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Copyzone
 01279 657769

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The Link is delivered free to nearly 3000 homes and businesses in Stansted Mountfitchet. Further copies may be purchased for 50p each or £5.00 for the year.

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by **noon** on 11th May
 for the June issue

by **noon** on 11th June
 for the July issue

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

EDITORIAL



The staff and pupils of Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College are to be congratulated on working their way out of special measures so speedily. Also to be commended are the developers of Linden House in Silver Street, and the adjacent property at the top of Chapel Hill, for the external work being carried out. The buildings are emerging handsomely restored and turn a previously dark and unprepossessing corner into an attractive feature worthy of such a prominent site in the village. Hopefully, it will encourage others who own properties in Stansted, which are currently empty and derelict, to do something similar - sooner rather than later.

Once again the dazzling display of daffodils in the grass verges of Stansted were a welcome sight. The ones on the northern approach to the village along the Cambridge Road, from its junction with High Lane, were particularly spectacular. But, isn't it a pity that the 'litterers' continue to dump their black sacks of rubbish amongst the blooms and in the ditches of Pennington Lane? The amount of rubbish does seem to be decreasing, but still needs to be reported as soon as it appears for the best chance of catching and prosecuting the culprits. If everyone is vigilant then maybe by next year we'll be able to enjoy the flowers, and views, without the eyesores!

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Cover photograph of the pump at Burton End taken by David Harrison

Stansted network is compiled by Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council.

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

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Halleluiah is our Song!

My daughter always counts the Halleluiahs that we sing and say in church on Easter Sunday. She does so because she knows I like to fit in as many as possible on that special day. This year gave her a bit of a problem when the choir sang the Halleluiah Chorus at the end of the service! The word Halleluiah means 'Praise God' and it is the Christian's shout on Easter Day because Easter speaks of God's power to transform the bleakest situation and bring new life and new beginnings to it.

Nothing could have been bleaker than the Friday Jesus died. The long tortured agony of his death on a cross after the mental agony of a sham trial and illegal condemnation. The death of the hopes of those who had followed him and the death of meaning to those who had loved him. Yet the bleakness of this was transformed two days later ('on the third day') when the tomb was found empty on Sunday and Jesus walked and talked with his friends. And because even that darkness was transformed, Christians believe that the darkness we encounter in our lives can be transformed as well. As one great Christian preacher put it, "We are an Easter People and Halleluiah is our song."

Many people experience suffering and loss. Life can be for many people like that Friday when Jesus died. But another great preacher put it this way, "It's Friday - but Sunday's coming." God's promise is that by trusting in him the sorrows of this world will be transformed to the Halleluiahs of his kingdom; and all because of Easter.



Paul Wilkin
Rector of St John's Church, Stansted



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Email: minister@stanstedfreechurch.org.uk

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

Preachers for May

1st 10.30am Rev'd David Mullins
8th 10.30am Rev'd David Keeble
15th 10.30am Rev'd David Keeble - Communion
22nd 10.30am Denis Walker
7.00pm Rev'd David Keeble - Café Worship
29th 10.30am Christine Heyhoe

Rev'd Allen Morton (our URC minister) is currently on long-term sick leave, so all enquiries should be addressed to Rev'd David Keeble.

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 10.00am
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 : 01279 656707

Meeting Sunday, 10.30am



Shalom

Our first meeting for this term will be at 8.00pm on 9th May at 7 Blythwood Gardens, when Christine Stiles will be giving an illustrated talk with slides about her recent experiences in Nigeria. Our 'At home' for this month is at 8.00pm on Monday 23rd May at The White House, Ugley Green. All are welcome to any of our meetings.

Marion Dyer
Tel: 814059



ST JOHN'S 300 CLUB

Many congratulations to the winners of the March draws:
 £100: No. 13 – Audrey Rodgers
 £ 50 No. 68 – Kathleen Clark
 £ 25 No. 180 – Paul Salmon

The first year of operation of the St John's 300 Club ended on 31st April and I should like to express a huge thank you to all those people who have supported this venture, raising a much needed £2,270 to help finance the ever increasing costs of running the church. The scheme will re-commence on 1st May with another £2,500 of prizes to be distributed (including the two extra prizes of £200 drawn at the end of July and December). There are still numbers available so, if anyone would like to join the scheme at a cost of £2 per number per month (maximum of five numbers per household), please contact Francine Cope on 814562 or Rosemary Thomson on 815551 for an application form. The draws for May will be held on Sunday 29th May, following the 9.30am service in St John's and winners will, of course, be notified as soon as possible thereafter.

Francine Cope

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.stanstedstjohns.btck.co.uk

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

Assistant Curate: Rev'd Giles Tulk is away on placement for three months

Director of Music: Lorraine Everett
 Email: lorraine@everett.info

Church Hall Bookings: Rachel Pocknell
 Tel or text: 07972 373994
 Email: stjohns.hallbookings@gmail.com

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-Saturday

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

Tuesday
 9.00am St John's Tots

Wednesday
 9.00am Morning Prayer
 10.00am Holy Communion

Monday-Saturday

5.00pm Evening Prayer

JAZZ AT ST JOHN'S

A reminder that St John's Church is holding its annual Evening of Jazz from 8.00pm to 11.00pm on Friday 13th May, featuring Pete Baker's Half Dozen. There will be a bar selling wines, beer and soft drinks and a light supper is included in the ticket, priced at £14.00. Tickets from the St John's Church Office 815243, Pete Baker 814865, Ray Smith 461151 and in St John's after the 9.30 Sunday Service. Hurry, hurry, tickets are restricted in numbers and are always in big demand.



CHRISTIAN AID WEEK 15th-22nd MAY POVERTY – helping people in poverty out of poverty.

Christian Aid week is the opportunity to contribute to realising this aim. The envelope collection is a regular feature in the Stansted calendar, giving everyone the chance to make a donation. Look out for the red envelope landing on your doormat. It is also a witness to their faith for those who do the collecting. It is not too late for anyone who can spare a few hours to come forward to offer their time and energy to take part in the collection. Last year the average collection was £46 – enough to pay for two sheep for a Nicaraguan coffee farmer. The sheep clear the weeds around the coffee plants (no need for weed killer) and also bring in income when their offspring are sold. I look forward to hearing from you.

Catherine Dean
 Tel: 813579

From the Registers

March

Baptisms

6th Poppy Hawkins
 Joseph Hawkins

Funerals

7th Charles William Douglass, age 87 -
 at Parndon Wood
 16th Gladys Louise Surridge, age 91 -
 in St Mary's Cemetery

HILL CHILLI

Friday 10th June 7.00 – 10.00pm at Sonia's Place (31 Chapel Hill). Tickets £10 - includes chilli supper and glass of wine! Vegetarian option available. Tickets from Sonia on 815282. Book early to avoid disappointment! Proceeds to St John's Church Hall Fund.



www.spangleschildrenscentre.org



ST MARY'S CHURCH

Throughout the afternoon of Sunday 13th March the bells of St Mary's were ringing. The reason was to commemorate the centenary of 'The Ringing World' publication in which was recorded a peal rung of New Cambridge Surprise Major -5066 changes - at Stansted; the same method was rung again one hundred years later, taking just under three hours. The church was open to visitors and there was a display of material from the bell ringing archives and a most interesting video produced by the Central Council of Bell Ringers. Several of the visitors were members of the Jordan family, whose grandfather was one of the ringers in 1911. Parish magazines dating back over one hundred years were available for researching family records and delving into Stansted's past. Tea and cakes provided and served by the supporters of the Friends of St Mary's made the afternoon a very enjoyable occasion; some 200 visitors attended, and £200 was raised for the Churches Conservation Trust.

Edmund Wilkinson

Sunday 1st May 2.00pm-5.00pm will see the first **Open Afternoon** for the season. In future, the Parish Magazines will always be available as they certainly attracted a great deal of interest on our last open afternoon!

On **Sunday 8th May** Ringers will be in action again to ring a **Full Peal** to commemorate a significant birthday of a pillar of our community (guess who?), beginning at 2.00pm and 'ringing down' at about 5.00pm. The supporters will be serving refreshments. If we have a pleasant afternoon of warm weather we should be able to serve tea outside, so that we may fully appreciate our ringers' efforts. At 6.30pm on Thursday 19th May in St Mary's Church, the Churches Conservation Trust will be holding a public meeting to launch the **Friends of St Mary's Association**. Many of you have already joined and to date we have over 100 members.

Audrey Rodgers

Essex Association of Bellringers

If you are interested in learning to bell ring, please contact Mrs E Griffiths-Jones on 850351.

DAY CENTRE

The Annual General Meeting of the Day Centre Management Committee will be held on Friday 20th May in the Day Centre.

Ruth Rawlinson
Secretary

Spangles Children's Centre is set to extend its antenatal services. A team of midwives is to move into new facilities at Spangles Children's Centre and work from its recently opened reception area in the near future. The Lower Street Children's Centre already has a baby-weighing clinic that is run by the Health Visiting Team. With midwives and health visitors working from the same building, Spangles will play a key role in supporting families in the Stansted area. The Children's Centre, which is run by the Pre-school Learning Alliance, has been open for three years and provides a huge timetable of events during the week for parents and children. On weekdays it runs 17 different activities, with some attended by as many as 75 parents or carers and their young children. However, Spangles will be providing only limited services during the summer from Bank Holiday Monday 29th August until Tuesday 5th September. The Health Team will continue to provide antenatal appointments at Spangles as usual during these weeks and a Children's Centre member of staff will be present and available even though there will be no play activities during these weeks. We want to thank the parents and children using Spangles for being so supportive of us even though there won't be any play sessions during this time. Nevertheless, we will still be open between 9.00am and 5.00pm weekdays to offer our wide range of services and facilities to families across the Stansted area. We will also ensure our website is consistently up to date and inform our users internally of the closure dates. Emergency contact telephone numbers will be posted on the doors for any concerned parents or carers. For more information, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Can you help?

Are you retired with some time on your hands? Are you looking for work and want to gain some experience? Are you a fit and active, sociable person who likes to meet new people? The staff at Spangles Children's Centre are sad and we need you!! We are all absolutely committed to providing services that welcome all children from 0-5 years to the centre in Stansted, but due to the financial climate we have lost a very valuable member of support staff. Without her we fear we may have to stop running our stay and play session on a Thursday. This session has often been used by up to 50 families per week. Can you help us maintain this successful, supportive session? We are looking for volunteers who can commit between three and four hours on a Thursday afternoon. Tasks will vary from keeping the room safe and tidy, playing with the children and talking to the parents, preparing the children's snack and helping to clear away. Full training will be given, but it is very straightforward and we are always looking for new ideas. The Centre is a happy, lively place and families come to make friends and for information. The children are always a delight to have around and benefit in so many ways from attending the Centre. Just a handful of people will maintain the services that will help the children to be ready for school. Please look at our website www.spangleschildrenscentre.org for a full picture of our services or call and have a chat with Mandy or Debbie.

Amanda Fitchett
Co-ordinator
Tel: 812348



Red Cross Week

1st - 8th May

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

New collectors welcome
Please contact
Christine Stiles 813172

BOWLING FOR BEGINNERS

Bowling Club, Recreation Ground
FREE Introductory Sessions
10 am - 3 pm Sunday 1st May
plus Mon 2nd - Fri 6th evenings
ALL WELCOME

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Please bring flat shoes &
a sense of humour!
Everything else is supplied
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Stansted Cricket Club

Junior Taster Session

10.45 am Sun 1st May
Hargrave Park

Softball Years 3 & 4
Hardball Years 6 & 7
Boys and girls welcome
Tel 812565 or 810990

VILLAGE EVENTS

May

1 Sun	Junior Cricket Taster Day Bowls Club Open Session St Mary's Church Open Red Cross week begins	Hargrave Park 10.45 am 10 am - 3 pm 2 - 5 pm
1 Sun / 2 Mon	Windmill Open	1.30 - 5.30 pm
4 Wed	Mountfitchet Club Mountfitchet Garden Club	Day Centre 2 - 4 pm Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm
5 Thu	Local History Society	Day Centre 8 pm
8 Sun	Birchanger PTA Fun Run Car Boot Sale Bell Ringing and church open	Birchanger School 10 am Mountfitchet College 10 am - 2 pm St Mary's Church 2 - 5 pm
11 Wed	Link copy due in today	before 12 noon
12 Thu	WI	St John's Hall 7.45 pm
13 Fri	Jazz Evening	St John's Church 8 - 11 pm
14 Sat	Mft College Quiz Night Scouts Quiz Conservatives Quiz	Mountfitchet College 7 for 7.30 pm St John's Hall 7 for 8 pm Day Centre 7.30 for 8 pm Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm 1.30 - 5.30 pm
14 Sat/15 Sun	Skips	
15 Sun	Windmill Open Christian Aid week begins	
18 Wed	Flower Arranging Evening	Mountfitchet College 7 for 7.30 pm
19 Thu	Friends of St Mary's Meeting	St Mary's Church 6.30 pm
20 Fri	Day Centre AGM	Day Centre 1.30 pm
21 Sat	Space Mission Fair	Bentfield School 2 - 5 pm
28 Sat/29 Sun	Skips	Lower St Car Park 9 am - 3 pm 1.30 - 5.30 pm
29 Sun/30 Mon	Windmill Open	



Stansted Windmill

Open Days

1.30 - 5.30 pm

Note later closing time

Sun 1st & Mon 2nd May
Sun 15th May (Mills Day)
Sun 29th & Mon 30th May
Sun 5th June



St Mary's Church Open

Sun 1st May 2 - 5 pm

Sun 8th May 2 - 5 pm

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Parish Magazines 1901 - 1940
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Bentfield School PTA

The Space Mission Fair

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Sat 21st May 2 - 5 pm

All the usual fun & games
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challenges and win a prize!

MOUNTFITCHET GARDEN CLUB



FLOWER ARRANGING

with Nick Grounds

7 for 7.30 pm Wed 18th May
Mountfitchet College

Tickets: £6 inc glass wine or juice

Entry by ticket only
Tel 815007 or 07919 478144



Pete Baker's Half Dozen

JAZZ at ST JOHN'S

8 - 11 pm Fri 13th May

St John's Church

£14 (incl light supper)

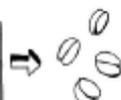
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In aid of Church Hall Fund

HOUSE TO HOUSE

COLLECTIONS

15th - 21st May



Collectors needed please call 813579



Stansted Conservatives

QUIZ NIGHT

7.30 pm for 8 pm
Saturday 14th May
Day Centre

Tickets £10
includes Fish & Chip Supper
Tel Bridget 814440 or Joan 814854

Stansted Scouts & Explorers

FUN Quiz Fundraiser

7 for 8 pm Sat 14 May
St John's Hall

Tickets £10 incl hot supper
from Claire on 816924

Tables of 8
but don't be put off if you are a singly or
small group as we will make up tables!

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**MOUNTFITCHET
GARDEN CLUB**
www.mountfitchetgardenclub.co.uk

The Club's AGM was held on 6th April, when the Chairman reported that over the past season membership numbers had increased. The Club's website had proved very popular and in the period 1st April 2010 to 1st April 2011 there had been 5397 visits to the site. The fundraising events held throughout the year had been well supported and the Treasurer reported that this had enabled the Club to maintain its membership fees at the previous season's rates. The new season's programme had now been finalised and promised to be another season of interesting speakers and topics (full details on the website). Two club outings have been booked – the annual trip to an RHS Garden (this year Wisley to coincide with their Festival of Summer in June) and a visit to Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire in September when their late summer borders will be in full colour, along with an evening visit to a local garden in July. Four members of the Committee agreed to stand again and were re-elected en-bloc and a new Committee member, Karen Simms, was welcomed to the team. The Club's thanks for all their hard work and efforts were given to the members that decided to stand down.

2nd Mini Spring Show

Members had been worried in March as Mother Nature was being fickle again, and some spring plants were early whereas others not in leaf! However, despite these concerns the mini-show was well supported with over 65 entries across the 15 classes. Certificates will be presented at next month's meeting.

2011-12 Season: Full Programme on Website

Now is the ideal time to become a member as the new season starts on Wednesday 4th May when our guest speaker will be Mr Roy Nunn of Cambridge who is going to talk to us about clematis. Our membership fees are £12.00 single and £20.00 double (two members at the same address). Visitors are always welcome to our meetings; there is a nominal charge of £2.50 per person. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month (with the exception of January) at the Day Centre. Doors open at 7.30pm for an 8.00pm start - refreshments are available prior to the meeting.

'An Evening of Flower Arranging' – Wednesday 18th May at The Mountfitchet College

Our demonstrator is Mr Nick Grounds who is an auctioneer by day and a flower demonstrator by night with stories and anecdotes to keep you smiling all evening. Entry is by ticket only and costs £6, which includes a glass of wine/juice. If you would like tickets please contact Chris Hope on 815007 or Maralyn on 07919 478144, or leave a message via the website contact tag.

Maralyn Harris
Chairman

Please support our advertisers
and mention that you saw their advert
in the 'Link'.

CYRIL'S GARDENING TIPS

Anybody who has seen my garden knows that I grow a lot of summer bedding plants. One of the questions I get asked most is "how do I cope with keeping them watered?" The truth is I do very little. When planting, dig all the holes first and then fill them with water. Let this soak right in and then put the plants in. My theory is that the roots will go down for that water and will be at a depth where it doesn't dry out so much. If you do have to water don't just splash some around, give them a really good soaking.

Cyril Stoneham



In April, nine of our adult members spent a week in Cornwall. They enjoyed a holiday at a lovely centre that caters for people with learning disability. Our members meet people from other parts of the country. In total there are 20 guests who get together on the first evening to plan the trips and activities for the week. The activities include boat trips, visits to the seal centre, cider farm, quaint Cornish villages and indoor activities such as ten-pin bowling. They have a great time and their families have a week in which they can also take a holiday or just enjoy a restful break.



On the Bank Holiday Weekend of 28th-29th May we will hold our third Open Garden at Hatfield Heath. This year we are adding live music from the Essex Guitar Group and will be selling books as well as excellent plants at very reasonable prices. Tea and cakes are available throughout the weekend and, of course, the main attraction is the wonderful garden. There will be plenty of signs to help you find 'Longridge' (CM22 7DR) on the road from Hatfield Heath to Sawbridgeworth. This is an important fundraising event for Grove Cottage so please come and visit.

Our new Tuesday evening Youth Club now has eight members. Although we intended the group to be for 15-25 year olds we have lowered the joining age and have a couple of 12-13 year olds. We would like to increase to at least 12 people so please telephone Aimee on 07757 052634 if you are interested. You can see some of the Youth Club's activities on You Tube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=snZiYtuDvs4>.

David Scott

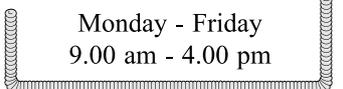
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The Spring term ended with an Easter Egg Hunt which was organised by the Friends, Parents and Teachers Association. The new play equipment is being installed over the Easter break and will certainly add value to the children's playtimes in the future. Class 5 finished their Mission X project and attended the closing ceremony where the prizes were awarded. The children have thoroughly enjoyed the project and plans are in place to continue with it over the next year. The class will also be visiting West Runton in Norfolk for their three-day residential visit. On Thursday 28th April the school celebrated the Royal Wedding with a street party on the playground. A tasty picnic lunch was prepared by the kitchen which was followed by a Talent Show! Acts included break dancing, singing, dancing, rapping, joke telling and a rock band and the whole school enjoyed the entertainment. After a light tea the afternoon we finished with a traditional sing-along and a small commemorative gift was presented to each of the children.

Year 6 take their SATs tests in May. They have all worked very hard and will be relieved when the test week is over. They then depart to the Isle of Wight for their residential trip accompanied by four members of staff. Visits during the week's stay include Carisbrooke Castle, The Needles boat trip, Alum Bay, and the Blackgang Chine Theme Park as well as several planned activities at the Crusader Centre where they are staying.

There are still some places available for our afternoon Nursery in September. If you are interested in a place please contact the school office on 813626. We also have places available in our Enhanced Provision for children with life-long learning needs, again if you or you know of someone who would benefit from this special educational needs provision please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Cathie Bonich
Headteacher

PTA News

A reminder of our Space Mission Fair 'Train like an Astronaut', 2.00pm-5.00pm on Saturday 21st May. Complete the astronaut training challenges and win a prize!

RED CARPET BALL

Together with my friend Nicki, I plan to trek the Great Wall of China in October on a nine day trip in a bid to raise over £5,000 for Childline and the NSPCC. So we are putting on this fundraising event which is to be held at Bury Lodge on Saturday 16th July, 7.15pm until midnight. Tickets are only £45 if purchased before 16th May (£55 after this date). The evening includes champagne reception, three course dinner with wine, and live music from the Stansted-based string quartet 'The Occasionals' and the band 'Home Grown'. Also your chance to win £1000 in cash on the night! Please contact me for tickets. Thank you.

Anthea Harrison
Tel: 817084
Email: anthea@antheaharrison.co.uk

The Hospice gave me a great retirement send-off – the noodle bar in Harlow for lunch with some lovely presents. Thank you, too, from the many volunteer wishes that came through to the Hospice during the past few weeks, I really shall miss you but please keep supporting me and St Clare through the Stansted Friends of St Clare Hospice Group within the village.

What a wonderful time was had by all at the Stansted Friends Quiz Night in March. A bit of a tight squeeze in St John's Church Hall but certainly a quiz with a difference. Over £1,000 was raised on the evening, which will be given to the Hospice next month, and a huge thanks to those who participated on the evening. The Stansted Friends look forward to holding the event on a similar date next year. The quiz sheets, sold on the evening, which raised a further £50 was won by Dan Waller of Bishop's Stortford, well done and thank you to everyone who took part in the quiz. A week later, a Jumble Sale was held in Clavering by the Stansted Friends and a brilliant £600.00 was raised as a result. A massive thanks to those in Stansted, Berden and Clavering who donated their gifts, but also to those who, in the past have supported Marina Lawrence and their family, and supported and helped during the sale on the day. It couldn't have happened without your practical help.

The next event to raise funds for the Hospice is the Flog It evening at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on Friday 3rd June in St John's Church Hall. Bring along your donation – it is bound to be someone's treasure to enjoy. Enjoy an evening of fun and laughs; Sue Hitchmough and friends guarantee it! Entry £1.

Finally, the King's Arms Hotel in Station Road, are raising funds for the Hospice, yet again, for which we are greatly appreciative. The Hospice fully recognises that local pockets are only so deep and that we ask you to continually to contribute, however, it is your local hospice and hopefully you shall not need to call upon the hospice services, however, please feel free to contact 773700 should you, your family or friends feel the need to access the services at no cost to yourselves.



Caroline Bore
Secretary
Stansted Friends of St Clare Hospice

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STANSTED BOWLING CLUB

A Great Way to Enjoy the Summer

Suddenly, almost it seems without warning, spring is here and our immediate thoughts turn to the beginning of the new outdoor bowling season. Dave Hunt, our green keeper, who has been ably helped by his son, Tony, has done sterling work over the winter, and the green was ready for the first bowl on 23rd April. Our fixture list has now been finalised and printed, many thanks to Jim Rodgers for all his hard work on this matter. We now look forward to a long hot summer (one can always hope) and to an enjoyable and successful season.

We need new members, so if you fancy trying your hand at lawn green bowling why not come along to our free introductory session for new bowlers of all ages and both sexes?

These sessions start on Sunday 1st May between 10.00am and 3.00pm and then each evening until Friday 6th May. However, don't worry if you can't make these dates, just telephone the numbers below and we will arrange a time and date to suit you. All you will need to bring along are a pair of flat soled shoes, we will supply everything else. If you are new to the village, joining our Club is a great way to meet fellow members of the community. We have a nice clubhouse with a well stocked bar all at reasonable prices. If you are an experienced bowler you would also be very welcome to join the Club. We are also happy to accept new social members. Our Club is located on the right hand side of Recreation Ground just off Chapel Hill. For all enquiries telephone Edward on 816932 or Derek on 816144.

Edward Taub



Nature Notes

In September 2010 these notes referred to three significant threats to our native oak trees. Sadly, the ensuing nine months have not seen any improvement, but rather the contrary. In particular the oak processionary moth has spread further into west London and probably Surrey. The moth is extremely difficult to eradicate and it severely affects the crown of the trees. The Forestry Commission is seeking to have a Protected Zone put into European legislation, which will in essence restrict any movement of oak material (including chippings) into or out of an area which presently covers 30 x 25 kilometres centred on Hammersmith. So far it hasn't reached us, but watch this space. Another big scourge, acute oak decline, is not far away either. To conclude this disappointing litany, it would be advisable to only plant European larch in our gardens and woods, since the more popular Japanese larch has had to be removed en masse from the west country and Wales due to the notorious phytophthora ramorum disease. Our trees are having their most threatening time since elm disease struck in the late '60s, but eventually it will pass.

We must, however, end on a positive note. The hard winter has helped to produce excellent displays of bulbs, and the all-important bees seem to be in healthy numbers around Stansted. This is a good season for celandines. This brilliant little plant can infiltrate our lawns, but after flowering it vanishes from our sight until the following spring. It is also a good season for a wide range of birds. Long-tailed tits are much in evidence and buzzards are strengthening their hold, while tree and meadow pipits and wheatears have put in a good seasonal show, particularly south of Bishop's Stortford. Do let the 'Link' know of your own observations.

Derek Honour



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET WINDMILL

Held on 23rd March, the windmill coffee morning was well attended and enjoyed by all. Delights on offer included bric-a-brac, windmill merchandise, raffle, cakes and hot cross buns with coffee. Thanks to all who supported this event and helped to raise the sum of £250 (approx).



Derek Honour

PEDAL FOR THE J'S

The J's Hospice invite you to take part in our bike ride taking in some of Essex's most beautiful villages. There are three rides of 15, 35 and 50 miles, with something for everyone, whether it is your first cycle or your 50th! All routes will start and finish at Admiral's Park in Chelmsford. The spirit of the event is 'taking part' so you can go as fast or slow as you like. Times can be measured if you wish or you can take a leisurely approach and stop for a pub lunch en route! Registration is £10 (£5 for under 16s); there is no minimum sponsorship but of course we ask you to raise as much as you can! The event takes place on 3rd July but registration is open now so hurry as places are filling quickly! Register online by visiting www.thejshospice.org.uk or call Dominique on 01245 351514 for a registration form. The J's Hospice provides hospice care in the home for young adults. Due to improvements in medical care and technology, the population of young adults with life-limiting conditions is growing; but at 19 years old, these patients have outgrown children's services and need age appropriate care and support. We also provide emotional and bereavement support. Our long term aim is to build a stand-alone building in Essex with in-patient beds. It will be the first specific young adult hospice in the East of England.

Sue Upton

Tel: 01245 351514

Email: supton@thejshospice.org.uk

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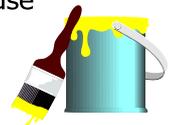
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CONGRATULATIONS

Many congratulations to Audrey Rodgers on her 80th birthday on 8th May. With best wishes from the 'Link' Committee and the Friends of St Mary's.



494 (Stansted Airport) Squadron Air Training Corps

This month we have been madly preparing for three Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions, a basic skills camp and the annual competition Falklands Trophy. Stores have been busy getting all the kit ready in time so that we are all correctly equipped on our weekends away. There is to be a Bronze expedition around Essex for all our young cadets who have signed up to the scheme. It will be a new experience for them, given that some are only 14 years old, trekking around the countryside carrying all their kit to camp and having to cook and look after themselves entirely for a weekend. There is also a Silver and Gold expedition in the Peak District: which is run along with the whole of Essex wing.



On 14th April I will be taking part in a teamwork/initiative selection day for the Duke of Westminster Award. This Award is run between all three cadet services and to take part cadets must be enrolled in the CVQO Level 2 Public Services Qualification. It involves getting to know the public and military services and requires cadets to get involved in the local community and take an active role as an NCO. I was selected by my Wing (Essex) back in September and paperwork on my roles in the community was submitted. From around 400 applicants I was selected down to the last 40, after which I had to submit a paper explaining how the CVQO has helped me and what opportunities it has brought. I was then selected down to the last twenty-one who are all travelling down to Somerset for the final selection. Nine of the 20 will be selected to go on a trip of a lifetime to South Africa all expenses paid; and the top three get a trip to Downing Street!

If you are aged between 13 and 16 and interested in joining us, contact us for more information - Telephone 681559 Mondays and Fridays 7.15pm-9.30pm (24 hr Answer phone)
Email: 494@aircadets.org.

Alice Brooks

helping you go digital



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If you are eligible, the Help Scheme will write to you directly and in plenty of time to ask if you want our help. All you need to do is respond to our letter by sending back a completed reply form or to make things even easier you can call the Help Scheme free, to respond. The Switchover Help Scheme has already helped hundreds of thousands of people make the switch to digital. Run by the BBC through an agreement with the Government, the Help Scheme has been designed around the needs of older and disabled people. Equipment has been chosen to be easy to use, and contact centre, delivery staff and installers have all been trained to understand and respect older and disabled people. All installers are vetted, carry identification and will never call without having made an appointment. Eligible people in our local area have been identified and should have received a letter to explain the switchover programme, and the people must respond to get help. There will be two further reminders. Many will be fortunate to have relatives, friends or neighbours to assist them with their response. However, some are not so fortunate, and the concern is that these people are amongst those least likely to understand the process.

To ensure that they do not get omitted, a community support programme has been established to reach these people. The support team consists of a number of volunteers, each covering a number of villages in their locality, and it is the objective of these volunteers to get the message across to the eligible people by engaging with organisations and services that are most likely to interface with them, such as parish councils, GPs, pharmacists, libraries, day centres and community transport.

If you feel that you know of people that are most in need and who may not be aware of the switchover, or where to go to get help, then please contact me.

Ken Wheatley

Designated support volunteer for Stansted Mountfitchet

Tel: 07817 585174

Email: ken.wheatley@vaessex.org.uk

Switchover dates: If you are receiving Anglia/BBC East programmes then the switchover has already started! Analogue BBC2 was switched off on 30th March, and the other four channels followed on 13th April. If you receive London programmes then the switchover will not take place until next year, but anyone who has received a letter about the help scheme can apply now.

MMCC is removed from Special Measures

“Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Significant progress has been made in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and the college now provides its students with a satisfactory education. Strong leadership from the headteacher and effective support from the federation and the college’s wider leadership has embedded a more aspirational approach to students’ standards. Improvements in assessment and teaching have been delivered in a relatively short space of time. Both staff and students are now very positive about the college’s future development.”

This is the opening paragraph of Adrian Gray’s report following his visit to MMCC in late March. As I’m sure people can imagine, the response to this has been fantastic. The level of effort and hard work put in by all those involved with the College over the past two terms has been immense and it is wonderful to be rewarded with such positive feedback. I am aware that people have felt that the category imposed in November 2009 was harsh, if not unfair. However, the way we have responded to the criticism has been to roll our sleeves up and tackle the issues head on. Much has changed in a short space of time, but the key factor in amongst all this is the ‘can do’ feeling which pervades the College. Yes, there is a long way to go: we need to become further involved in the community and ensure that our resources are more widely used; we need to develop understanding of different cultures and diversity; we need to raise examination results, but most of all, we need to recognise that we are now on the starting blocks of what is going to be a steady and exciting challenge – moving the College to good and then outstanding. It would be fantastic to see the community backing their local school and making sure that primary students come and see us in action. May I take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the success of the College recently. Without a team effort, none of this would have been achieved. Onwards and upwards!

Catherine Anderson
Headteacher

Gifted and Talented Course

In March, I accompanied two Year 11 students, Cosmina Miscu and Steven Cowen, on a residential course for Gifted and Talented students at Villiers Park Cambridgeshire. The theme was Codes. After some amusing icebreakers and an orienteering session in the grounds, the students, along with pupils from other schools, spent an hour learning about different types of codes. In the afternoon, there was a visit to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford, where we were given a talk on the World War 2 Enigma machine, before a brief (or perhaps I should say ‘flying’) visit to the museum. Arriving back at Villiers Park, students had a further academic session. The after dinner entertainment was the film *Enigma*, in keeping with the theme for the course. The emphasis on Day Two was independent work and collaborative work. Students had to research a topic related to codes, working in pairs or groups of three with students from other schools. Steven’s group was given the task of researching and preparing a presentation on the Diffie-Hellman Exchange, a process

that aimed to create a method of coding which could be exchanged without potential eavesdroppers being able to decode messages. Cosmina and her partner were given a task involving languages in coding. Cosmina and her partner had fun at the expense of participating teachers by giving them the task of decoding modern-day text messaging. The tutor for the day, a post-graduate student from Cambridge University, was very impressed with the effort and final presentations of all the participants, pointing out that some of the work they were doing was of A-Level or even First Year University standard. Both Steven and Cosmina performed well in their final presentations. They had to explain their research to other students and adults in a ten minute slot and then field questions, which were often searching and certainly not easy to predict in advance. I was very proud of their performance and delighted when the organiser, Sally Brady, announced that Cosmina and her partner had won the prize for best presentation. The course was a very worthwhile experience and provided the students with skills that will stand them in good stead for Sixth Form and higher education.

Mrs T Huckerby
Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator

Comic Relief - 18th March

This year we held a non-uniform day to raise money for Comic Relief. It was a great success with students dressing up in ridiculous costumes to raise money, such as Erica Clarke-Bar and Julia Studholme in Year 11 who dressed as Barbie and Ken plus Christian Christodoulides, Sam Hanson and Luke Rodliffe (Year 9) who dressed as bananas! We also held a talent show, judged by a panel of staff and the competition was tough, but by popular applause, Lewis Macdonald in 11LG won. Staff and students of MMCC raised



£1,137.41 this year. Thanks to Mrs Brennan for masterminding the day and well done to everyone who took part!

Miss L Gittins
Form Tutor

French Spelling Bee ...Regional Finals

Some Year 7 students have been hard at work learning vocabulary for the French Spelling Bee. Three students, Bryony France-Reed, Ross Chaplin and Chanéz Ruddy, were winners in the MMCC stages of the competition, Stages 1 and 2. To reach Stage 3, the Regional Final, these hard-working and talented students had to learn 100 words from a list set by the organisers. They then had to be able to spell them out loud, using the French alphabet. Even apostrophes, hyphens and accents had to be included in French! The students gave up some of their lunchtimes to practise. On 5th April, we attended the Regional Final at Comberton College, Cambridge. For this stage, students had to learn an extra 50 spellings, making 150 words in total. It was a nerve-racking experience, carried out in the style of *Mastermind*! Sadly, the competition was fierce and we did not make it through to the national stage of the Spelling Bee. However, all three students are to be congratulated for taking part and for get-

ting this far. They certainly know a lot of French spellings now, including many words that are usually met in Year 8!



They will receive certificates from the organisers for reaching Stage 3 of the event.

Mrs T Huckerby
Languages Department

Year 7 Gifted and Talented Day

Year 7 took part in a Gifted and Talented Enrichment Day in the Drama Department on 30th March. Students developed skills in teamwork to begin the day. They then explored some GCSE techniques that involved creating drama based on movement without meaning or character. Students created chair duets that were of a GCSE quality. Their level



of focus and achievement was superb! We then explored how to create drama based on current events and students created monologues, interspersed with physical theatre as characters involved in the Japanese tsunami. The students really enjoyed their taste of GCSE Drama and, to quote Molly Bell "This was the best day ever!"

Miss C Beard
Head of Performing Arts

‘OUTSTANDING’

This was the headline in the Dunmow & Stansted Observer after they received the news that The Mountfitchet Mathematics and Computing College had passed its latest Ofsted inspection and was now out of ‘special measures’. This is a marvellous result for the College and all the staff and students are to be congratulated for their hard work in

achieving this turnaround so quickly. It is also very good news for the children of Stansted. Now with the immediate threat to the College removed, the Governing Body and the College’s Leadership Team can plan ahead with a renewed confidence. Our new Headteacher, Catherine Anderson, has made an excellent start and we look forward to the College, under her continuing leadership, going from strength to strength.

Alan Corbishley
Vice-Chairman of the Governing Body

MMCC PTA www.mmccpta.org.uk

Car Boot Sales

Our first Car Boot Sale of 2011 was held on 20th March. The weather was great and the car park full of stallholders. Around £400 was raised for PTA funds. Let’s hope the weather is as good next time! The next sales are 11.00am -2.00pm on Sundays 8th May and 3rd July. Sellers from 10.00am, buyers from 11.00am. Pitches £7 cars, £12 vans/lorries. Pay on the day. Refreshments available.

PTA Quiz Night

Saturday 14th May 7.00pm for 7.30pm. Tickets £5, tables of up to eight. Bring your own food and drink. For tickets please phone Tina on 814371 or Yvonne on 813071.



WE ARE THE ‘LITTLE GEMS’

Sorry to disturb you at this busy time,
We hope you’re well and your families are fine,
We’re five working mums, who were recently talking,
About getting fit by doing some walking.

So after plenty of chat and a little wine,
We’d do a Marathon Walk known as ‘Shine’
26.2 miles through London at night
To find a good cause would make it just right.

To help us raise money for our charity,
It’s ‘Ovarian Cancer’ just for clarity.
We’re holding a Coffee Morning in Birchanger Hall
And we’re looking for prizes for the various stalls.

We know times are hard and the margins are tight,
With the immediate future not looking that bright
But we’d appreciate your help however small,
To help challenge a disease that can affect us all.

1st June is the date that’s been set,
And any donations we’d gladly collect.
We thank you very much for your time
And if you’d prefer you can donate on line.
www.sponsormetoshine.org/littlegems.

For more information please contact me. Thank you.

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812094
Email: carolyn@caesurveying.co.uk

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NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COUNCILS

REPORTING ON A WELL RECEIVED ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The meeting on 23 March was attended by about 46 people. In the course of two hours a short presentation on the Local Citizens Advice Bureau was made, Cllr Peter Jones reported on the accounts and the budget for 2011/12, Cllr Geoffrey Sell (Chairman of Parish Council) delivered his Annual Report while about 20 parishioners raised some 24 issues.



An indication of the concerns are summarised below:

- *The qualification in the accounts* suggesting that the Parish Council had failed to provide evidence that it had carried out an adequate review of the effectiveness of its system of internal audit related not to the information but to the format. *It is ironic that Parliament has now scrapped this requirement for Parish Councils for the 2010/11 i.e. the period for which the Council was criticised!!*
- *The provision of more allotments* was requested. One site is possible albeit not ideal for parking or access. Other landowners will be approached.
- *Funding for the refurbishment of the Fountain triangle* was raised with the suggestion that parishioners may contribute. Ideas for replanting a tree still welcome.
- *Extending the opening hours of the Parish Council office* was requested. The Council accepts that this may be desirable and is looking to increase resources to meet this and other demands in an expanding Parish (towards 8000 people once Foresthall is completed). Discussions have begun with the Essex Library service, Uttlesford District Council and the police to provide enhanced services at Crafton Green.
- *Concern was expressed over dogs in the cemetery.* The Clerk confirmed that dogs were not permitted in the cemetery and should be secured outside. A notice will be put up to highlight this regulation.
- *A new litter blackspot in Lower Street* was reported. The Council intends to put a litter bin at this point. The good work of Gerard Frogley was commended.
- *The proposal for development on Elms Farm* was criticised and calls for the Council to oppose. The Chairman pointed out that no plans have been submitted and any assessment should wait a planning application. It should also be noted that any such step would require a change in the green belt status of the land.
- *The future of the site of St Mary's School* in St John's Road was raised. Cllr Ray Gooding indicated that no decision had been taken while joint ownership with the Diocese of Chelmsford added a complication. The Parish Council hopes to maintain the playing field as an open space.
- *A number of traffic issues* were raised including obstructive parking at the entry to Woodfields, reducing traffic speed on High Lane, Church Road and Walson Way (schemes for all of these have been requested from Essex County Highways) and the status of the residents' parking scheme for Lower Street/Grove Hill (awaiting analysis of objections).
- *The timing of the parish boundary review* to move all of Foresthall Park into Stansted Mountfitchet. The Clerk explained that this would occur at the end of March 2012 but in the meantime negotiations would proceed with developers, Uttlesford District Council and

Birchanger Parish Council to take over the maintenance of the estate.

- *Other issues covered included* the position with regard to the construction of a new Health Centre (still issues to resolve), the neglect of trees notably along the Cambridge Road (problems with gaining consents from Essex and now Uttlesford Councils) and the disgraceful condition of empty properties (powers to require action are limited but being pursued).

Overall an enjoyable, constructive and informal evening. Why not put next year in your diary now - 21 March 2012 (to be confirmed).

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - NOW MORE NEEDED THAN EVER

Kate Robson, who works for Uttlesford Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), gave a short presentation on the work of the local organisation. CAB has just celebrated its 20th birthday. There are about 3,000 clients of whom 30% attend on a regular basis. In 2009/10 there were over 8,000 visitors and there are four objectives to be worked upon.

- To improve service and staff training albeit Uttlesford CAB is one of the top bureaux in the country
- To secure funding which is raised locally from Uttlesford District Council and town and parish councils amongst others. It is registered as a local charity.
- Raise awareness and profile to reach people who need help.
- To increase preventative work particularly in the area of debt.
- To emphasise community policies including social housing.

CAB has eight paid staff all part-time with offices in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow. There are outreach offices in Thaxted and Stansted Mountfitchet with our parish having sessions at Spangles, Lower Street on Thursdays. Attendance is by appointment only

The Parish Council helped CAB to introduce its service here and is making a grant of £600 to help in the current year. This is a valuable, and in some cases a life resuming, service.

If you wish to take advantage of the service offered by CAB, please call 01799 775896 to make an appointment.

FORESTHALL PARK TO BE PART OF STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

On 31 March the Finance and Administration Committee of Uttlesford District Council approved the recommendation to incorporate all of Foresthall Park into the parish of Stansted Mountfitchet. This change will be effective from April 2012. Negotiations will now take place to take over the maintenance of the estate. Any concerns, questions or ideas should be sent to Stansted Mountfitchet Parish Council (telephone 813214 or email parishcouncil@stansted.net) Other boundary changes already implemented mean that Thremhall Priory is no longer part of the parish - the boundary having switched from being the old A120 to the new road, and that Brook View, and some gardens in Rochford Close/ Stoney Place which were once in Birchanger, are also now in Stansted!

PARISH PLAN APPROVED BY UTTLESFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL

On 6 April the Development Control Committee approved the Parish Plan. This document will now be printed and circulated to all households and businesses. Now we have to turn ideas into action and achieve results.

STREET LIGHTING OUTAGES

Most problems are dealt with in an acceptable time but sometimes delays do occur. One example is the light in St John's Road (JR5 near houses 40/44) which is inconsistent. It is now in the hands of edf Energy as there appears to be a problem with the electricity supply. Please continue to report all problems to the Parish Council. This year an electrical and structural review of all lights will be undertaken.

REFURBISHMENT AND REPLANTING THE FOUNTAIN TRIANGLE

A plan to refurbish this area has been drawn up and is now being costed. Once this is completed funding will be sought.

The replanting of one or more trees on the triangle will take place to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. (Advice was received not to re-plant until all roots have died back). If you have ideas of the species of tree(s) to be planted, please let the Parish Council know.

RESIDENTS PARKING SCHEME FOR LOWER STREET AND GROVE HILL

A number of objections have been received by Essex County Highways relating to a small part of the scheme on High Lane. These are being considered by the legal department of Essex County Council. The Parish Council would prefer to amend the scheme if necessary to prevent further delay.

CO-OPERATION AROUND BREWERY LANE

Essex County Highways, following requests from residents and the Parish Council, has placed kerbing at the entrance of Brewery Lane from High Lane to prevent erosion of the verges. The Parish Council has organised vegetation to be cut back courtesy of the work of Levi Loveridge, a volunteer, while the residents of Brewery Lane have offered to cut the restored grass verges. All in all a successful co-operative effort.

STANSTED AIRPORT GRANTS

The Stansted Airport Community Trust is inviting applications for grants from community and voluntary groups. The closing date is 31 August 2011 and forms can be obtained by e-mailing the name and postal address of the organisation to cllr.susan.barker@essex.gov.uk or by telephoning the administration office on 01245 430233.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

As NhW is now fully in place in Stansted, we have decided to have just one Public Meeting annually and this will be on Wednesday 25 May 2011.

- * Venue: Stansted Free Church Lecture Hall
- * Time: 7.30 pm
- * Refreshments available after the meeting
- * Guest Speaker
- * Police input

Please endeavour to attend this meeting as it is your chance to have your say.

Contacts: Cllr Valerie Trundle - 01279 813433
Mrs Diane Roberts - 01279 813089

DIGITAL SWITCHOVER SCHEME

We have received information relating to the introduction of digital TV in this area, particularly aimed at older and disabled people. The scheme is run by the BBC and aimed at people who are over 75 years of age, OR have lived in a care home for six months or more, OR receive Disabil-

ity Living Allowance (DLA), OR Attendance or Constant Attendance Allowance, OR Mobility supplement OR is registered blind or partially sighted.

They can arrange for an approved installer to supply and install everything that you will need to switch one of your televisions to digital. For further information, request a leaflet from the Parish Council (we have a few copies), telephone 0800 40 85 900 (free calls 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm Sat and Sun). Free textphone service on 0800 40 85 936 or look at their website helpscheme.co.uk

WINDMILL

As we go to print, the issue of the "sticky" paint is still to be resolved. The contractors will be re-painting all of the doors and window frames, and possibly the sails. We had hoped that the work would be completed prior to Easter opening, but unfortunately we have encountered delays.

STANSTED IN BLOOM

Important Information

- * Entry form for Competition overleaf.
- * Last date for entry is Friday 24 June. Forms to the Council Offices, Crafton Green by this date.
- * Date of judging for Competition is Saturday 2 July between 2 - 5 pm.
- * Date for distribution of prizes - Saturday 9 July. Venue: Stansted Free Church Lecture Hall, time 3 pm.
- * Judges: Mrs Anne Berrisford and Mrs Diane Newland

Please help to make our competition another great success this year and enter your garden in our competition. No separate categories this year.

Contacts: Cllr Valerie Trundle - 01279 813433
Cllr Iris Evans - 01279 815848
Mrs Joy Thomas - 01279 813871

DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS - 7.45pm

11 May	Full Council & Annual Council
18 May	Open Spaces

CONTACT DETAILS

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

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Member of Parliament

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Haselhurst MP
 House of Commons, London SW1A OAA
 Tel: 0207 219 5214/Fax: 0207 219 5600
 Email: *alan.haselhurst.mp@parliament.uk*

Police

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

***Stansted in Bloom 2011
 Entry Nomination***

OTHER CONTACTS

NAME OF PERSON NOMINATING

.....
 CONTACT NUMBER

.....
 ADDRESS OF PROPERTY TO BE INCLUDED IN JUDGES' TOUR OF THE VILLAGE

.....
 Please return to SMPC, Council Offices, 72 Chapel Hill, CM24 8AG
 by Friday 24th June

THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKES

Christchurch, New Zealand, the largest city in the South Island with about 350,000 people, is midway down the eastern coast, on the Canterbury Plains next door to Banks Peninsula and not far from the Southern Alps. Though brought up in Stansted, I have lived in the South Island since 1946 and continuously in Christchurch since 1959. The earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 have changed almost everything here. Although it is well-accepted that New Zealand is on the geological Pacific Ring of Fire, large 'quakes in Christchurch weren't foreseen. The first major event, on 4th September last year, was centred about 30km west of the city, causing considerable damage but mercifully no deaths; a good deal of the chaos had been tidied up before the much more destructive event of 22nd February. That time, about 180 people were killed, mostly when two quite modern office blocks collapsed. Around 600 non-residential buildings and about 8000 dwellings have already fallen or need to be demolished. In the eastern suburbs all the shopping malls will be closed for months, and many smaller shops have been dismantled. In spite of mighty efforts by council workers and volunteers, roadways are still buckled and cluttered, tap water has to be boiled for drinking, electricity supplies are often makeshift and sewer mains are problematic.



I haven't personally seen how much the second quake devastated the central city, because it's still cordoned off for safety reasons. One main thoroughfare hadn't been completely restored after the first 'quake. Meanwhile aftershocks continue, some large. The first earthquake was the more powerful, registering 7.1 on the Richter scale against 6.3 for the February shake. The effects of the 'quakes and aftershocks were magnified by their shallowness, typically only a few kilometres.



The shallowness has meant too that extreme damage has tended to be quite local, although ground conditions have also been important, low-lying areas being subject to liquefaction, with huge cracks oozing large volumes of silt. Hill suburbs are menaced by loosened rocks. Among the greatest sufferers have been public buildings, notably churches, mostly put up to specifications from places with no earthquakes. This could be rectified in the rebuilding, but traditions die hard; anyway, we don't know that the big shocks are over. So far we personally have been lucky, with only a few minor ceiling cracks, two broken TVs and some smashed crockery. One grandson, however, has twice had to move from wrecked houses and he and his family are now living with his parents. Our publishing business has suffered badly because our printers can't access their workshop. I end by paying tribute to the vast amount of help received not only from all over New Zealand but all over the world, including, of course, the UK. Rescue teams have done a wonderful job and fundraising efforts have been magnificent and greatly appreciated. Our thoughts are now with the Japanese for the much larger disaster that has hit them.

The pictures are of damage to the New Brighton Union Church (Methodist-Presbyterian). The spire was removed by crane to protect passers-by.

Robin Mitchell



As usual the children at Rainbow have had a busy month. In March we had a wonderful day out at Colchester Zoo. The children loved looking at and learning about all the different animals and the grown-ups had a pretty good time too! Following on from February the children have continued learning about eating healthily and looking after our bodies. We visited Sainsbury's in Bishop's Stortford to learn all about the fruit and vegetables there. One of the members of staff dressed up as a banana, which the children found highly entertaining! They also enjoyed the train journey to and from Bishop's Stortford. Rainbow is very grateful to the Rose and Crown in Bentfield Green and, in particular, quizmaster David Clark, for running the Tuesday night quiz. A wonderful £447 has been raised for Rainbow, which will be put towards furnishing the outside area in our new premises. The Rose and Crown have asked us to mention that if any local charity would like to run a quiz to raise some funds please get in touch with them – the number is 812107.

Places for September 2012 are filling up fast. If you have a child who would like to attend Rainbow please put his or her name down as soon as possible (even if only a few months old!). We welcome visits to preschool – please see our website at www.rainbowpreschool-stansted.co.uk for more details.

Katherine Aiken
Tel: 813110

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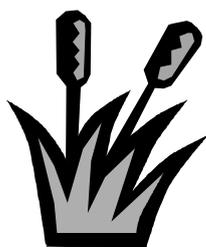
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MAY IS RABBIT MONTH!

May is rabbit month at Mercer and Hughes. We won't be going as far as wearing bunny costumes or fluffy ears - that would be a hop too far! (Sorry, couldn't resist it). But we will be inviting clients with rabbits to bring them in for a free health check with our nurses during Rabbit Awareness Week. Rabbit Awareness Week is a nationwide event which runs from 23rd to 27th May and aims to improve the well-being of rabbits by increasing awareness of health care and husbandry. Every year has a different theme and this year it is behaviour and emotional health, but we will be happy to talk about any aspect of rabbit care. Additionally, we will be holding an information evening from 7.30pm on Tuesday 24th May at our Saffron Walden surgery. This will be run by Gemma Bargman, one of our vets, who has a special interest in rabbit medicine and surgery and Cat, one of our qualified nurses, who breeds and shows rabbits in her spare time. They will give lots of advice on general husbandry and health care including dental problems and correct feeding regimes for rabbits. It's sure to be a popular evening, and booking is essential as places are limited, so ring the Saffron Walden surgery on 01799 522082 now and book a place. The Rabbit Welfare Association and Fund website www.rabbitwelfare.co.uk is really useful for information about all aspects of rabbit care. Did you know that rabbits are the third most popular pet in the UK now but can be one of the most neglected? Many rabbits are left in hutches without access to correct food or exercise and this can lead to teeth problems, skin infections and even depression. I read an article recently that said rabbits should spend 75% of their waking time eating, but most of that food intake should be hay. This allows the teeth to be ground down properly and provides the digestive system with enough roughage. Another interesting fact is that rabbits produce two different types of droppings; soft sticky droppings in the morning called caecoliths which they need to eat and the more recognisable hard droppings later in the day which they don't. I could go on, but I know Gemma and Cat have lots of other interesting information to share with you, so hop along to Saffron Walden on 24th May and find out more. I was going to write about rabbits getting 24 carrot health care at Mercer and Hughes but I think I'd better stop now!



Ilse Pedler

BUDGET UPDATE

As you will no doubt have been aware, the 2011 budget which the Chancellor gave recently, held a few titbits of good news, such as the increase in the Personal Allowance for the tax year starting in April 2012, which means that individuals can have income of over £8,000 and not pay any tax, and the reduction in the fuel duty. These small concessions were all that the majority of taxpayers will be affected by. Small business also benefited from some slight concessions that will benefit them, but, in this 'affluent' area, we do not benefit from many of the measures that the Chancellor announced such as the setting up of further enterprise zones, and the establishment of more university technical colleges, which are earmarked for areas of higher unemployment.

The main measures that the current Coalition Government have put in place were detailed in the June 2010 pre-Budget forecast, and it is this document that sets the current state of the country's finances into perspective. Even with the extensive cuts in central and local government spending, the deficit that we as a country have will still keep increasing for a further two or three years, with most commentators believing that the 2013/14 year will show the peak of the value that we, as a country, will need to borrow, to balance our books. Indeed, in each month that passes, the actual figures of what is needed to be borrowed increases, above the Government's own estimates, as tax income falls, and expenditure on benefits increases. As the amount borrowed increases, so does the interest we as a country pay on it. Estimates show that the interest paid in 2010 could have amounted to as much as £43 billion. How does this affect you? Well, it certainly is a time to make sure that you have your affairs structured accurately, to best suit your own individual circumstances. Next year, your husband, wife or partner, son or daughter, can earn over £8,000 without paying tax. Can you save tax on this figure by employing them?

For any discussions on these points, or on tax or business matters, please call either Jeremy Fozzard or Mark Williams at Mansell and Co LLP, on 658499.

Children's Recipe of the Month

Asparagus Frittata

British asparagus comes into season in May so try this yummy frittata. Serves two.

Ingredients

100g cooked potatoes
2 eggs
2 asparagus spears
1 spring onion
2 heaped tablespoons of peas
A few mint leaves
2 tablespoons of grated parmesan
black pepper
vegetable oil

Method

Crack eggs into a bowl and beat lightly with a fork.

Chop asparagus with scissors and add to eggs along with the peas, spring onion and parmesan.

Tear the mint leaves and add.

Mash potatoes with fork (or put in bag and bash with rolling pin) and add to mixture along with a pinch of pepper.

Brush inside of oven-proof dish with a little oil and pour in mixture.

Bake in oven at 180° for 15-20mins until set. Serve warm with salad.



For details of cookery classes and parties for 2-11 year olds contact Jane Chate, Kiddy Cook 07796 270068, www.kiddycook.co.uk.

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Stansted Evening Women's Institute

The hall was full of people, chatter and handbags for our March meeting when Judy Jeffrey came to tell us a little of their history and to warn us of the perils of loading too much into them! She reminded us that bags were originally used by men in the 1500s and were called pockets or pouches and worn under the clothing. That of course turned into pockets actually being made in their clothing, and once women were deemed to need to be able to carry things about with them reticules were invented, which were little drawstring bags. Pockets were not put into female clothing as this would have spoiled the line of their dresses. By 1900 though, most women carried a handbag and most men stopped doing so. At that time handbags were made to match outfits and the richer you were the more handbags you had. Judy told us that we should not carry heavy shoulder-bags and certainly none weighing more than 2kg. Some people had theirs weighed and found to their horror that they were carrying far more than that. There followed an interesting discussion on what people put into theirs; quite surprisingly one handbag was discovered to be housing two toilet rolls! We didn't discover whether she had called at the shops on the way there or whether that was a normal precaution. Judy's other topic was scarves and she showed us some very new and novel ways of tying them so that they don't slip and become a tangled mass which is the norm! One thing she did say was that it was better to have a long neck; but offered no solution to the dilemma if you aren't so endowed. Our competition was for a favourite handbag and this produced a wonderful selection, especially some evening bags.

We had a very good County AGM at Colchester and were entertained by Ian LeGros from RHS Hyde Hall, who told us of all the improvements being made there, which include clearing a lot of land and planting new gardens and trees. WI members will be helping to decorate the Christmas trees there this winter with recycled and natural materials and our Institute hopes to be involved if chosen. There is a very good restaurant there, as well as several walks of varying lengths and things for children to do. The main speaker was Lady Antonia Fraser DBE and this took the form of an interview by a journalist asking her the questions on behalf of us all. This made a very interesting and informative talk, though I still haven't quite worked out why she left a marriage of some years and six children to live with what must have been a very difficult man, almost on the spur of the moment! However, they were eventually married and spent 30 years together, so something must have been right.



In May we are discussing our two resolutions for the National AGM, which are on local library closures (thankfully ours in Stansted is safe) and proposed mega farms. We are also expecting a visit from our local Police Community Support Officer. Last month we had four visitors; why not be one too and come to our May meeting 7.45pm on Thursday 12th May in St John's Hall? We would particularly like to welcome people from Foresthall Park.



Judy Colliver
President



UGLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

At our recent meeting our speaker began by saying that she was going to talk rubbish (in the nicest possible way of course)! Our speaker was Catherine Dean and her subject was recycling. A short quiz generated a lot of discussion and then followed a most interesting DVD presentation featuring the materials recycling facility at Tilbury; an amazing place where 25 tonnes of our dry recycling are processed per hour - that's 400 tonnes a day! All the mixed dry recycling is separated through a system of conveyor belts and a combination of manual and automatic procedures before being sent to re-processors who prepare the items for manufacturing into recycled products. For example, all our waste paper and card is sent to Kent where it is recycled for use in the production of more newspapers and magazines, including the one you are reading now! Aluminium cans and foil are despatched to Warrington and recycled into food and drink cans. Steel is sent to Cardiff and plastic goes to Leicester, where it is used in the production of street and garden furniture. What about our old shoes and textiles? Uttlesford has a small number of textile and shoe recycling banks including one in Lower Street Car park. The items are sorted and those of good quality are either sold in UK charity shops or sent to Africa, where they are washed and mended and sold in markets. Unusable textiles are recycled into cleaning rags and wipers for industry. 'Any old iron'? Even our domestic irons can be recycled too! Our kitchen waste is dealt with by a composting facility which on occasion allows the Council to take some free of charge which is then passed on to us. So the message that we were left with at the end of a very interesting and comment provoking afternoon was 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' and 'Keep our district clean and green!'

Other highlights on the horizon include a visit from the canine partners charity in July, a tour of Grandad's garden in September and a visit from the Nazeing hand bell ringers in December. So why not come and join us one afternoon? You would be assured of a warm welcome. We meet on the third Wednesday of the month at 2.30pm in Ugley Village Hall.

Andrea Fitt



Huw Johnson Club

We do not have any news to report this month, other than to let you know that we are having a bumper coffee morning in June or July. More details in next month's 'Link'.

Marion Johnson
Tel: 812284



Stansted Cricket Club

Stansted Tennis Club



Dates for your diary

Ladies' Night Monday 9th May 7.00pm-10.00pm. All are welcome!

Spring Clean

There will be a spring clean of the clubhouse and garden on **Saturday 14th May at 3.00pm**. The committee would really appreciate any offers of help, even if it's just for an hour! If you would like to help, please email Chris Hollis on chris.hollis2@btinternet.com.

Cayless Chilli Tournament

This popular senior tournament takes place on Sunday 15th May at 12.30pm. An afternoon of competitive tennis will be rounded off with a few drinks and a delicious chilli meal. Please see the club noticeboard for the entry list and sign up.

Club Tournament

The entry list will be on the noticeboard in the clubhouse for the entire month of May. We would encourage as many members as possible to enter this year's competition.

Coaching

For more information, please contact Chris Hollis on 319155 or Martyn Taplin (Monday night adult coaching session) on 816386. Chris is currently trying to organise an extra group for younger children (Reception/Year 1) on a Tuesday at 4.00pm. There are also vacancies for the following groups:

Monday 4.30pm-5.45pm - Girls' Match Practice session.
Monday 5.45pm-6.15pm - Year 5/6- Boys.
Tuesday 4.30pm-5.45pm - Boys' Match Practice session.

Please give Chris a call if you are interested in any of these groups.

Used tennis balls

Used tennis balls can be purchased for £1 per tube of four - choose your own! Please contact Jan Hollis on 812073.

Club Playing Sessions

Members are encouraged to attend these open sessions:
Wednesday from 9.00am and 6.00pm
Friday from 9.30am. Sunday from 10.00am

Contacts

Richard Mott (Secretary) 466348, Janet Hollis (Chairman) 812073, Daphne Lunnon (Membership Secretary) 817574.

Chris Hollis

At our AGM on 21st March we elected Ian Parsons (1st XI), Dave Roach (2nd XI) and Ben Baker (Sunday XI) as captains for the coming season. We held a successful NatWest Cricket Force Day on 27th March. We have cleared up the brick dust from the area adjacent to the car park, put down soil and re-seeded the area. The dressing rooms are being redecorated and fitted with new rubber flooring and new changing benches. We have been drawn away to Langley in the first round of the HECL Cup on 17th May. Our new league season starts on 30th April with the 2nd XI entertaining Little Bardfield and the 1st XI travelling to Harlow Town II. Our home fixtures for May are:

Sat	7th May 1.30pm	1st XI v Hockerill I
Sun	8th May 2.30pm	Sun XI v Epping Foresters
Sat	14th May 1.30pm	1st XI v Birchanger
Sun	15th May 2.30pm	Sun XI v Clavering
Sat	21st May 1.30pm	2nd XI v Three Caps
Sat	28th May 1.30pm	1st XI v Thorley I
Sun	29th May 2.30pm	T20 match and barbecue

If anyone wishes to join the club, please contact David Hedge 812509.

From 10.00am to noon on 14th June we are holding a coffee morning at 49 St John's Road to raise money to improve our clubhouse disabled facilities. Any tombola, raffle prizes, cakes and bric-a-brac would be very much appreciated. Please contact Sandra on 814471.

David Hedge

STANSTED JUNIORS

Junior Cricketers Wanted

Cricketers (both boys and girls). Years 6 and 7 to play hardball and years 3 and 4 softball. Come and join us on Sunday 1st May 10.45am at Hargrave Park for a taster training session, conducted by qualified coaches. Regular coaching will start on Friday 6th May at 4.30pm (softball) 6.30pm (hardball). We have a few places left in the team due to play on 3rd May so if you can play hardball please contact Keith or Sandra on 814471. Stansted Junior Cricket Club is a 'Clubmark' approved club which means it operates to the latest ECB regulations and standards. We have five qualified coaches and all junior managers and officials hold current CRB checks. This year we plan the following sections:

Under 15 (Year 8/9/10) Mike Burgoine tel 07720 710212

Under 12 (Year 6/7) Mark Allen tel 812565
Kwick (softball) Greg Williams tel 810990

If you have the time and wish to be involved (even in a small way) please contact any of the above.

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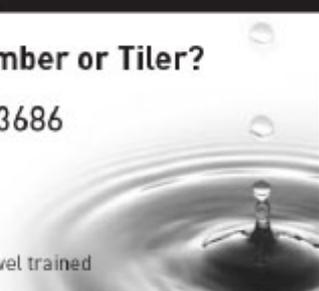
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SSE welcomed the recent rejection by the Competition Commission of BAA's latest attempt to cling onto ownership of Stansted Airport and calls upon BAA to accept the decision and sell Stansted Airport without any further prevarication or delay.

A new Government consultation is being held to determine the future of aviation, which gives local people an opportunity to make their views about Stansted Airport known ahead of the draft policy that will be published next year. The scoping document entitled 'Developing a sustainable framework for UK aviation' makes clear that the 2003 Air Transport White Paper is now fundamentally out-of-date and, encouragingly, takes as its starting point the premise of no new runways in the south east – including Stansted. It poses a series of strategic questions around three themes linking aviation to the economy, climate change and the local environment. While seeking a sustainable solution to aviation's future growth, the consultation's authors are mindful of the impacts that the industry has on the environment locally and globally. Local concerns are highlighted as having been a key consideration in the scrapping of the Stansted second runway plans, with night noise as the least acceptable impact of aircraft operations. Noise comes in for a special focus as the Government seeks to gather views which will be important in a separate consultation on the night flights regime scheduled for later this year, making it doubly important for people to respond if they are currently affected by noise – or who could be affected under anticipated route changes flagged up in the consultation. The consultation, available on the Department for Transport's website at www.dft.gov.uk is being run for an extended period to encourage as wide a response as possible before the closing date of 30th September. SSE will be issuing guidance to those wishing to respond, not least to tackle the on-going impacts of Stansted's operations on the community, although our full response will not be completed until after new passenger forecasts and the Government's reply to the Climate Change Committee's report on UK aviation are published this July. But we will be renewing pressure for a long-term moratorium on any second runway plans and the need to prevent Stansted's owners from exceeding the 35 million passenger limit. The airport is currently operating at 18 million passengers a year.

Runway Ramble

A visit to historic Thaxted will be the highlight of the annual Runway Ramble being held by SSE on Saturday 25th June starting from the centre of Duton Hill between 10.30am and 2.30pm. The five-mile circular walk is free (with a small charge made for refreshments) but those who want to seek sponsorship for their efforts or make donations at the event are welcome to do so. More information including a detailed route will be available on the SSE website: www.stopstanstedexpansion.com or telephone 870558.

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

SKYWATCH

A monthly look at an aspect
of the night sky



I trust you all enjoyed your trip to the Space Station last month? This month reflects on the first manned rocket to go in to space 50 years ago. Risky as all spaceflight is, and will always be so, Yuri Gagarin's first ever manned flight on 12th April 1961 was as risky as it could ever be. Not all those unmanned craft got back in one piece. But, come the day, his spacecraft, Vostok 1, lifted off perfectly and followed its computer's commandments. Gagarin didn't have any duties to do with the technical side of the flight; he just had to sit there. That may sound a bit too easy but we did not know for sure that such a trip was acceptable to the human frame and if Gagarin had been disabled in any way he might have been unable to function properly. His flight lasted 108 minutes from lift-off, in to a single orbit which reached a high of 178 miles above the Earth. Voice communications between him and the ground were excellent and he was clearly in good spirits and, being a particularly good Communist, informed the world, having looked out of his window at the infinite Universe ... that there is no God.

Unlike the Americans, who, at the same time, were creating their own space program at Cape Canaveral, the Russians at that time, decided that their spacecraft would crash land on dry land. For Gagarin, and many of his successors, he had to leave his ship on the way down by ejecting at 20,000 feet, landing by parachute ... to the considerable surprise of a Russian farmer who didn't believe a word of Gagarin's explanation. Within eight years of Gagarin's flight (he died in a plane crash in 1968) we had gone to the Moon and, although rather expensive in these stricken times, we have a Space Station that is inhabited with people from all round the world. As an end piece, we cannot entirely ignore the politics of the time, between the USSR and the USA. The fact that Moscow could send a rocket all the way round the Earth first dented American pride then made it perfectly clear that it was very easy to send a rocket just halfway round the Earth. Even so, quite early on, the two Super Powers had an agreement about exchanging astronauts and cosmonauts who might land in the wrong place. And we are still all here.

Can you could help me?

Two or three months ago someone rang me to do a quiz night at the beginning of July and I said I would. I have lost all the information and I am asking if you could contact me again on 813514 please?

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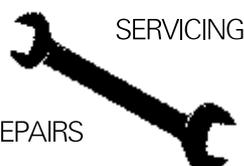
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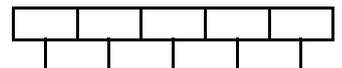
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1st STANSTED SCOUT GROUP

Research, in the form of a photograph taken at Blythwood Dairy, has revealed that the Group was founded in 1911, some three years after Robert Baden-Powell held the first Boy Scout Camp on Brownsea Island and thereby started the now world-wide Scout Movement. So a team of present and former Stansted Scouters has been gathered to plan for the local centenary. Centenary Day for the Stansted Group is 16th July. All former and present members will be invited to the Scout Headquarters for events that are being arranged, so if you are numbered among them, or are related to one of them, please put the date in your diary now.

Mark Gerber
Group Scout Leader



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET U3A

My article this month will be rather short as I am writing this just a few days before our next Committee meeting. This means that any decision we make at our meeting about opening up our membership again, will have to wait until the next issue of the 'Link' – although any decision we make will be added to our website by the time this article comes to print. Meanwhile we are still taking names on our waiting list for new members, so if you would like to put your name down please contact Vicki on 810985. I mentioned last month that I had written to the Rector of St John's Church asking him if he would consider us using the church for our meetings, which would mean that we would not have to restrict membership numbers as we have at present. I have received a reply from him to the effect that he has to look into the legal position and needs to speak with the Archdeacon. He feels this may take some time but hopefully he will afford us the opportunity to discuss this matter with him further.

Last month we had held our Annual General Meeting when Sally Rich, who had been standing in as Treasurer since Alan Bore's resignation last year, was elected as our Treasurer. Jean Pyatt stood down as Vice Chair and Alan Bore was elected in her place. Only one other member, Jan Neal, put her name forward as a Committee member and she was elected unopposed – we are very pleased to have her on board, as new thoughts, ideas and input are most welcome. All other Committee members remain the same.

At our meeting on Thursday 19th May at 1.30pm in St John's Hall, Barbara Young will be talking on the life and work of Claude Monet.

Future Trips and Outings

Sunday 15th May: Wildlife Walk around the meadows of Thaxted with Barry Kaufmann Wright

Tuesday 17th May: ITV Studios for Live Recording of the lunchtime chat show 'Loose Women'

Tuesday 7th June: Walking Tour in Hampstead, London with Guide Geoff Marshall

Friday 8th July: Riverboat Cruise and Constable Country

For further information please call me and I will be happy to help.

Cherry
Chair
Tel: 817140



STANSTED MOUNTFITCHET

LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We were very sorry to hear that the advertised speaker, George Smith, had died since the Society's programme had been arranged, but our Vice Chairman, Peter Sanders agreed to substitute with a talk he had given in a neighbouring town some time ago. This was entitled 'That Unfortunate Village: The Great Stansted Scandal of 1822' and was taken from a letter written by a leading Bishop's Stortford cleric, an elder statesman of the Independent Church community. At the time, Stansted was scarcely one village but was made up of four hamlets - The Street (what is now around Lower Street), Burton End, Bentfield End and The Chapel, centred on the crossroads on the old A11, and it had a population of about one and a half thousand. Its main occupation was agriculture but its religious life was divided - the farmers and their labourers were mainly Anglican and the craftsmen and tradesmen were generally of the Independent Church. In 1818, the Minister of the Independent Church died and after much consideration, the man selected was Josiah Redford, who took up his appointment in 1821. What then happened is reported in the Church Books of the Old and New Meetings - the first by Robert May, Redford's successor, and the latter by Redford himself. May presented the argument held by many that at the time of Redford's Ordination, he was living 'in fornication'; while Redford himself maintained that he was legally married but nevertheless had been suspended. The congregation - always independent by nature - became split in two, with the result that after considerable disorder, the New Meeting, with Redford as Minister, was established at a purpose built chapel in Silver Street. However, the matter did not end there and argument continued to rumble on. Eventually, a new Minister was appointed to replace Josiah Redford - John White, however, did not satisfy the New Meeting any more than Redford but he died in 1851 after only three years in office.

Peter illustrated his talk with much information about the Stansted of the time but there were certain things which still continued to puzzle him, among them the date that the Independent Church eventually came back together. However, we enjoyed his talk very much and were very grateful to him for stepping into the breach. The final meeting of the Society until our new season starts in September will be on 5th May, when Peter Sanders will be speaking once more on the life of Stansted Village. I have not heard in detail his subject but believe it has something to do with World War II and the American servicemen who stayed with us for a while - we shall see but it is bound to be interesting! See you there - 8.00pm in the Day Centre.



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CONSERVING A WINDMILL

The sight of a windmill with its sails gently turning in the breeze evokes emotions, which few other structures can match. Why is this and is it just an emotion? The visual impression created by modern wind turbines do not produce the same appeal although the motion is similar. Is it because a windmill is to a more human scale, or is it a hankering after something more primitive, or just admiration for an ancient feature that has survived against the odds? Or perhaps an amalgam of all three with hints of other indefinable qualities too? The principles and practices of having and maintaining a windmill are very different from those for a new building. With a new-build a plethora of Standards, Codes of Practice and regulations have to be observed. A windmill was built two or more centuries ago by craftsmen, sometimes millers themselves, using basic materials, who had learnt the skills from their forebears, all with a single objective - the production of flour for bread. The construction was simple but incorporated astonishingly fine adjustments down to thousandths of an inch for the stones. Robusticity and easy replacement of worn parts were the imperative, in our case for 123 years. In 1952, some 42 years after our mill went out of use, it was designated as an Ancient Monument and it came under the overview of what is now English Heritage. In simple terms this means that the windmill has to remain in the condition prevailing during its working life. Early in the present millennium English Heritage considered that, although no longer able to work, and to relieve weight on one sector of the tower, it would be desirable for the cap and sails to turn and so present a semblance of its early days. They gave substance to this by awarding a grant, which together with monies ring-fenced by the Parish Council plus Millers' funds was sufficient for the 2010 refurbishment. We, with most of Stansted, were delighted.

The Trustees and Stansted Millers are shortly to assume responsibility from the contractors for a structure that is no longer static. We in Stansted are inevitably faced with compromise, as when parts deteriorate (as they surely will), we must replace them in such a way that the vernacular of the whole remains unchanged. We are therefore reactive more than proactive, especially as the approval of the architect is needed at any stage, and although this can lead to some misunderstanding of our role it still means that repairs should be carried out to the best standard that is attainable. We are alive to the possibility of further replacement within the worm and fantail mechanism after several occasions of renewed use in 2010.

So where are we now?

Since last April the cap has been turning into the wind but at the time of writing the mill has been temporarily made immobile while some matters are being rectified by the millwright. We are assured that defective paintwork will be restored in the better spring weather shortly after the Easter opening. Moreover the Trustees and Millers will be entering into a regular inspection regime with a professional millwright. Thanks partly to an Uttlesford grant the mill now has prominent banners on each floor describing its functions and we have 20 new chairs. By May our unique wall-paintings will have received restorative treatment from a specialist. This all adds up to mighty progress in little more than a year. What we now need is more helpers able to operate the

mechanism - not a daunting operation - and others to help with stewarding and the annual fête. The Stansted Millers will welcome you!

Derek Honour
Co-chairman
Tel: 647213



STANSTED FOOTBALL CLUB

At the time of writing this article Stansted are still top of the League and still in the League Cup so fingers crossed for a brilliant finish to what has been a very good season for us but I will let you know the final outcome in the next issue of the 'Link'. As our home football games finish at the end of April and Hargrave Park passes to our friends in the Cricket Club, our bar's opening hours will change. Details will be displayed on the clubhouse door. If anyone would like to book the Club for an event please contact either Tony Smith on 07727 083658 or myself on 07920 039113.

Lynne Furber
Treasurer



STANSTED BEAVERS

In March Stansted Beavers joined in our district 'messy afternoon' where they could choose from a selection of activities, including face painting, making models, painting with marbles and even painting with their feet! We also spent a morning with some wacky science experiments using familiar objects - can you make an egg float? Or make raisins dance? Over the next few weeks we are working towards the health and fitness challenge badge, and so we had an Olympic theme morning to get into the mood for London 2012. Term finished on a lovely sunny day with our spring hike. As we are celebrating 25 years of Beaver Scouts this year, at the end the Beavers took home some special badges to mark the anniversary.

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Our Nearly New Sale at the Hilton Hotel was a huge success!! We had over 250 buyers through the door and 55 sellers. A big **thank you** to Jane Chate and Corrina Mottram who do such a fabulous job of organising the smooth running of the event. Thank you also to over 20 volunteers from the NCT who worked on the event. All proceeds go to the NCT head office and contributes towards projects such as improving postnatal support, improving information and support for families of premature babies, and the campaign for a better birth environment.

This month, now the weather is hopefully better, we have re-introduced playground fun in our diary. We will alternate around the three Stansted playgrounds, starting this month at the Foresthall Estate. We have also organised a trip to the Discovery Centre in Braintree. If you have not been there before, put this date on your calendar as it is a great day out for children of all ages. With water fun and sand pits I would advise a change of clothes! Fancy a friendly chat and some new playmates? Why not pop along to one of our coffee mornings, which are informal gatherings held in members' homes. Each age group is individually tailored for: Bumps and Babes, Toddlers and Pre-school. We would love to meet you and it is a great way of making new friends. All our events are for members and non-members – for further information on any of the following events or our weekly coffee mornings, please contact me.

For all Pre-preschoolers and Pregnant Mums – Friday 6th May 10.00am Tea and Toys at Henham Church Hall
For all ages – Saturday 14th May 11.00am Foresthall Playground for Playground Fun!
For all ages – Tuesday 31st May at 11.00am, Discovery Centre. Meet at the benches outside the cafeteria – this event is dependent on the weather.

Anna Sedgbeer
Tel: 812257

music@stansted

Saturday 25th June at St John's Church is the date and place set for our popular, biennial Summer Soiree featuring many outstandingly talented local young musicians. The first half of the concert will begin in the Church at 6.00pm. In the interval there will be supper, licensed bar in the marquee, and jazz in the church gardens. Further details will be in next month's 'Link' but tickets, *which we ask you to purchase in advance please for catering purposes*, are now available. Adults £12, accompanied children £5, including food, from Stansted Carpets, Chapel Hill; Nockolds, Bishops Stortford; and Sonia Levy, 31 Chapel Hill tel 815282. For more information about *music@stansted* and future events please visit our website at www.musicatstansted.com

Alan Corbishley



ROTARY CLUB OF STANSTED STORT VALLEY

Friday 25th March, responding to the devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan, our Club in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Bishop's Stortford, organised a collection to provide ShelterBoxes to ameliorate the suffering of some of the shattered victims. The Stansted Airport authorities allowed us to set up a stand to collect and to show the life-saving contents of the ShelterBox. £800 was collected and this money will go towards both Clubs' continuing programme to fund ShelterBoxes – last year our two Clubs raised the money for 18 at £600 each. At the heart of every ShelterBox is a disaster relief tent for a family of up to 10 people. In addition there is a range of other survival equipment including thermal blankets, insulated ground sheets, a stove and an essential life saving means of water purification. Every item is durable, practical and brand new. The box itself is lightweight and waterproof and has been used for a variety of purposes in the past - from water and food storage containers to a cot for a newly born baby.

The ShelterBox Charity was set up about 11 years ago by a Rotarian and responds instantly to disasters all around the world delivering aid as quickly as possible to the people who need it most. After initial search and rescue reports on television and in the press scenes often show vast areas covered by ShelterBox tents displaying the Rotary Logo giving shelter and other vital means of survival to the victims. Upwards of 100,000 shelter boxes have been distributed to date and Rotary raise the majority of funds to support the work of this fantastic organisation. The easiest way to find out more about ShelterBoxes and maybe to make a contribution is to visit www.shelterbox.org or contact the event organiser Rotarian Nigel Dobie on 656977, email nigeldobie@hotmail.com.



Rotarians Jackie Worsfold and David Green

Since the closure of Pearse House Hotel our Club has been without a regular meeting venue but this has now been resolved and for the foreseeable future we will be meeting Tuesday evenings at the Lemon Tree Restaurant, Water Lane, Bishop's Stortford. For more information about Rotary please contact me.

Peter Latham
Tel: 507294

Email: yp.latham@uwclub.net

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