the glider, was tremendous. We didn't do any loop-the-loops, but managing to turn left and right, and go up and down, gave us all an enormous sense of achievement.



For our next trip we went to London again, but this time, to Wembley Arena for the Big Gig. This was a pop concert specially, and only, for members of Guiding - 12,000 of them. The line-up was impressive - Pixie Lott, Alexandra Burke, The Alphabeats, The Saturdays, Chipmunk, Tinchy Stryder, JLS and Scouting for Girls. They were obviously delighted to be with us, and the screams of the girls left no doubt that we were delighted too! It was amazing!

We've had a wonderful start to celebrating our Centenary year, with proof of the Movement's ability to move with the times and respond to girl-led guiding.

Glynis Prothero
Guide Leader

Hello everyone.

Christmas approaches and the excitement is building. At the Forest we are keeping busy through the winter months and there is plenty to see and do. The healthy walk group that meet every Thursday are still going strong and always welcome anyone who would like to join; they meet at the Main Gate at 9.45am so come along and keep out and about this winter. On 17th December I shall be leading the walk and talking about some of the work we carry out here as well as some history of the Forest. I hope to see you there. Saturday 19th December is our annual Christmas Carol Concert in front of the Shell House. We will have the Salvation Army Band playing and we are looking for you all to come and join in with the singing. I will be there singing away, hopefully not too badly!

Work continues on the Forest throughout the year and our woodland pasture reclamation programme will continue this winter next to London Bridge. Every year we cut-back one hectare out of approximately 46 hectares of scrub; young woodland growth that is encroaching on ancient woodland pasture habitat. We allow this area two years to acclimatise and then we introduce our sheep as intensive conservation grazers. After about five years these areas will be opened up as woodland pasture where you might see our cattle grazing and sleeping during the summer months.

Laura Slater
Community Warden
laura.slater@nationaltrust.org.uk
Tel: 874043

DESPERATE TIMES!

Earlier on this year our trusty radio/alarm clock of many years died. My husband tried everything to jolt it back to life, only just stopping short at the kiss of life. Eventually he reluctantly agreed that we should replace it. Not with anything complicated or fancy, just a bedside clock that's luminous, like the old one.

Our first purchase, a simple basic alarm clock, seemed to meet the criteria, claiming to have luminous hands and numbers. It didn't. Purchase number two, a slightly grander affair, boasted 'luminous hands and numbers that glow in the dark'. They didn't. Now, am I missing something here? Does luminous no longer mean what I think it does? Just to be sure I checked in the OED. My edition, admittedly dated way back in 2002, clearly defines luminous as 'bright or shiny, especially in the dark'. We are currently psyching ourselves up for yet another shopping expedition in search of a new alarm clock - one that we can see what time it is in the dark, without having to switch a light on; one that emits just enough of a glow that we can negotiate our way to the bathroom in the middle of a pitch black winter's night, without stumbling blindly into the dressing table en route! If anyone can recommend such a timepiece I'd be very grateful, for I fear that if we don't find one soon, my husband may become desperate enough to resort to that kiss of life!



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Learning together we care, share and prepare

The Key Stage 2 Classes have each been investigating aspects of early British history throughout the autumn term, from the Celts and other ancient tribes to the Roman invasion and the changes they brought to Britain. The topics have enabled the children to develop and to practise skills in asking questions, finding and presenting information, developing a point of view. Would you have worked with the Romans, risking the displeasure of your people for the sake of profit, or would you have sided with Boudicca and fought back? Hawthorn Class found out what happened to those who took a stand!



An example of the strong sense of community at St Mary's is clear in the work of the PTFA. During the half term holiday our energetic and wonderfully supportive PTFA spent two days in the school grounds gardening, painting, clearing up, making repairs ... parents and families turned up on two days during the half term and worked long and hard on behalf of the children and the school. As well as making a big difference and brightening up the outside, everyone enjoyed it. Thank you so much to organiser Lawrence McMahon, and to everyone who worked so willingly on the grand tidy up of the outside area front and back. We have a regular cycle of maintenance from various contractors, but this is a building that takes a lot of upkeep and we do appreciate parents' care and efforts on the school's behalf.

Harvest for the Hungry: On 16th October, all the boxes of food donated by St John's and Farnham churches and St Mary's school were collected. There were so many there was a van just for donations from our community!

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

At the time of writing this, during the second week of November, we have still not had the first frosts of autumn. The legacy of recent warm and mainly dry months can be seen in our surrounding countryside: many ditches, streams and ponds are dry and autumn rains have not yet made paths very muddy. Birds have been nesting late into the summer but, even so, I have seen no profusion of young birds in the garden, and I would reckon that there have been fewer than previous years. Apart from the pigeons, that is, which have been successfully raising broods of two at a time, the last of which did not leave their nest until October and were still following their parents around right into November.

The masses of berries on the hedges will ensure that birds will get a good start to the winter, but the warm, dry summer has affected trees and bushes in different ways. Blackberries and sloes ripened early but were generally not very big or juicy. Horse chestnuts were abundant on some trees but generally smaller than usual, while sweet chestnuts, which form later in the summer, were not up to much at all. The dogwood berries which used to be important for the winter supply of lamp oil are a bit sparse this year and some bushes are completely mixed up and blossom has appeared in the autumn. Several species of wild flowers are still blooming and on a walk round the lanes now one would probably spot ten or 12 different flowers still struggling on. For most of these it will be a pointless exercise because a lot of the insects on which they rely for pollination have succumbed to the chilly nights. The other day I saw a wasp searching for nectar on the white umbelliferous flowers of a cow parsnip and as I watched the insect gave up and fell to the ground exhausted.

Felix



**Stansted
Cricket
Club**

The club is pleased to announce that it has obtained Clubmark certification. Clubmark is an accreditation scheme for high quality junior sports clubs. It is managed by Sport England and sets the standard for all high quality sports clubs in England. To be awarded Clubmark means that the club has achieved minimum operating standards in safeguarding and protecting children, quality coaching, equal opportunities and good management. It is deemed to be a well-run club which is active and accessible; this means getting the best out of young people and giving everyone a sporting chance. The award was presented by Graham Pryke, the Cricket Development Officer for Essex CCC, on 26th October. Our thanks go to all who contributed to this effort (in particular Claire Baker, Louise Springham and Keith Ayres).

If anyone wishes to join the club next season, would adults please contact David Hedge (812509) and juniors contact Keith Ayres (814471). We would also welcome enquiries from anyone able to fulfil the role of regular Club Scorer (following the sad death of our previous scorer, John Pape, last June).

David Hedge
Secretary

VILLAGE HARVEST SUPPER

Following last year's successful evening, nearly 100 people again packed into St John's Hall on 11th October for the Village Harvest Supper. The meal was again excellent - home made shepherds pie and crumble. We were then treated to an amazing feast of entertainment. What a wealth of talent lies within our church folk and friends! A very big thank you to the organisers and helpers from all the Stansted churches, and to those who came to support us. A total of £400 was raised for St Clare Hospice.



What is this life if, full of care,
We have no zest for harvest fare?
No thrill beholding, crisp n' dry,
The re-recurring shepherd's pie?
(hopefully lamb from good New Zealand stock
Not from some Bethlehem shepherds' flock.)

Girls with 'Jerusalem and Jam'
May demonstrate 'New ways with lamb'
While groovier folk prefer their grub
In some up-market, French-style pub

O for a taste of crumble upon plum
All just as good as 'made by Mum'.
Dull would he be of sense who could pass by
The sight of Stansted's harvest bakery!

On with the crumble – and of course
Lashings of cream and gold custard sauce!
What is this life if full of pie,
We cannot choose our way to die?

I've loved these harvest 'Salad Days'
Tomorrow ?? - to fresh fads and takeaways?



*Harvest Poem
composed and performed by Phyllis Harrison*



Photographs by Alan Wheeler

MANUDEN SINGERS 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Twenty-five years ago a small group of singers met in the Regency elegance of Cleeve Hall in Manuden under the directorship of Charles Eve, originally just to sing for their own amusement. Meeting in each others' houses, there were a series of conductors one of whom, Graham Savage, directed the choir for five years. In 1997 Ian Priest took over as the choir's conductor and established the practice of donating their concert proceeds to local charities whilst striving for high performance standards. He instigated the tradition of three concerts a year, one grandly entitled 'A Village Glyndebourne' where the audience bring their picnics (including candelabras!) and are entertained as they enjoy their wine and good fare.

The first Glyndebourne in 1997 was very memorable. After weeks of drought, the black clouds rolled up, thunder echoed in the distance, but having already started their picnics the audience voted to stay put with the result that both singers and audience got well and truly soaked. Stoically the choir continued the piece they were singing 'The Mermaid' before they rushed dripping into the house clutching very soggy music! The next item on the programme after the downpour just happened to be 'Somewhere over the rainbow'... In 2010 we approach our tenth Glyndebourne with a weather record of only two concerts in the church; not too bad for the vagaries of the British climate. Why not come and swell the audience next year; we have a leaning towards G&S which is always great fun.

Other concerts are of a more serious nature. The walls of Manuden church have echoed to the strains of major works from Vaughan Williams to Duruflé, Finzi to Handel and Chopin. A great triumph last year was Handel's 'Messiah', which received a standing ovation and raised £2000 for the church's new building project. We were fortunate enough to have some excellent soloists from Trinity College of Music in London to join us. In recent years we have had the benefit of the Manuden Players, experienced musicians who enhance our performances greatly. The Singers have performed in venues from local churches to the Chilean embassy in London. Our aim is to support mainly local charities. Recently we have supported Grove Cottage in Bishop's Stortford, a centre for children and adults with learning difficulties, East Anglian Children's Hospices and our local church in Manuden. The choir is small with 30 to 35 members, and we always welcome enthusiastic singers. If you are interested, ring Ian Priest on 647050. Our 25th Anniversary Concert is Haydn's 'Creation' on 6th December at 7.30pm in Manuden Church. Tickets, £10 adults and £5 children can be obtained from Fiona Bengtsen 812157, the Tourist Office, Market Square, Bishop's Stortford or on the door. All proceeds will go to Cecily's Fund educating AIDS orphans in Zambia.

Theresa Priest

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31st October is scary for two reasons, for being Hallowe'en and the first 2008/9 tax return filing deadline. If you file the traditional paper tax return you must do so by 31st October to avoid a £100 late filing penalty. If you miss the deadline, however, the penalty can still be avoided by filing the tax return online as the deadline is then extended to 31st January. Online filing of tax returns has become more and more popular every year; in 2008 thousands of people filed their tax returns on Christmas Day! At Mansell & Co LLP we aim to file every tax return online wherever possible. Other advantages with online filing are that the software will calculate your tax liability for you, there is no risk of the tax return being lost in the post and it is received instantly. HM Revenue & Customs have free software on their website that covers most forms, but you do need to allow a week or so for the online security codes to be issued before you can use their service.

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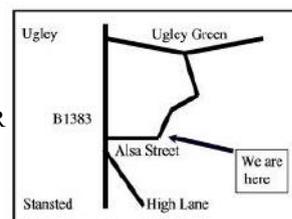
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NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY

As this photograph by *Ray Woodcock* shows, there was a good turnout once again for our parade and service.



Our thanks go to all the organisations and individuals involved who gave up their time to remember and honour all those who have paid the ultimate price on our behalf.

Our thanks must also go to one of our parishioners who, after last year's Service, suggested that it would be good to see the younger generation involved a bit more.

We were delighted therefore to have pupils from St Mary's primary school reading the names of the fallen. We hope that the children did feel more involved, and look forward to including our other schools also next year.

BONFIRE NIGHT

What a great time was had by all who attended the bonfire and firework display at Elms Farm on 7 November. We believe that this event is excellent value for money and provides a safe environment to enjoy the spectacle!

We are indebted once again to a group of volunteers who give up a considerable amount of their time for your benefit. Everyone involved spends a long time in advance preparing for the event – making sure that equipment is working and gets to the site on time. Food has to be ordered and prepared and the bonfire built.

Those responsible for the fireworks attend training courses in advance, take delivery of the fireworks on the morning, and remain on-site until the event is over. The bonfire has to be monitored until late into the evening. As is so often the case, we are indebted to Denise, and her staff, at Elms Farm, the Scouts, ATC, MMCC Badminton Club and a gang of local individuals for the success of this event – our grateful thanks to you all. [Note – if there is anyone else who would like to be involved with the organisation of this event, please contact the Clerk.]

LIGHTING THE SKATEPARK

Two grants each of £5,000 have been received from Viridor and the Essex County Council Youth Capital Funds. Although another £3,000 would have been helpful, we have decided to go ahead and give the contractor the go-ahead to install the lights this winter. Our thanks go to Viridor and Essex County Council for their generous financial support.

WHISTLE-BLOWING, ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

Apart from publicly listing any interests or assets which may provide a conflict and declaring at every meeting any interest, however remote, which may be relevant to any issue being discussed, the Council now has to have in place two additional policies:

- A whistle-blowing policy which covers the responsibilities of staff on discovery of fraud, misconduct or wrongful doing by others!
- An Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy which requires a culture of honesty, openness and fairness and requires elected members and employees at all levels to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles contained in The Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001!!!

The Parish has one main administrator, The Clerk, and fifteen members unpaid (with virtually no expenses - £586.00 in 2008/09). The Council is having to cope with increasing overkill of bureaucratic paperwork. In complying with these measures, and many others, you pay – either in the council tax or in the diversion of time from actions to improve life in this parish.

SOUTH UTTLESFORD COMMUNITY FORUM

Come along to the Multi-agency Forum, 7.15 for 7.30 pm on Tuesday 12 January at the Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College. Representatives from the following will be available:

Essex Police
Essex Highway's Department
NHS West Essex
Uttlesford District Council

This is your opportunity to hear about and discuss issues in your area.

ALL WELCOME

For further information contact Sue Hayden, Community Development Officer - 01799 510563.

STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

In last month's Link, the article relating to the above report stated that Elms Farm had been included as a possible site for housing. May we state that this related solely to the existing farm site, not to any other land at Stansted Park, and would only receive support from this Parish Council if the view from Chapel Hill, across the parkland, remained intact.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

A meeting was held recently with officers from Uttlesford DC to discuss litter, leaf sweeping etc. We were informed that consideration might be given to the removal of the Civic Amenity wood and metal skips from Lower Street as they are little used. Watch next month for further details and the opportunity to give your opinion.

Recently, parishioners have raised concerns about wheelie bins being left on the pavements and in the road on collection days as this can be a hazard. Please leave your bins out for collection, as near to your front boundary as possible, but giving consideration to pedestrians and not causing an obstruction. Thank you.

RECYCLE YOUR CHRISTMAS TREE

Sat 9th Jan 9.30 am - 3.30 pm

Lower Street Car Park

Wood and metal skips also available on that day, but not green waste

Green waste – for those of you who purchase bags from the Council in order that your green waste will be collected alongside your brown bin each week, good news. Uttlesford has changed to much thicker brown paper bags. These bags can now withstand thorns and branches without being torn to shreds, and are fully biodegradable. Cost currently remains at £1.20 per bag, or 60p per bag for Senior Citizens.

Leaves – the worst of the autumn fall is probably over now, but at our meeting, we sought clarification on whose responsibility it is to clear leaves from the pavements and twitchels in the village. UDC confirmed that it is their job to do this. The mechanical sweepers do come to the village each week and alternate, so one half of the village is done one week, and the other half the next week. Not every road is swept, but when there are a lot of leaves in one area, we should notify UDC and they will endeavour to sweep as soon as possible. It is hoped that in the future, a more frequent service will be offered on residential streets.

Following the editorial in last month's edition, a plea on behalf of Gerard, our litter collector. The litter bins that are around the village are for general litter, ie sweet papers, cans, crisp packets etc (and they are well used). They are NOT for household rubbish, or animal mess, particularly cat litter. We are encountering this problem in two particular bins on a regular basis. Not only does it leave little space in the bin for other rubbish, but it is extremely heavy for Gerard to cart away. Uttlesford's officers assure us that it is fine to double-wrap animal waste and place it in the black wheelie bin. Thank you for your co-operation.

Thank you to Mr Harrison for his comments in appreciation of the hard work that has gone into making and improving the floral and general appearance of our village this year. We are always looking to improve areas, both in and out of the conservation area.

It must be pointed out however, the noted hard work and dedication of Gerard our litter collector. He does clean Church Road once per week up to the M11 bridge and also takes groups of pupils from MMCC out along this road litter picking.

Referring to hanging baskets, we would be happy to consider new additions but this is subject to tight budget constraints -as detailed in last month's Link. It is unlikely that planters or benches could be safely placed along Church Road due to the width of the pavement and not the unwillingness of the Council.

Finally, Burton End is not ignored by the Council and we have worked closely with representatives of the area in the fight against Airport expansion and the proposals for the new Junction 8b on the M11.

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

9 December	Full Council
6 January	F&GP followed by Special F/C precept & plans
20 January	Open Spaces
27 January	Full Council

NEWS FROM UTTLESFORD D.C.

From Cllr Alan Dean

Long-awaited technical reports which came out in November confirmed that a new town at Elsenham would be badly located. Roads in and out of Elsenham are described as poor and unacceptable. The route through Stansted Mountfitchet is described as narrow and already congested. Of all the locations that have been put forward by landowners for a new settlement, Great Chesterford has been given the most favourable score in the transport assessment. The report does say there is one solution to a new town at Elsenham; link it to a new road network needed for a second runway at the airport!

It now remains to be seen whether a majority of Uttlesford councillors take note of this technical advice and revise UDC's preferred future housing option to either a concentrated new settlement at say Great Chesterford, or switch to a dispersal strategy across the district's towns and villages.

I very much doubt there will be an about turn to supporting a second airport runway to rescue the council's new town preference, though surprises are not unknown at Uttlesford.

An extraordinary environment committee meeting to consider these reports was scheduled for November 24th. It is bound to have attracted a large public attendance.

I have written to the Essex Chief Constable in support of the Royal National Institute for the Blind over parking on pavements. The RNIB is concerned that people with limited sight are being put at risk by vehicles that are parked on pavements and grass verges, where pedestrians should have freedom to walk safely. I sent the chief constable photographs that I took of cars and vans parked inconsiderately in the Mountfitchet estate area, though this is a public nuisance that affects many parts of Stansted.

[NOTE – the Parish Council has written a similar letter asking for the PCSO's to be given powers to take action against offenders.]

From Cllr Geoffrey Sell

Housing Pressures

The biggest challenge facing the Council is to deal with the housing target that has been set for the District by the Regional Spatial Strategy. The target is to allocate 3,979 dwellings by 2026 through the Local Development Framework. This is in addition to the 2,572 completed since 2001, the 3,302 currently allocated and the 297 predicted on smaller sites. This is a total of 10,150 dwellings.

This significant housing growth is a real concern as it threatens to alter the character of the District. Uttlesford has always ranked high in its quality of life. This however acts as a pull factor as other people from areas such as London, Harlow and Bishop's Stortford wish to benefit from living in a predominantly rural district. These pressures are allied with a shortfall in affordable housing. The District does need more housing but whether at the level proposed by the Government is debatable. The Council does not have the power to alter the housing targets. Its job is to decide where the additional housing should be located.

Currently the Council's preferred Option 4 (which I have always consistently opposed) is a new settlement of 3,000 dwellings at Elsenham with the remaining 1,000 dwellings distributed around the existing urban areas. The officer recommendation is that 750 of the 1,000 dwellings should be located at Great Dunmow. One hundred and sixty dwellings would be dispersed through the key villages - Great Chesterford, Newport, Stansted, Takeley and Thaxted (average 30 dwellings per settlement). Ninety dwellings would be dispersed through other villages. Stansted/Birchanger has played its part in meeting the additional housing needs. The Rochford Nurseries development has a commitment to 479 dwellings. Of these, approximately 151 have been built and are occupied.

Other potential locations for a new settlement are currently being proposed by developers at Boxted Wood (Stebbing), Chelmer Mead (between Great Dunmow and Little Dunmow), Easton Park (South-West of Great and Little Easton) and Great Chesterford.

These proposals will be debated at the extraordinary Environment Committee Meeting referred to by Cllr Alan Dean. If there are no changes at this meeting, Option 4 will go out to consultation again in Spring 2010. Findings from this consultation will be debated at Full Council in the Autumn of 2010, before a further final consultation leading to a definitive recommendation to Government some time after the next District Council elections in May 2011.

Council Budget 2010/11

At the last Finance Committee meeting the Administration announced it was working towards a 3.9% increase in council tax for the next financial year. Although this is less than the current year's increase, I would like to go further and see an increase which only reflects the rate of inflation. Together with colleagues I will be putting forward an alternative budget.

NEWS FROM ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

From Cty. Cllr Ray Gooding

Telecare Home Safety Service

This service provides 24-hour protection from fire, flood, bogus callers and gas leaks, using a range of non-intrusive telecare sensors which, when activated, link to a 24-hour monitoring centre where trained advisors can take appropriate action to get the help required.

A free 12-month trial is available to all residents over the age of 85, but note that this offer ends on 31 March 2010. A free 12-week trial is available to residents below this age.

For further details please write to Essex County Council (Telecare) Freepost CL3636, County Hall, Chelmsford CM1 1XZ or go on-line at www.essex.gov.uk/telecare.

PARISH COUNCIL MEMBER CONTACT INFORMATION

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

* Chairman

** Vice Chairman

CONTACT US!

Clerk – *Ruth Clifford*
Admin Assistant – *Anne Court*
Email: parishcouncil@stansted.net
Phone/fax 01279 813214 10am – 1pm

OTHER CONTACTS

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Essex County Council Member

Ray Gooding Tel: 01279 813103
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Member of Parliament

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

Police

PC Tom Bastendorff Tel: 01279 812211

Non-emergency number 0300 333 4444

PCSO's (Stuart/Kelly) Tel: 07801 461 666

**PARISH COUNCIL
CHRISTMAS CLOSING**
Please note that the Council
Offices will be closed from
Monday 21st December
reopening on
Monday 4th January



**STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET
LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

The Society November meeting was to give a warm welcome to our guest speaker Rosanne Kirkpatrick who presented an extremely interesting talk, well illustrated with slides, on Saffron Walden and the Quakers. The meeting was told of and shown members of the Quaker families with their many interests, business involvements, houses, gardens, and so many other long lasting historical benefits much directed towards the people and the town of Saffron Walden. Unfortunately due to unforeseen circumstances the usually well-documented society report at this time is unavailable for print.

The Society's next meeting will be on 3rd December when Stephen Ruff will speak on 'St Margarets to Buntingford Railway' (Part 3). At the meeting on 7th January, David Barlow will talk on 'The History of Bottles'. Please note this is a change from the published programme, and the popular Members Evening will now be held on 4th February. All meetings start at 8.00pm and are held at the Day Centre.

Peter Brown



**Stansted
Evening
Women's Institute**

Our Annual Meeting in November will have taken place after I write this, and we will have a new committee for our 50th Anniversary next year. Happily we still have some of the founder members amongst us, all of whom have served on the committee at some time during the last 50 years. Rene Sanders, currently in hospital (and we wish her well), was our very first President. On a personal note I shall be standing down this year from the committee having been secretary for the last 14 years; but I shall continue to take an active part. We have a record of all those past years which makes fascinating reading. By 1962 there were 134 members who met in the Central Hall and must have filled it. In those days the President and Secretary would have been up on the stage and wearing hats, as did many of the members. In 1963 a 'Housewife's Show' was held which attracted 204 entries - can you imagine something being called that these days? Although, come to think of it, the 'Calendar Girls' could have the same label.

During the years the WI has always made itself known in the village; Christmas parties and parcels were given to the over-sixties; help was given at the clinic weighing babies - impossible now; fancy dress was organised for the Carnival, as well as entering a float most years. This continues to this day with our help at the Windmill Fête, which has become a popular village event, and at various catering events. Fund-raising has always been part of the WI programme and we have done jumble sales, garden parties with stalls in Mrs Turner's garden at Bentfield, a Chinese auction, dress shows, flog-it and, of course, the monthly raffle at our meetings or anywhere else we can do it. Last month we had a very successful flower demonstration and tea party which raised nearly £140. On 10th December we have a talk intriguingly

entitled 'From Potage to Peacocks' and on 14th January Ray Spiller is coming along once again to liven us up with his collection of pop records old and new. Both meetings start at 7.45pm and are in St John's Hall. Our membership now is 56 so come along and join us and help to celebrate 50 years of our WI in Stansted.



Judy Colliver



**Huw Johnson
Club**

The Christmas concert is on Friday 11th December at St Mary's School - doors open at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Entrance is free but there will be a raffle and a chance to make a donation. Wine and mince pies will be available in the interval. Do come along and join the fun.

In January we will once again have our New Year Dinner at the Chequers, where we always have a very warm welcome from Dave and his staff. We then have a break from club meetings until the end of February to avoid the bad weather. We would like to thank the Stansted Lodge of Instruction for the £100 from their Charity Collection Fund and were sorry to hear of the death of Mr Lee, their treasurer.

Marion Johnson
Tel: 812284

WEDDING

The wedding of Christopher O'Brien and Nina Jane Lenton took place at 2.00pm on Saturday 12th September in St John's Church. The best men were David Ingham and Daniel Lehner, and the bridesmaids were Susanna Lenton, Katharine O'Brien, Susanne Foster and Katie Toll.



Nina was given away by her father, Richard Lenton, and the wedding was conducted by the Rev'd Paul Wilkin. A reception was held at the Lenton family home in Burton End with pink champagne and Pimm's on the lawn, followed by a hog and venison roast. The wedding party continued into the night buoyed on by a set of swing and lindy hop numbers performed by the fantastic Ding Dong Daddios.

Julie Lenton

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music@stansted's next concert, to be given by the Cambridge Chorale, is on Sunday 13th December at 3.00pm in St John's Church. The choir was formed in 1994 by Michael Kibblewhite. Since 2005 Julian Wilkins has been the musical director, and in 2008 the choir was successful in the BBC Radio 3 Choir of the Year competition, beating over 100 other adult choirs to win a place in the top six. Their concert on Sunday 13th December will be entitled 'Joy to the World' and will feature glorious choral music from around the globe. Sacred music spanning the centuries from Gregorian Chant to Lauridsen; Russian vespers by Rachmaninov and Tchaikovsky; choral masterpieces by Debussy and Mantjyarvi; exhilarating folk songs, jazz, and uplifting spirituals. What a feast it promises to be!

In January we have another treat when, at 3.00pm on Sunday 17th, Andrew Booth, one of the most exciting young guitarists in the UK, will be giving a recital sponsored by The Countess of Munster Musical Trust. Andrew recently completed his Bachelor of Music degree with First Class Honours at the Royal Northern College of Music where he is now a postgraduate student. His programme at Stansted will include items from J S Bach Suite 995; some delightful 20th century Spanish pieces by Vincente Asencio; Innovaton and Dance (Joaquin Rodrigo); Roland Dyens' arrangement of Cole Porter's 'I love Paris'; and other popular pieces. An afternoon to look forward to.



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

Alan Corbishley

This issue of 'Link' covers the months of December and January, so the next copy will be the February 2010 issue. We hope that our contributors will remember to scoop up their Christmas and end-of-year news or anecdotes for the next deadline on 11th January. In the meanwhile, avoid the 'flu!

Editor

Court Resurfacing

The Tennis Club was hoping to resurface the courts this autumn/winter. Unfortunately this project has had to be delayed until spring 2010. Once a firm date is known, it will be posted on the club noticeboard and also in the 'Link'.

Recent Tournaments

Saffron Walden & District Hospital Cup Finals

The Saffron Walden and District Lawn Tennis Association Hospital Cup Finals took place at Stansted Tennis Club on Saturday 19th September. Finals results:

Mens' Singles: Alex Lupton (Stansted) beat Joe Hollis (Stansted) 3-6 6-1 7-5

Ladies' Singles: Fiona Price (Henham) beat Sue Griffiths (Grove) 3-6 6-4 6-3

Mens' Doubles: Joe Hollis & Alex Lupton (Stansted) beat Tim & Will Cowell (Thaxted) 6-2 6-2

Ladies' Doubles: Sandra Ayres & Sue Sebley (Stansted) beat Fiona Price & Monica Sutherland (Henham) 6-4 6-4

Mixed Doubles: Joe Hollis & Jenny Kirby (Stansted) beat Hussain Shaida & Petra Studholme (Elsenham) 6-1 4-6 6-2 Janet Hollis, Chairman of the Hospital Cup Committee and Stansted Tennis Club, thanked everybody involved for the successful running of the tournament and was delighted to present a cheque for £600 to Dorothy Bartlett, Secretary of the League of Friends of Saffron Walden Community Hospital. It is hoped that this money will go towards an eye unit. A large and successful raffle raised additional money.

Clover Girls' Doubles Tournament

On 11th October, eight girls aged 15 and under, took part in this popular annual tournament. In the knock-out stage, three very close and exciting matches ensued. Zoe Wilson and Ellie Sykes defeated Alice Golden and Taylor Green 6-4 and Alix Woods and Lydia Clark beat Evelyn Carter and Laura Golden 6-3. The final was a tense affair, eventually won by Zoe and Ellie, beating Lydia and Alix 6-4. The trophies were presented by Honorary Life member, Pat Clower.

Membership

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

Coaching

The lunch-time adult coaching session will now run for 60 minutes, from 1.45pm to 2.45pm. If you would like to join in, please call Chris Hollis on 319155 (please do not just turn up). You don't have to be a member to join in. Junior coaching with Chris continues for all junior age groups. 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.

Club Playing Sessions

Members are encouraged to attend these open sessions:
Wednesdays at 10.00am and 6.00pm
Friday at 9.30am. Sunday at 10.00am

Contacts

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

Chris Hollis

UTTLESFORD OVER SIXTIES ASSOCIATION (UOSA)

Following the Age Concern/UOSA meeting in November at the Stansted Day Centre, Lindsey Peters has provided the following information:

The principal objectives of UOSA:

- Consulting with older people of Uttlesford
- Representing their views
- Providing practical services where consultation shows that they are needed
- Seeking wider involvement with constituent clubs as well as with other bodies, eg Day Centres, other parish and community-based organisations.

The principal tasks facing UOSA:

Consulting with older people

- To improve how we listen to what all the older people of Uttlesford want and need. There is a need to shift the balance from telling to asking the club members what they need
- To improve links to the clubs by face-to-face contacts and by making general meetings more attractive
- To collaborate with other agencies, eg Age Concern Essex, CVSU over the distribution of information to the clubs and their members.

Representing the views of older people of Uttlesford

- To facilitate or organise conferences/forums from time to time to enable older people themselves to put forward their points of view to their peers, the Age Concern Essex County Association and statutory authorities
- To consult with older people more effectively to cover adequately their health, social and practical needs. To monitor services regularly and seek improvements in the services provided by Age Concern Essex, statutory bodies and other providers for older people in our area, eg nail-cutting, advocacy, Home Support, Information and the work of a field officer. Issues gleaned from our consultations and from monitoring will be presented to statutory bodies. To work with other voluntary organisations to the benefit of older people
- To review our links with Uttlesford District Council and its relevant departments, with the Older People's Focus Group, with West Essex PCT, with the CVSU.

Providing practical services if consultation shows that they are needed

- The organisation of group holidays
- Support for local clubs
- Grants to individuals in need
- Providing opportunities for older people to volunteer to use their skills for the benefit of others; eg driving, cooking lunch at lunch clubs, organising competitions, encouraging activities to keep mentally and physically fit
- Preventing older people from needing the statutory services by encouraging them to take part in enjoyable and interesting activities

Other tasks:

- To consider our wider involvement with other bodies as well as with clubs eg with U3A, Day Centres, other parish and community-based organisations
- To consult with the Great Dunmow clubs and to secure their support for these initiatives.

The organisation of group holidays

Dianne Redfern has organised and led group holidays every year since 1976. The first of these holiday groups went to Cliftonville (Margate) in 1976. The cost was £22 per person per week. Some places were subsidised by the Association.

More recently between 33 and 50 persons have spent a group holiday together in Scarborough 2000, Weymouth, 2001, Youghal (County Cork) 2002, Torquay 2003, Morecambe 2004, Oban 2005, Llandudno 2006, Eastbourne 2007, Weymouth 2008, Sandown (Isle of Wight) 2009.

The introduction of a local Advice & Information Service

This is available at Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow Libraries – in collaboration with Age Concern Essex and is provided by Advice and Information Volunteers. Age Concern Essex's Advice & Information Service supports people through a range of issues and their needs. Based in Chelmsford, the office deals with over 10,000 calls a year ranging from straightforward inquiries, eg local lunch clubs and churches, to more complex calls that require working in partnership with statutory bodies and outside agencies to explore services that can assist. It is very apparent that there is still an unmet need for advice and information. It was decided that this need might be addressed by establishing local information points in local libraries. The Essex County Council Libraries are committed to making this initiative a success. The overall plan includes the provision of similar services at other venues in Uttlesford if the level of recruitment of volunteers permits. CAB and at least one other organisation have expressed an interest in participating in the initiative.

Affiliated clubs and associations with which UOSA corresponds

There are some 30 town and village clubs and associations across the Uttlesford district that are affiliated to UOSA. In Stansted, the Mountfitchet Club (Chairman John Robinson tel 812755) is affiliated to UOSA.

UOSA Executive Committee:

Peter Fentem, Chairman
Brenda Scarr, Vice-Chairman
Kenneth Wilson, Treasurer
Madge Moseley
Dianne Redfern
Barbara Hughes
Mari Hinton, *Uttlesford Carers*
Jacqui Mee, *Co-ordinator Age Concern Essex*
Peter Bland, *Age Concern Essex*
Sue Sumner, *Council for Voluntary Services Uttlesford*
Jim Ketteridge, *Uttlesford District Council*

Lindsey Peters



**STANSTED
FUN RUN**

www.stansted10k.org.uk
info@stansted10k.org.uk

Yes – the two years will be up in 2010 so we are already planning next year's event, which will be on Sunday 27th June at 11.00 am. More details in the new year, but please book the date now.

Marion Dyer
Tel: 814059

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOE BOX EVENING



This is the first year we have had to manage without Janet Townsend, who has been the mainstay of this operation over very many years.

Many thanks are due to all the people who rallied around to make this year's box filling so successful. The hall was filled to capacity as we all jostled to fill our boxes. Stella Skingle and her husband who had already collected 95 boxes from St Theresa's church in the afternoon came again at 9 pm to take them all off for checking at the warehouse in Harlow.

We managed to fill 188 boxes, which will give a lot of needy children in Belarus a very happy Christmas. So many people give willingly of their time; from those who collect the boxes; to families who give up many evenings to cover them with Christmas paper; and so many more kind folk who buy goods and spend much of the year knitting woolly hats and mittens, scarves and teddy bears.

Once again thank you all for your support and we hope you also have a very happy Christmas.

Eileen Quinn and Helen Baker



Photographs by Brian Quinn

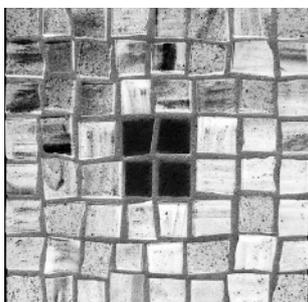
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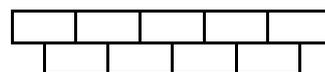
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SKYWATCH

A monthly look at an aspect
of the Night Sky



We would not exist without the Sun. As well as providing us the heat and light that governs all life, it nourishes us by making our bodies create vitamin D. Yet it wasn't until the nuclear age that we learned how this vast fire, 175,000 miles across, worked. The Sun is, very simply, a continuous hydrogen bomb. Every second, at the Sun's centre, four million tons of hydrogen is squeezed under the immense gravitational pressure around it, into making helium. The helium weighs 96% of the weight of the hydrogen and the four per cent left over is the light and heat that we see and feel. But there is a lot more to tell about the Sun. It spins once about every 28 days. However, not being solid like the Earth, it doesn't all go at the same speed. In fact, the equatorial regions get round faster than the upper and lower regions.

You may have heard that the Sun has spots: sunspots, as they are quite reasonably named. The number of spots varies over a very roughly 11 year cycle - roughly, because over many cycles, the minimum to maximum times can go between nine and 14 years. And there's a twist in this tale of sunspots. It was discovered some years ago that the spots had their own magnetic field and continuous monitoring of the sunspots revealed that the cycle is actually 22 years because every 11 years (or so) the magnetic fields reverse. It is interesting to note that in the 18th century, when the Thames froze over and the ice fairs were regular features, the sunspot number remained very low. This information comes from a Rev'd Maunder who spent a lot of time studying the Sun. In his honour, this era is now known as the Maunder Minimum. These days the Sun and its activities are monitored all the time because it can, quite suddenly and on a random area, give off a violent storm, sending large doses of radiation in our direction. We are protected by the atmosphere but the electronics in orbiting satellites can be destroyed in an instant. So any threat means the satellites have to be turned away PDQ to shield themselves. The Sun has been going for around five thousand million years. Eventually, as it runs out of hydrogen, in another five thousand million years, it will expand and ultimately swallow the Earth. Not bad for something that's only 4% efficient.

NB: Never, ever, look through a telescope or binoculars at the Sun.

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MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB

The Mountfitchet Garden Club wishes all 'Link' readers a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please note that the Club does not hold a meeting in January - our first meeting of 2010 will be 3rd February when we will be welcoming Barry Kauffman-Wright back to the Club. The title of his talk and photoshow is 'British Coastal Wildlife and Landscapes'. Doors open at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start. Everyone is welcome - visitors £2.00.

Maralyn Harris



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Ann Calver gave a blow-by-blow account of the County Annual Meeting attended by a mini-bus load of members at Grays ... 'Jerusalem' sung without a piano! (bring back Mary Ecclestone!). Dr Rob Hicks spoke on 'Sun and skin cancer', maybe not too late for those off on a tropical holiday - "Be aware of signs! See your GP". Zena Skinner, not just a pretty face above the cooking-pots, was highly entertaining with her reminiscences of life in the WRNS and, in retirement, cooking for the TUC and GEC conferences. Messages came from Yorkshire Tea for WI's help towards their charity building project and a need was announced again for blankets for premature babies.

Back at Ugley, we heard Peter Saunders speak on 'Family History', giving a most informative, 'warts and all' account of his own 'tribe' and then, enlarging on social history, marriage and child bearing patterns since 17th and 18th century in our own corner of England eg movement and settlement of families. This talk led to some very interesting discussion and interest shown in referring to sources on genealogy - your parish register and county archives. A new venture in our WI - a Scrabble group meeting monthly in members' homes.

Phyllis Harrison

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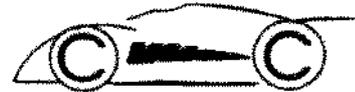
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494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

During the school holiday some 15 or so cadets with adult staff joined other squadrons at Fremlington, North Devon for a 'Green Camp' to partake in archery, shooting, canoeing and go-karting. Other activities were orienteering, climbing, field craft and 'high rope', mountain bike riding and a Command Task (raft building). A great time was enjoyed by all with some very happy (and slightly mucky) faces when they returned home. These activities aim to help cadets gain Duke of Edinburgh Awards and are all carried out under the guidance and tuition of experienced qualified Essex Wing staff.



On 7th November, CI Mrs Smith and two Cadets ensured that the St John's Cenotaph looked its best for the Remembrance Day Parade. The Squadron led by Flt Lt Ellie Chinnery turned out in full to honour and remember. On 9th November, seven cadets were enrolled by the Squadron Padre. An Extraordinary General Meeting will be held at the Squadron HQ at 2nd Avenue, Stansted Business Park North Side, Stansted Airport on 7th December at 7.30pm to which parents, guardians, grandparents, and all other interested adults are cordially invited in support of the Civilian Welfare Committee (CWC); light refreshments will be provided.

Recently, the cadets assisted with parking, traffic control and helping the public at the Village Fireworks and Bonfire. Christmas will be celebrated by the cadets with a Fancy Dress Disco organised by the cadets with the guidance of CI Mrs Smith. To help raise funds the cadets will be carrying out bag-packing at Sainsbury's in Bishop's Stortford from Saturday 19th to Thursday 24th December. The cadets, staff and CWC wish all our supporters (past, present and those who may consider joining us in the future) a very Merry Christmas with an exciting and prosperous New Year. If anyone would like to know more about 494 Squadron or wishes to become involved either as a cadet or in an adult capacity either as Staff or with the CWC, please contact Civilian Instructor, Mrs D Smith on 814368, or email darleyplants@btinternet.com.

John Smith
Chairman
Civilian Welfare Committee

BEST WISHES AND GOOD WALKING

Just a short one this month. Everyone at Mercer and Hughes wishes you a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year. Don't forget to look on our website or the notices in the waiting room for information on our Christmas opening times and don't forget to order your pet's food and medication in advance so you don't run out over the holiday period. If you want to give your pet a treat at Christmas avoid lots of rich food it's not used to or chocolate which can be toxic, but take it for a nice long walk or come and see the range of Christmas gifts we have at the surgery. Hope you all have a wonderful time.

Ilse Pedler
Partner
Mercer and Hughes
Veterinary Surgeons



STANSTED FOOTBALL CLUB

News from Stansted Football Club – unfortunately our Vice-Chairman Larry Woods, who normally does this article, is in the middle of moving house so is unable to provide copy this month so this will be a shorter version than normal.

We now have Sky complete with 8ft screen fully operational at the club so please come along and join us and enjoy club prices in the bar. The fixtures are as follows:-

28th November	Home to Basildon United
5th December	Away to Burnham Ramblers
12th December	Away to Mauritius Sports

Hopefully Larry will be penning next month's article so will be able to give you some results as well as fixtures.

Lynne Furber
Treasurer
Stansted Football Club

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STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

We can now see that the long-awaited works to the cap, sails and brickwork are under way. The sails have gone to the millwright's yard for repainting and the cap will shortly be lifted and the curb repaired or replaced. This is so encouraging for those who have worked and donated over the years. The mill is Stansted's principal symbol so keep watch as week by week the renewal takes place, and offer a cheery word to Giles, Paul and the team as you pass by.



Stansted Millers

MOUNTFITCHET CLUB

At our recent AGM it was agreed that we would continue meeting every first Wednesday in the month in the Day Centre. We will still have meetings, guest speakers, music, games and outings during the year which will be arranged by our outings/meetings organiser. Our first meeting in 2010 will be on Wednesday 6th January at 2.15pm.

I would like to thank all of our Committee for their hard work over the past year. May I take this opportunity to wish all of our members a very good Christmas and a peaceful 2010.

John W Robinson
Chairman
Tel: 812755



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET U3A

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

There will be no monthly meeting of our U3A in December as it would have been too near Christmas and members and the Committee have a busy calendar. Amongst other things we have outings to see Pam Ayres in Chelmsford and a day out at the ITV studios to see 'Loose Women' where we shall have lunch in London and see the lights in Regent Street before returning home. In place of our monthly meeting we shall be having a Christmas lunch at the Great Hadham Golf and Country club. Our next meeting will be 2.00pm on Thursday 21st January in St John's Church Hall, when Alan Goldsmith will be our speaker. Many of you will know Alan as a recognised 'after dinner' speaker. Alan will talk about his career in the music industry of the '60s when he organised many a pop concert of famous singers and celebrities - a trip down memory lane for many of us?

In the November issue of the 'Link' I gave our new web address as www.stanstedu3a.webs.com. This has now been changed and the correct address is www.stanstedu3a.org. Even though there is no meeting this month, if anyone would like further information about our group please contact one of us below and we will be pleased to help you. A Happy Christmas to you all.

Cherry Venn	Chris	Vicki
Chair	Secretary	Membership Secretary
817140	817587	810985

UGLEY FARMERS' MARKET IS SEVEN YEARS OLD

Ugley Farmers' Market is in its eighth year, having started in October 2002; it is one of the longest running markets in the area. In case you have not visited us before, we would love to see you. The Market is held in Ugley Village Hall (about one mile north of Stansted on the B1383) on the third Saturday of every month from 10.00am to 12 noon and there is ample parking.

For a small market, there is a wide choice of stalls, including meat, poultry and game in season, eggs, bread, honey, cakes and pies, preserves, fruit and veg, hand-made greetings cards, creams and lotions, ceramics and knitted babies' and children's clothes. Other stalls come in from time to time. The stallholders are from the local area and are very enthusiastic about their products; have a chat with them to find your ideal purchase.

Refreshments are available; why not relax with coffee and cake (or a bacon roll) after all your shopping.

The next market is on Saturday 19th December - just time to buy those Christmas goodies, and the first market of the new year is on 16th January.

If you would like any more information, please contact me on 814052 or email: susan.bone@ajmb.co.uk.

Susan Bone

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STANSTED BOWLING CLUB

We only finished our season a few weeks ago yet it feels like months ago when we gathered for our final club game which we call our 'Last Bowl'. It's a fun afternoon with members playing to win a glass rose bowl which they keep for a year. This year's winner was Mike Shewry (don't forget to buy the roses regularly to put in it!). Other club match winners were: Bert Grubb Memorial – Stephen Hill; Cawkell Cup – Mike Thompson; Perrin Rose Bowl – Terry Francis and the Emerson Trophy – the old boy himself, Jim Ashton. Well done to all of you. The highlight of the season was to win the Daniel Robinson Cup against Elsenham. This cup game consists of a home and away game with the winners gaining the most shots overall. Stansted managed to win 164 shots to 130. As always Bart Robinson was on hand to present the cup and with family ties to both Stansted and Elsenham, the game is close to his heart. We thank you for your continued sponsorship.

We held our AGM on Friday 30th October and I am pleased to say that it was well attended with some newer members taking on roles within the Committee. It is good to see new blood and with it new ideas and I wish them luck.

President - Roy Barnes; Secretary - Edward Taub; Men's Captain - Del Sharp; Ladies Captain - Margaret Hill; Chairperson - Rosemary Felstead; Seniors Captain - Stephen Hill. As we won the North West Essex Bowling Association Triples competition this year I thought we should have a photograph of us – left to right, Rex Turner, Derrick Giffin and Del Sharp. It was quite a nail biting finish and without saying any more - if anyone recognises Del in the street ask him what a 'Wrong Bias' is!!!



This is the last time I write an entry for the Bowls Club as Rosemary and I are soon to move to the coast near Lowestoft. We have been members for the last 15 years and have taken on a number of roles in the club which we shall miss in many ways. Stansted Bowling Club will always seem special to us but I am sure we will soon be playing in the Suffolk air. Edward Taub, the new Secretary will, I am sure, keep the village aware of the club in the future.

Rex Turner



The children at Rainbow are busy making Christmas cards to be produced for sale to family and friends in a few weeks time. At the end of October some of the committee members were pleased to attend a fundraising auction and curry night at the Kings Arms who had nominated Rainbow as one of their charities. A huge thank you goes out to them as they donated £750 to the pre-school which will enable us to buy new equipment for the children next year. Older children have already been preparing for spring by making a visit to Bishop's Stortford by train. They chose and bought bulbs to plant in the new planting tubs which were bought by collecting Sainsbury's vouchers. We held a very successful open day for parents of the older children. The children enjoyed showing everyone what they do in their sessions at Rainbow. Sian Ansell, an 'every child a talker' development worker, was on hand to answer parents' questions, and the session ended with Sian's superb story telling of 'Whatever Next?'

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 please contact Gill Pursglove on 814701 for further information. We do currently have a few places available.

Terri Stockwell and Yvonne Hardy
Rainbow pre-school managers

A REMINDER TO CYCLISTS

During October an accident occurred involving a pedestrian and a cyclist. The pedestrian was walking along the pavement near Barclays Bank on Cambridge Road when he was knocked to the ground from behind by a cyclist riding along the pathway. It was a hard collision and the cyclist also fell. When he fell, the pedestrian, a senior citizen, banged his head on the pavement and suffered cuts, grazes and bruising to his pelvis. He was also very shaken. It took ten days before his injuries improved. Although the cyclist was very apologetic this does not excuse his disregard of the law. This event took place within days of another near miss on the same stretch of pavement.

All cyclists should be aware that it is **ILLEGAL TO RIDE A BICYCLE ALONG THE PAVEMENT.**

A Stansted Resident



Stansted Conservatives

Forthcoming Events

Do join us for our Christmastide Supper on Saturday 12th December at the Day Centre, Crafton Green 7.00 for 7.30pm Tickets £12.50. Also on 22nd January at 8.00pm at Stansted Day Centre, Sir Alan Haselhurst and Stansted Conservatives invite you to 'Cava and Caviar' - an evening to welcome new members. Tickets £7.50 - free to new members. Tickets and more details for both events from Bridget 814440 or Joan 814854.

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ST CLARE HOSPICE

I would like to thank the Stansted community for their very generous and kind support of St Clare Hospice, over the past year, in helping to raise part of the £2.5 million needed to ensure its services. The Stansted based groups, which I know about, have raised in excess of an incredible £7,000 over the year; these include the Stansted Firemen, the Kings Arms, the Stansted PCC, Churches Together in Stansted and the Stansted Friends of St Clare Hospice. Your support is greatly appreciated by St Clare but huge thanks must go to those who have attended events, businesses that have donated towards raffles, others who have hosted an event for us, to St John's Church for the Jazz Evening and to Spangles SureStart who converted their premises into a spooky, fun environment for our Hallowe'en Walk. Please be assured that all monies will go directly towards patient care and family support.

The Hospice will be celebrating its 20th birthday in 2010. Like the Queen, we have two days which have particular significance: 12th April when we received charitable status and 31st May when the first Board of Trustees was established. There will be the launch of '20 in 2010' in the New Year and communities, clubs and societies will be invited to join us in our celebrations. Would you consider raising funds for us with the number 20 in mind? If you are interested in getting involved during 2010 please do not hesitate to contact the Fundraising Team on (01279) 773750 for further details and ideas. Meanwhile, I wish you all a very happy and healthy Christmas and New Year and look forward to your continuing support.



Caroline Bore
Community Fundraiser East Herts and Uttlesford
Tel: 773751 or 813938
Email: Caroline.bore@stclarehospice.org.uk

An Evening of Jazz

The St John's Church PCC's Evening of Jazz last month, which was organised by the Stansted Friends of St Clare for the benefit of St Clare Hospice, featured the ever popular Peter Baker and His Crusty Jazzers. The evening was a hugely successful occasion in terms of entertainment and good fellowship, bringing together many strands of village society to participate in and enjoy an evening of great music and dancing. It also raised over £1,000 for the work of St Clare. As a trustee of St Clare, I warmly thank Paul Wilkin, the Rector of St John's, and the PCC for facilitating the occasion; Peter Baker and His Crusty Jazzers for, once again, producing lively and popular music; Small But Perfect Caterers for an excellent supper; the Friends of St Clare and all who helped with organising the event; and, of course, the punters for so generously supporting St Clare.



Alastair Richardson
Tel: 815518

The Kings Arms do it again ...

Considering the recession that is upon us, customers and staff at The Kings Arms Hotel, Stansted still showed excellent support towards two worthy charities, this year being St Clare Hospice and The Rainbow Pre-School here in Stansted.



Dating back to the end of last year with various raffles, Poker Nights, the local Firemen organising a charity car wash, donations and charity collection boxes and then leading on to a 20 mile walk/bike ride on August Bank holiday - which raised over £2000 alone. Then the grand finale in October with an all day tombola, a grand auction and excellent Indian meal supplied by Abdul and the staff at the Bombay Butler. Over the entire year we raised over £4000 which is our most successful to date. We would like to thank the local firemen for their generous donation, Abdul and the Bombay Butler for the excellent food supplied on the night and to Jackie for all her hard work over the whole year. Then we would like to give a special thank you to all our customers who have shown not only us, but the local charities the most tremendous support ever; we believe these charities rely heavily on local donations and we do hope by us doing what we've done will help someone in need. Thank you and well done.

Stefanie Moore

MYTHS, LEGENDS, CUSTOMS

APPLE TREES *Malus sp.*

On 17th January, at Carhampton, Somerset, a ceremony has taken place for at least 150 years of wassailing the apple trees. A bonfire is lit, guns fired into the trees, cider poured round the trunk of one tree and a piece of burnt toast put into another. The gathered crowd sings to the trees and toasts them with mulled cider. Wassailing fruit trees was recorded in St Albans in 1486 and in Kent in 1586. The 17th century diarist, John Aubrey, wrote of the practice of toast being placed in trees. The idea is to chase off evil spirits with noise and encourage good ones, thus ensuring a heavy crop. "Keep me as an apple of an eye," it says in the Book of Common Prayer and the fruit of the tree of good and evil which God forbade Adam and Eve to eat is traditionally thought to be the apple. In Celtic mythology it is regarded as having the power of healing and rebirth.

Peggy Honour

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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 7 Blythwood Gardens, Stansted CM24 8HG. Details must be submitted by the 11th of the month for publication the following month.

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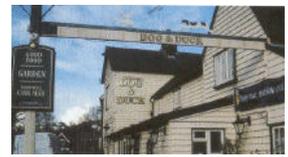
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