



The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

Building Community in Print and Online
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Issue 13

March 2025

IN THIS ISSUE...

- Read all about Community Alliance Broxbourne & East Herts
- Find out the latest news from our local schools
- Meet talented local artist Dawn Coulter

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FREE!**



St John the Baptist
Great Amwell



St Mary the Virgin
St Margarets



St Andrew
Stanstead Abbots

The 3 Churches Benefice

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

PALM SUNDAY ~ 13TH APRIL

9am Eucharist at St John the Baptist, Great Amwell

10.30am Holy Communion at St Andrew's, Church Stanstead Abbots

MAUNDY THURSDAY ~ 17TH APRIL

Benefice Maundy Thursday Meal

6.30pm at The Wilshire Hall, St Andrew's Church, Stanstead Abbots

Tenebrae Service

7.30pm at St Andrew's Church, Stanstead Abbots

GOOD FRIDAY ~ 18TH APRIL

Good Friday Walk of Witness and Reflective Service

10.30am from St Mary's Church, St Margarets to St Andrew's Church, Stanstead Abbots

The Way of the Cross, a Passiontide Service

2pm at St John the Baptist Church, Great Amwell

EASTER DAY ~ 20TH APRIL

Easter Day Dawn Service

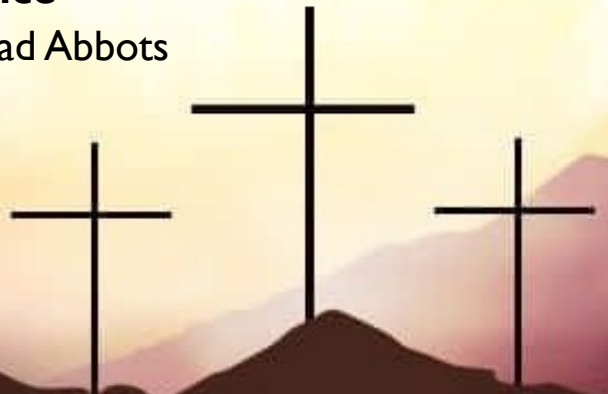
5.30am at St Mary's Church, St Margarets

Easter Day Eucharist Service

9am at St John the Baptist Church, Great Amwell

Easter Day Holy Communion Service

10.30am at St Andrew's Church, Stanstead Abbots





The Three Villages Magazine

COVERING GREAT AMWELL, ST MARGARETS AND STANSTEAD ABBOTTS

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From the Editor...



Cover: © Paul Marriott,
High Flying Drone Shots

Welcome to the first issue of 2025! The Three Villages Magazine is a joint venture between the three Parish Councils of Great Amwell, St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots, and The 3 Churches Benefice. It is intended as a community resource that is accessible to everyone. The online and print formats provide a platform to share local news and information, showcase local talent and support local businesses.

Thank to everyone who completed our survey at the end of last year. We took on board your feedback and our big news for this year is that our magazine is now FREE! Having wonderful supporters means we can offer the magazine to our readers for free, which will help us to increase our reach and to continue to build community.

Our cover showcases a wonderful photograph by Paul Marriott from High Flying Drone Shots. Do check out their website for more information (www.highflyingdronesshots.co.uk). If you would like to enter a photograph for the next cover, please send your images to threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com. We are looking for seasonal images of the local area.

Do you have an interesting story or an upcoming event to promote? We would love to hear from you! Looking ahead to next year, the approximate deadlines for submissions are: 3rd April (June Issue), 3rd July (September Issue) and 3rd October (December Issue). Alternatively, we can also promote your upcoming event/share your news on our News & Events blog. Please do get in touch!

Continued thanks are offered to Willowthorpe Care Home, our generous sponsors. We have also been kindly supported by a grant from Stanstead Abbots Parish Council.

Please do check out our website (www.thethreevillages.com), subscribe to our News & Events blog for all live events and important up-to-date news, and follow us on Facebook.

Thank you for your continued support.

Anna Bond

Editor

THE THREE VILLAGES TEAM

Jim Aitken-Ballard	Rosemary Imroth
Anna Bond	Clare Maynard
Julia Davies	Mandy McCarthy
Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest	Lyn Paddon

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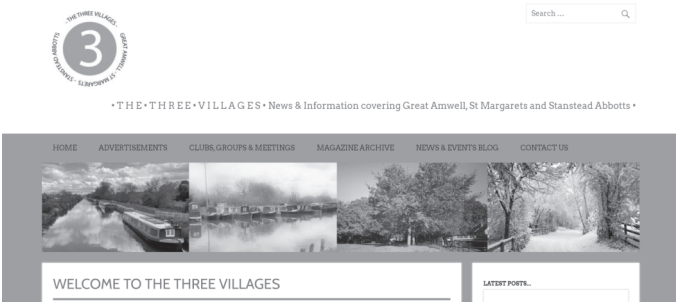
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The Three Villages Magazine

FROM THE VICAR



This issue of The Three Villages Magazine marks three years since our first edition of the new-look parish magazine in March 2022. During this time, we have developed and grown our vision of why we would want or need a village magazine. In a time when print media is suffering nationally, why would you print a magazine? So much of our news is instant and digital, so what is the aim here?



Our primary goal in this magazine is to build community, and to do that you need to be able to be in touch with all the community. The magazine is a collaboration between the three churches and the three parish councils of Great Amwell, St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots. As a group of churches, or benefice, we had a parish magazine that came out every two months and shared news about village events and clubs. The Parish Magazine had been around for a while, and though it was much loved, it often ended up being swiftly

recycled rather than read from cover to cover! The vision for the new magazine was to be a quality read that was also available online, and that became a source of village news and a catalyst for community life.

Over the last three years, I am proud to say that we have achieved some of the things we set out to do. Those people who read the magazine in print or online are generally really positive about what they find. There's news from the Parish Councils, articles from our schools and churches, information about local events and clubs, a focus on charities and local people, and generally a celebration of the many things that go on in our community. But not everybody knows about us and our print run has been limited, and so in December we decided to change the way that we run things, to take a leap of faith, and to go FREE! Previously we've charged one pound for a print copy, but this limits how many people pick up and read the magazine, because so many people just don't carry pound coins around with them anymore.

So this is the first edition of the free Three Villages Magazine and I hope you enjoy it. I also hope that as we print more magazines and share them generously that we will get more advertisers, more writers, and more people interested in reading and offering content, because the more people we have on board the more community we are building!

So look out for us in all the usual places that you pick up your copy, and some new spots. It may even have been dropped through your door as we try to reach out to people in the community who might be less likely to have found us. If this is the first time that you have read the magazine, I hope you really enjoy it. Welcome to the community!



Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest
Priest in Charge, The 3 Churches Benefice



The 3 Churches Benefice

LOCAL HISTORIC FACES & PLACES: SIR FELIX BOOTH (1775–1850)

Stanstead Abbots – where malt beer meets dry gin! How come? Because in the mid nineteenth century two giants of the alcohol trade chose to build their country homes on the same ridge of land overlooking the Lea Valley, within our parish. We've already recounted how Thomas Fowell Buxton, the Managing Director of 'the largest brewery in Europe', built his home at Easneye in 1868. Now we feature Sir Felix Booth, of Booth's London Dry Gin fame, and his establishing of a country pile at Netherfield near the summit of Cat's Hill.

Booth's home was rebuilt on his death in its current Italianate style in 1860 by his nephew and successor, Sir Charles Booth, but Sir Felix had frequently used the original building for the entertaining of his London guests. And he had many such guests. Sir Felix expanded the family distilling business by building a second distillery at Brentford and then purchasing the neighbouring brewery of Hazard and Company, which he renamed as the Red Lion Brewery. By establishing a distillery at Edinburgh in Scotland, Booth could then boast that he was the owner of the biggest distilling business in Great Britain. In 1828, now aged 53, he was elected Sheriff of the City of London and of the County of Middlesex. His fame peaked when King William IV made him a baronet.



Portrait of Sir Felix Booth, Bart FRS, by Sir Thomas Lawrence

However, it was the consequence of his being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1834 that his legacy rests. When an explorer of the fabled North West Passage, Sir John Ross, wanted to make a second attempt to discover this Arctic route (this time in a steam-powered paddle ship), he found a willing private sponsor in Booth, who bought and outfitted a steamship called, The Victory. Ross sailed in 1829 and made it partway into the Arctic archipelago, when The Victory was frozen in for the winter, which was normal. Unfortunately, it remained frozen in for the next four summers and winters, which was not normal! Thus Ross had plenty of time to name the features around him. He called the frozen bay the Gulf of Boothia and the peninsula nearby Boothia Felix (now Boothia Peninsula), and his place of encampment Felix Harbour. He even called the native people he encountered 'Boothians'!

Despite this fame – or, perhaps, because of it – between 1840 and 1843, Sir Felix was faced with a blackmail situation, which was ultimately taken to court. Booth had a second cousin once removed also named Felix Booth, born 1805. The younger Felix, no doubt envious of Sir Felix's wealth, threatened – with the intent to extort money – to reveal to the police that Booth had committed unlawful sexual crimes, namely homosexual relations with a young man named Marr. Booth attended the hearing in Hull Yorkshire, vigorously denying the claims asserted by Felix. Booth admitted to the court that he had fathered a male child with a Scottish woman in Edinburgh that he was very fond of, and had financially assisted the child through his growth years. This situation had made the younger Felix insanely jealous. The 'love child' was referred in the court simply as 'Mr Marr'. The court ruled Booth to be innocent. Felix was found guilty of blackmail and sentenced to twenty years' transportation to Australia. Meanwhile Netherfield House continued to provide a safe haven to which Booth could escape.

Sir Felix died unexpectedly of heart failure while staying in a seaside hotel at Brighton in 1850, aged 69. His funeral procession was staged with all the solemn pageantry of the Victorian period, and passed respectful bare-headed villagers lining the roadside in Edmonton and Stanstead. Six horses, preceded by outriders, drew the hearse, six coaches of mourners followed it and Booth's private carriage, empty of passengers, brought up the rear. It was said that, 'Sir Felix Booth dies generally and justly lamented. He was in every respect a princely citizen of London. His immense wealth, acquired by his own industry, was devoted to the benefit or enjoyment of others. His disposition was amiable and his habits splendid. He took delight in hospitality and in acts of kindness and charity'.

Quite a legacy. And in addition to all of the above, it was also claimed that Booth's Gin was the favourite tipple of both the late Queen and her mother!

Bob Hunt

The brand name 'Booth's Gin' which began in the 1740s by Sir Felix's ancestors, ceased production in 2017 when the owner, Diageo Spirits, sold the name to the American Sazerac Company. It was re-launched, however, in 2022.

The Three Villages Magazine

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Great Amwell Parish Council

With the project to provide four new bus shelters (two on both sides of the A1170 within the parish) now completed, the Parish Council's attention will refocus on future schemes.

One such scheme will be a refurbishment of the War Memorial by the New River in Amwell Lane. Periodic repairs and refurbishments have previously been undertaken by the Parish Council. The Memorial's location by the New River and its construction material are both factors in determining the frequency of maintenance works. The pictures (right) show the Memorial before and after the most recent major refurbishment works in 2014/15.



The Parish Council has been notified by East Herts District Council that it will be removing three litter bins from the parish as part of an efficiency review. The three bins earmarked for removal are located at the Lower Road/Furlong Way junction, Church Path/Caughterly Lane junction and Scott Avenue/Gilpins Gallop junction. The Parish Council lobbied for the bins to be retained but to no avail.

Should any parishioner wish to contact their local East Herts Council Members on this or any other matter within that authority's remit, the details are: Peter Boylan (peter.boyland@eastherts.gov.uk or 01920 822026) and Joseph Dumont (joseph.dumont@eastherts.gov.uk or 07985 664116).

Great Amwell Parish Council meets every second Thursday in each month (except in August) in the Parish Hall, Hillside Lane at 8.00pm. The Annual meetings of the Parish and Parish Council in May commence at 7.30pm.

Jeff Hughes

St Margarets Parish Council

The Parish Council has recently awarded Citizens Advice Bureau East Herts a grant for £500, which will help them to meet the increasing cost of providing the advice service that they deliver to residents of St Margarets and other surrounding villages/towns.

The Parish Council continue to report the flooding issues on Lawrence Avenue/Station Road. All residents are encouraged to continue reporting any problems so that it helps to prioritise any works needed. You can do so here: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/report-a-problem/report-a-highway-fault/flooding/flooding.aspx>

East Hertfordshire District Council is undertaking a Community Governance Review of the civil parishes within the district to enable the council to consider if any changes are needed to the current parish arrangements. The Parish Council recently submitted their views during the first stage of the Review process, and the next steps in the timetable are as follows:

Consideration of submissions/preparation of draft recommendations	January/February 2025 (report to Council meeting 26 February 2025)
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Consultation on draft recommendations

Publication of draft recommendations	3 March 2025
Consultation on draft recommendations/publicity campaign	3 March to 12 May 2025
Deadline for consultation responses	12 May 2025
Consideration of responses/preparation of final recommendations	May/June 2025 (report to Council meeting July 2025)

Decisions & implementation

Publication of final recommendations	July 2025
Council meeting to make any Reorganisation Order	July 2025
Effective date for any revised electoral arrangements	6 May 2027 (next ordinary town/parish council elections)

If you are interested in getting involved with the Parish Council then please contact the Clerk on 07422 582172 or at clerk@stansteadstmargaretsparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Christina Whellams

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Stanstead Abbots Parish Council

The Parish Council has been busy setting the budget for 2025/26. Councillors review the budget annually to ensure there is enough money to maintain the services they provide, such as the CCTV system, the playground and meadow area and the annual Christmas lights.

Where your money goes.

Christmas Lights

The parish council spends approximately £6500 on the Christmas Lights in the High Street every year. Although this is a large amount of money, councillors agree that it is money well spent as residents always comment on how much they like them.



CCTV

The parish council finance the monitoring and maintenance of the CCTV cameras in the village which costs around £6500 a year. Local police officers who attend parish council meetings regularly comment on how useful the footage is when investigating crime in the village.

Village Playground, Meadow and Outdoor Gym

The parish council is responsible for maintaining the High Street playground and meadow as well as the Outdoor Gym, the High Street planters and the flowerbeds in Roydon Road. This costs around £9000 a year.



Grants to local organisations

The parish council sets aside £6000 a year to award grants to local charities, groups and organisations.

Administrative Costs

Although all councillors are unpaid volunteers, the parish council employs a part time clerk to run the administration of the parish council. Other administrative costs include, room hire for meetings, Public Liability Insurance, audit and book keeping services, website maintenance, Wi-Fi for the parish hall and other subscriptions. All these costs account for about £30,000 a year.



Reserves

All councils have to have a minimum amount of money set aside as a reserve in the case of emergencies or unforeseen costs that may arise at any time. A healthy number of reserves should be the equivalent of at least 3 months expenditure to a maximum of 12 months expenditure, it is generally agreed that between 6-12 months is a healthy level of reserves. The parish council expenditure for 2024/25 is approximately £70,000 so a healthy reserve should be around £35,000. The reserves were depleted after improvement works to the playground so we aim to rebuild them over a number of years to get back to the £35,000 we consider a minimum.



Sarah Neighbour

BE READY FOR POLLING DAY

Polling Day is coming up on 1st May, so make sure you are ready! To vote in local and national elections you'll need to have a form of photo ID. You will only need to show one form of photo ID, but it needs to be the original version, and not a photocopy or a digital version.

Here are a few of the most common eligible forms of Photo ID:

- * Passport issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, a British Overseas Territory, an EEA state or a Commonwealth country (including an Irish Passport Card);
- * Driving licence issued by the UK, any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man, or an EEA state (this includes a provisional driving licence);
- * A Blue Badge;
- * Older Person's Bus Pass funded by the UK Government;
- * Disabled Person's Bus Pass funded by the UK Government;
- * Identity card bearing the Proof of Age Standards Scheme hologram (a PASS card);
- * Ministry of Defence Form 90 (Defence Identity Card);
- * Voter Authority Certificate.



To see a full list of eligible forms of Photo ID, visit www.electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id.

Need help? Get in touch with your local electoral registration team (electors@eastherts.gov.uk/01279 655261). They can tell you if you're on the electoral register, or if you've registered for a postal or proxy vote.

The Three Villages Magazine

MEET A LOCAL: DAWN COULTER



Dawn Coulter is a Northern Irish artist based between Stanstead Abbots and Donegal. An incredibly talented artist, with a collection of her work even being bought by Stevie Nicks, Dawn became the first woman to be artist in residence at the Savoy Hotel in London. In 2021, she

wrote and illustrated her first children's book *Bear Shaped*, which was shortlisted for The Waterstones Children's Book Prize. Dawn has recently started teaching afternoon and evening classes in Stanstead Abbots. We caught up with Dawn to find out more about her local life...

How long have you lived locally?

18 months. I'd been looking to move out of North London for a while and a very old character property I was buying in Ware fell through. I was gutted. People kept saying to try Stanstead Abbots and I'd resisted saying 'I don't want to live near the airport' – geography never was a strong point for me! I remember driving over the bridge by The Jolly Fisherman and being really taken aback at how pretty it all was. I put in an offer before I'd even left the house. I still have days of feeling so lucky to have found this place.

Where is your favourite place to eat locally?

Oh this is tricky. My partner Gary and I love The Taste of Raj on the High Street and Hussein welcomes us like relatives who've been gone for years every time we go in. But the food in The Red Lion next door is incredible too. They do a pasta dish that tastes like it's just been flown in from Rome. So I'm chickening out with a tie there.

What is your favourite local shop?

The Donna Reeves Art shop has more beautiful well-priced art and bits and bobs than is fair for temptation.

What is your favourite book?

At the moment my favourite book is *Circe* by Madeleine Miller. It gave me a wonderful sense of empowerment of how wonderful life can be in your own company, when you have to start over from scratch. It's beautifully written. Miller absolutely paints in words.

If you could invite any four people to dinner, living or dead, who would they be and why?

Assuming I can cheat here by having Gary help me cook and my daughters Martha and Grace both milling around, I would choose Tony Hart (loved him and Morph when I was little and

I would often daydream about having a picture up in The Gallery); Mary Hughes (my art teacher in secondary school. I'd love to show her what I've managed to achieve and thank her for her encouragement back in the day); Shirley Hughes (whose illustration style was always an inspiration to me); and Nigella Lawson (in case it all goes wrong in the kitchen while I am trying to impress the late Shirley Hughes!).

What do you love about your work?

I suppose that my 'work' spans so much for me. Currently I teach art to children who are sectioned in a mental health unit and it is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I also teach art to adults to help them reconnect with their creative side. I'm an artist producing my own work. I also want to write and illustrate another children's book. For me, being a creative isn't just about producing my own creative work, but being able to reach other people and proving that anyone can draw/paint/create.

What motivates you?

Finding, creating and unearthing beauty in the everyday, overlooked, taken for granted moments and things, and having other people see it too.

Could you tell us about an achievement that makes you particularly proud?

Aside from my girls – my two best creations – it's probably *Bear Shaped*. I'd just been turned down for a Masters course in drawing that I really wanted. Initially I kept insisting it was fine then I stopped, admitted to myself it wasn't 'fine' and allowed myself 24 hours to wallow. At the end of that wallow I decided I needed to do something else. I wrote my first ever book the next day. Now it's in eight languages and I still have people tell me how moved they were by it, how it helped someone in a grieving process or how a child they know felt 'seen' by the representation of a neurodivergent character.

What is your favourite thing about living in the villages?

To open my kitchen door every morning to nothing but birds, rabbits and trees is a dream. People have been so welcoming and, while trying to get my art classes off the ground, I'm getting to know more locals and feeling more part of a warm and eclectic community.

Dawn's art class meets on a Thursday in The Lounge at The Maltings, Stanstead Abbots. A new monthly life drawing evening class started at The Lounge on Wednesday 19th February. Places are limited, so book in advance. Evening classes in The Red Lion will start again very soon and Dawn has plans to run afternoon or morning classes once new venues are found. You can find out more at www.pencilsatdawn.com. If you are interested in classes, school author visits or tutoring, you can email Dawn at dawncoulter@me.com.

CHARITY FOCUS: COMMUNITY ALLIANCE BROXBOURNE AND EAST HERTS

Community Alliance Broxbourne and East Herts is a small charity based in Stanstead Abbots. They support local voluntary organisations, empower community groups, build local partnerships and improve residents' lives. Visit communityalliancebeh.org.uk for more information about Community Alliance's projects and services.

Car Scheme

Calling all drivers in East Herts. The Community Car Scheme for Broxbourne and East Herts needs your help!

Could you use your car to help those in the local community to get around more easily? Are you friendly, reliable and compassionate and enjoy helping people and driving?



Community Alliance Broxbourne and East Herts are looking for volunteer drivers to support its Community Car Scheme that helps vulnerable, elderly and less mobile residents living in East Herts and Broxbourne to get to and from essential appointments. This is a flexible volunteering role that can fit perfectly around your commitments with no minimum time commitment whatsoever! Car Scheme Volunteer Drivers receive 50p for each mile driven and will experience great life stories and enjoy the heartfelt appreciation that is guaranteed along the way!

To join our dedicated team of Volunteer Drivers, call 0300 123 1677 or email our Volunteer and Community Car Scheme Coordinator, Sarah Coles, at sarahc@communityalliancebeh.org.uk. For more information, visit the Community Car Scheme Driver Role description on Community Alliance's website.

Digital Skills

FREE Digital Skills Sessions in Your Community at Nigel Copping Community Building in Stanstead Abbots!

Are you tired of not finding your way around your phone, laptop or tablet? Do you want to get to grips with using your tech to your advantage and feel comfortable and safe online? Our volunteer Digital Champions are here to help with all things digital. Whether you're a beginner or looking to sharpen your skills, everyone is welcome!

Make 2025 your year of digital confidence.



Call 0300 123 1034 if you would like to know more, or reserve your space via email to sarahc@communityalliancebeh.org.uk. Alternatively, visit 'Digital Skills Sessions' under Projects on communityalliancebeh.org.uk to view all session dates.



Community Alliance

BROXBOURNE & EAST HERTS

Find us at: Nigel Copping Community Building, 88 Sanville Gardens, Stanstead Abbots, Herts. SG12 8GA.

Sarah Coles

Volunteer & Community Car Scheme Coordinator

The Three Villages Magazine

BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: ELITE DIRECT



Mandy McCarthy is the owner of Elite Direct and is known to very many people in the local community for her teaching, massage and sports rehabilitation work. As a schoolgirl, Mandy was eager to go on the stage and she excelled at dance and drama. She has always been very fit and she ran for her school and the county, Middlesex. However, after beginning her first job, which was in a gym, her employer – who danced and modelled – introduced Mandy to teaching and she loved it.

Mandy trained as a Sports Therapist at the Surrey Rayworth Centre and returned to live in the Lea Valley – moving North from Enfield to Waltham Cross, then Turnford and eventually to Stanstead Abbots. Mandy took a while to lose her London instinctive suspicion as the friendliness of people in the village wasn't something she was used to.

Over the last 30 years, Mandy has taught at various times aerobics, step, spinning, dance, Zumba and kick-boxing while she continues to teach Pilates and Yoga. Along the way, Mandy has owned an agency, which was recruiting fitness trainers for her clients. Indeed one of her clients has stayed with Mandy for 29 years! After closing the agency, Mandy ran her own gym in Hertford where she employed 15 people. The enterprise proved to be very hard work but really enjoyable as Mandy organised a variety of facilities in it. Unfortunately, things were quite tricky at the gym when a night club was opened upstairs, seriously detracting from the ambience required for yoga and meditation – amongst the other activities.

Mandy has several Pilates and Yoga classes going on in the village, and many clients who benefit from her rehab massages and personal training have come to her via the classes. However she continues to want to develop her knowledge and skills in order to offer even more help and advice to her clients. She plans to qualify in Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, which will help people to take more control over their lives and the ways they can avoid poor nutrition and overcome phobias and addictions. As a personal trainer, she often acts as a mentor/counsellor and CBT seems like the natural progression.



**ELITE
DIRECT**

BRINGING HEALTH &
FITNESS TO YOU

Yoga and Pilates have been her passions since she attended yoga classes, aged seven, with her grandmother. Mandy feels more should be done in schools to advise on nutrition and to introduce yoga and meditation, which can especially help with neurodiversity. School children should be encouraged to have good posture and healthy living: she admits that she sometimes finds it hard not to ask those close to her to stand up properly in public!

If you would like to try a first class for free and you live in the one of the three villages do get in touch with Mandy by email (mandy@elitedirect.co) or on her mobile (07854 759426).

Julia Davies

HAVE YOU FOLLOWED US ONLINE?

- * Check out our **website**: thethreevillages.com
- * Subscribe to our **News & Events Blog**: thethreevillages.com/news-events
- * Follow/like our **Facebook page**: @TheThreeVillagesMagazine

Online is the place to go for the latest news and information about up-coming events in the three villages of Great Amwell, St Margarets and Stanstead Abbots.



UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



St Andrew's Church of England (VC) Primary School

St Andrew's welcomed Mr Michael Speed as our new Headteacher this term. He has settled well and is loving becoming a new member of our St Andrew's family. He has been particularly interested in finding out all about the school's curriculum. With the support of Dr Collins, our science subject lead, the children have been showing off their practical science skills.



Year 4 children learnt about tooth decay, and designed and conducted an investigation into the effects of different liquids on their teeth. Eggs were used for the investigation as their shells share some properties with the enamel in our teeth. The children had to consider how to keep it a fair test by measuring each liquid carefully. They then eagerly waited to observe changes over time.

Year 3 made crystals as they explored the process in rock formation. Year 6 looked at how water is transported around the body. They investigated the process of osmosis using potatoes and salt water, and made a model of the kidneys. The children learnt that their kidneys contain a million tiny sieves called Nephrons, which filter out waste and excess water. They used filter paper in their experiment and saw the coloured water had been cleaned as it left their 'bladder'.

Our curriculum has also included a number of exciting trips. Last term Year 6 visited Stanstead Bury Farm where they took part in a number of activities including gardening in The Walled Garden, a history tour of St James' Church and Stanstead Bury House. They also went down into the ice house!

Our Reception class went on their first school trip of the year to Pizza Express in Welwyn Garden City. The children made their own pizza and learnt about all the different jobs people do in a restaurant. The children loved squashing out the sticky dough, spreading the sauce and adding a generous cheese topping. They even got to take their creations home with them and the trip led to some wonderful role play, both in and out of the classroom.



Year 4 visited the British Museum where they looked at the stunning sculptures and artefacts excavated from Ancient Egypt. The children became historical detectives trying to work out what some of the objects were and deducing what they told them about this ancient civilization. This term we have a number of R.E based visits, such as the Year 2 visit to St Alban's Cathedral and the Years 3 and 4 Faith Tour where they will visit a Mosque. Years 5 and 6 are going on their exciting residential trip to Aylmerton, Norfolk. To conclude the Spring Term, we have our Years 3 and 4 Easter production. Mr Speed has certainly begun his tenure as Headteacher at a very busy time.



Helen Gillingham

The Three Villages Magazine

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



St John the Baptist CE VA Primary

Our Autumn Term was an active one, with our children participating in a number of sporting activities. Year 3 enjoyed their time at Wodson Park for a sports development day: 'We loved it. We tried boxing, bowling, curling, skipping, badminton, noughts and crosses, boccia and circuits. Our favourites were boxing, curling and noughts and crosses. We also enjoyed badminton and achieved our Racket Pack Stage 1 certificates'. Our netball and football teams enjoyed their first friendly fixture, with our football team winning their match. A team of girls from Years 5 and 6 participated in a Tag Rugby Festival: 'Everyone played amazingly, but our player of the festival was Ivy Caudle for tagging everyone and being an energetic team member'. Years 1 and 2 attended the Everyone In Festival and children in Years 3–6 competed against other local schools at cross country running.



The children enjoyed visiting the Coram SCARF tent, for workshops on mental health and well-being as part of our Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) curriculum. Harald the Giraffe helped the children to learn and practise strategies to help them when faced with a new challenge and to develop their growth mind-set. Year 6 enjoyed a session aimed particularly on well-being online. As a school we marked Anti-Bullying Week with a range of activities. This year our focus was on respecting differences. The children expressed

how much they had enjoyed learning skills to help them disagree respectfully in discussions, and how this had helped them in negotiating issues with friends on the playground.



We were very pleased as a team of staff and governors, that the work on our school vision was identified as an example of good practice, as stated in The Annual Report of the National Director of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) 2023–24. Much like the Ofsted Annual Report, this report highlights good practice identified in inspections, and used as a guide for other schools to follow. The Annual Report stated:

The governors of St John the Baptist VA Primary School root their monitoring activity in the vision to 'run with perseverance the race marked out for us'. They use this vision as a lens through which they monitor the school's work, before evaluating the effectiveness of policy and practice in the same way. As a result, they are able to say with evidence-based confidence that the vision is 'the rope that ties the whole of the school's offer together'.

The Annual Report of the National Director of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) 2023–24, p. 17, paragraph 1:24. Based on evidence from our SIAMS inspection in October 2023.

Our term ended with an Ofsted Inspection. Please do check our website to read the inspection report and to find out more about what goes at St John's: www.sjbaptist.herts.sch.uk.

Lydia Hunt, Headteacher

UPDATES FROM OUR LOCAL SCHOOLS



Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College

Every1 In Festival

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College is based in Stanstead Abbots and provides education for 174 children with Severe and Complex Learning Difficulties.

Class 5 pupils went to the Every1 In Festival on Wednesday 4th December 2024, held at Allenburys Sports & Social Club in Ware. The Every1 In Festival is a sports event for children in Years 5 and 6. Activities at the festival include archery, volleyball, speed stacking and bowls.

The Class 5 teacher, Amanda Hayter, said 'the pupils made me so proud, they joined in and practised their PE skills. Volleyball was a new sport for most of the pupils; they all enjoyed playing as a team to send the ball over the net to their peers. We especially liked the bowls and appreciated the help given by Eddie from the Bowls Club.'

Head of PE, Lucy McFayden, said 'Events like this one are so important for our pupils. It gives them the chance to take part in different sports and use the skills they have learnt in their PE Lessons at school. It is a great opportunity for our pupils to socialise in a wider community environment, both with pupils and volunteers from local schools.'

Janet Warrington, School Business Manager



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IT**

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PUZZLES

QUIZ: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea?
2. Which philosopher wrote *The Republic*?
3. In what year did the Berlin Wall fall?
4. Which element has the atomic number 79?
5. Who was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize?
6. What is the only country to have a flag that is not rectangular or square?
7. What is the term for a word that is the same forward and backward?
8. What is the name of the longest-running Broadway musical of all time?
9. What is the smallest country in the world by land area?
10. What is the name of the smallest bone in the human body?
11. Which bird is the national symbol of the United States?
12. Which British author wrote *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?

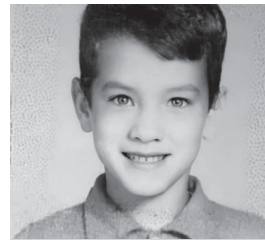


WORDSEARCH: BREEDS OF CAT

F T A C I C O T P T H B P
R A B A W W H R O A U U N
P R I R S M Q A A Y R R Q
L O R O G G R S U Z G M J
O K M M S N N A I S R E P
Y S A J I U I V G B I S R
B E N G A L K A M D I E G
F V T P M E H N O J O H R
Y I K A E B C N A E M L A
H M N E S E N A V A J X L
T X N S E N U H E U R X A
E B D Y A B M O B J Z D R
I C K I H U I B E G V S E

BENGAL	MUNCHKIN
BIRMAN	MANX
BOMBAY	NEBELUNG
BURMESE	OCICAT
CHAUSIE	PERSIAN
JAVANESE	RAGDOLL
KORAT	SAVANNAH
SIAMESE	TOYGER

GUESS WHO



Picture 1
(Image: JetPunk)



Picture 4
(Image: The List)



Picture 2
(Image: The Lab)



Picture 5
(Image: StoryMapJS)



Picture 3
(Image: Daily Mail)



Picture 6
(Image: The Lab)

HOPE IN ACTION

I remember the day I left the hospital, which in itself was a miracle, more about that later. I put my clothes on and was waiting for some medication to be given to me to combat an infection I'd caught in my weakened state.

For anyone who has never tried to leave a hospital bed, never let them allow you to wait for medication after you have been allowed to go home. This situation ends in madness! I was told to go home by the doctor who, 6 days before, had told me I was going to die! At this stage let me fill in the blanks. I was a hopeless drug addict and it had finally killed me.

Let's flash back to my gangster days. I never used the products I provided, that only started to happen when I had decided to leave criminality or rather buy my way out! You are not allowed to just stop being a criminal, you must buy your way out as money buys trust up to a point. After I was out, I fell into a full-blown rockstar complex, which involved singing in an almost successful band – travelling, drinking and taking part in all the things society tells you not to!

Anyway, back to the hospital. When I arrived 6 days earlier, I had a terrible rash on my legs, as my kidneys had finally given up and admitted defeat. Then followed my liver and then the whole deal decided it had had enough of my behaviour and life was over. As it turns out my body hadn't given up but something that never happens happened to me. My body stopped working so it could reboot and let me get back to life!



After having made peace with my impending death it was then swapped out for more life. That was 15 years ago, and I haven't used drugs again since. The real reality of dying due to the disease of addiction was enough to give me the strength to live and not use drugs.

You never stop being an addict, but you can break the cycles of addiction. This restructuring of your life means you do not need a substance to control what you do and how you behave! I used to say I'm an ex-addict but sadly once you have been identified as addict, that title will never leave you.

Why am I telling you all this!? I'm telling you this to show that people do get to leave the cycles of addiction behind and in some cases, lucky as mine was, get to live a life where helping people becomes more important than the search for substances. The style I wrote this in is one of chaos jumping here and there. This was done to show you just a little bit what an addicts brain looks like.

Hope in Action is a group meeting not just for addicts like me, but for people who are worried about others with substance misuse problems or worried about their own heavy use or drinking. Full-blown addicts who are looking for some real help too are welcome.

Addiction takes away your ability to make a decision about taking a drug or having a drink, as addiction is when you are no longer in control of the decision to use or not. The decision is made for you by the substance and when that happens you no longer get to steer your own life.

I am still here and am now eager to help others who are lost or worried, and I have enough abstinent time away from using to be able to have clarity about how to help!

Jim Aitkin-Ballard

Hope in Action **Addiction, Heavy Use and Concern Group**



Wednesdays

5:00 – 6:30pm

**St Mary's Church, St Margarets
(on Hoddesdon Road)**

The Three Villages Magazine

REGULAR CLUBS, GROUPS AND MEETINGS IN THE THREE VILLAGES

1st Stanstead Abbots Brownies: Mondays 5.45–7pm (The Wilshere Hall) for girls aged 7 to 10 years. Guider in charge: Helen Payne (01920 462676).

Great Amwell Scout Group: Squirrels: boys and girls aged 4–5 years old, Beavers: boys and girls aged 6–8 years old, Cubs: boys and girls aged 8–10½ years old, Scouts: boys and girls aged 10½–14 years old. All groups meet at Scout HQ, 142 London Road, Ware SG12 9NH. For details visit www.greatamwellscouts.org.uk or call 01920 320142.

1st Stanstead Abbots & St Margarets Scout Group: Age groups as above. All groups meet at Scout HQ, Marsh Lane, Stanstead Abbots SG12 8QT. For details visit www.stansteadabbottsscouts.org.uk or follow on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

Community Hub Drop-in: Offers a safe space for anyone in the community who is in need of a listening ear or practical help. During winter months this is a Warm Welcome Space. Meets every Wednesday, 10:30–11:30am at St Mary's Church, St Margarets.

Great Amwell Women's Club: Every 1st & 3rd Wednesday 7.30–10pm at the Parish Hall, Great Amwell. Club Secretary: Dulcie Fordham. Contact number for enquiries: 01920 466689 (Christine).

Herts Wheelers (Cycling Club): Weekly Sunday club rides for various abilities normally starting in Ware. Contact membership@herts-wheelers.org.uk.

The Amwell Society: Quarterly talks in the Parish Hall, Great Amwell, as well as trips, walks and activities locally. For details of membership contact William Brown on 01920 872450 (Chairman).

Stanstead Abbots Local History Society: Chairman, Rosemary James. Regular meetings for both members and non-members. For details visit: www.salhs.org.uk. For membership details email: admin@salhs.org.uk.

St Margaretsbury Tennis Club: A friendly club with social sessions on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturday and Sunday mornings, plus a junior section, coaching available, and opportunity to play match tennis in local leagues. For details contact: secretary@stmargaretsburytennis.co.uk or come along to a social morning.

'Armchair Singers' for everyone: A chance to eat, drink, sing and quiz all in one afternoon. Fun, fun, fun. Held in the Nigel Copping Community Centre every Monday 1.30–3.30pm. Singing for health and well-being. All ages welcome. For more details please contact Gabby Hanley (07875221543).

St Margaretsbury Cricket Club: A friendly cricket club that welcomes all ages and abilities. Email info@stmcc.org.uk for more information.

St Margaretsbury Football Club: A Chartered Standard local football club for Youth, Ladies' and Men's football, with youth starting from 6 years upwards in non-competitive leagues, and more competitive as they move up into Under 18s', Ladies' and Men's Football. Contact: Club Secretary at <https://stmargaretsburyfc.leaguerepublic.com/contacts.html>.

Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall Table Tennis Club: A friendly club meeting on Friday afternoons from 2pm, and Thursday evenings from 7.30pm with the opportunity to play in local leagues. For further details please call 07841 583256 or email saphttc@yahoo.com – or just come along!

Carpet Bowls Club: Our Carpet Bowls club meets every Tuesday from 7pm in Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall. We are an all-inclusive sport, suitable for all ages and abilities. Our members range in age from 9 to 90. No need to bring any equipment, everything is provided. First night is free. Come along and give it a try! For more details contact Pete (Tel: 07429142525 / Email: pmcook1@hotmail.co.uk).

St Andrew's Church Card-making Group: We meet in The Wilshere Hall starting at 1pm on the first and third Tuesdays every month. The cost is £4 per session to cover materials used and two cards will be made each session. We have a break midway for refreshments, which is included in cost. New members welcome – please contact Janet Dance on 07941096834.

Just Friends: a group for widows, widowers and divorced or separated people. We meet as friends to support each other, arrange activities and share names of trusted tradespeople. Meeting every 2nd Tuesday and 4th Thursday. If interested, please contact Mary (maryhallett14@gmail.com / 07899 861297 or 01920 870527).

Bell Ringing at St John the Baptist, Great Amwell: We meet every Thursday at 7.30pm until 9.00pm. A new skill for all ages to stimulate the brain and keep you fit. Just come along or contact Frances Adams 07876 496654 / fmadams50@yahoo.co.uk.

Coffee and Coping Hertfordshire: A community support hub that aims to build community, curtail loneliness in the older generation and help support our veterans. Meeting every Wednesday 12–1.30pm & 5–6.30pm, and Friday 12–1.30pm, in The Ashlea Room at Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall.

If you would like to add a club, group or meeting to this list, please send details to print.threevillagesmagazine@gmail.com.

ARMCHAIR SINGERS



Armchair Singers has been running since January 2019 and serves our local village communities. We believe singing is one of the best medicines for general well-being and good health. Since starting we have blossomed, to

include exercises and a quiz. This keeps our mind and body fit and raring to go; ready to tackle any problems that may come their way. Members have been seen leaving the building singing and dancing, and it's a rainy Monday afternoon! Life is to be lived not endured; spirits lifted and comfort given. This is why Armchair Singers is such a special activity. As one of our members Enid says, 'I come away knowing that I have been with friends.'

Without our wonderful volunteers there wouldn't be Armchair Singers, so a great big 'thank you' to Ann, Elizabeth, Jill, Mary and Nathalie.

If you are free Monday afternoon at 1.30pm, come and join us at the Nigel Copping Centre. Give it a go, you may surprise yourself!

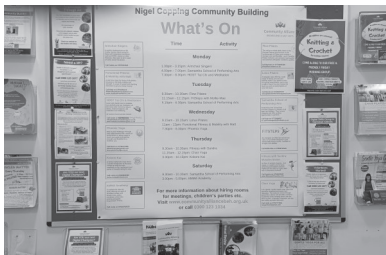
Gabby Henley

Improve your happiness join Armchair Singers 4 reasons why

- 01** Tackling quizzes with a cup of tea and a slice of cake
- 02** Fun exercising to music with your friends
- 03** Singing songs from different eras with gusto and enthusiasm
- 04** Sharing a happy, relaxed afternoon, that will set you up for the whole week.

When Where
Mondays 1.30 to 3pm
Nigel Copping Centre SG12 8GA

MATT HALFHIDE FITNESS AT NIGEL COPPING COMMUNITY BUILDING



Many of our readers like to go along to the Nigel Copping Community Building (located on the corner of Sanville Gardens and Hoddessdon Road in St Margarets) to participate in the varied activities available. In particular, those who have suffered strokes or other life-changing events go there for social and therapy reasons. Examples of such activities are the Armchair Singers on Monday with Gabby Hanley and the Craft Club with Jackie who teaches knitting and crochet, and widens clients' ideas and knowledge of how they can be put to use.

In particular the exercise classes have made a major difference to people recovering their mobility after strokes. 'Functional Fitness & Mobility' by Matt Halfhide on Wednesday at 11am until 12 noon is a session focused on full body strength and mobility with a range of seated and standing exercises, which is suitable for all. 'Strength and Mobility' with Matt runs on Friday (11am to 12pm) and is suitable for those who can get onto a yoga mat on the floor. It is an all-in-one class that includes yoga, strength training, light cardio, balance and mobility – all you need to bring is your yoga mat.

Matt has been an instructor for many years and specialises in fitness for the over 50s. He runs the classes, but he is also like a personal trainer in that he can provide help at home to those needing physiotherapy. If you would like to find out more, you can contact Matt by email (matthalfhidefitness@gmail.com) or you can check out his website (matthalfhidefitness.com).



Julia Davies

The Three Villages Magazine

POEM BY LYNNE HERAUD

THE HIGH STREET

On walking down the High Street
I soon become aware that
On our pavements, in our gutters
There is rubbish everywhere

Plastic bottles, sandwich wraps
And cardboard cups galore
Crisp packets and dog-ends
And we don't want any more

There are bins in various places
To pop your rubbish in
And if they're full then take it home
and put it in YOUR bin

A clean and tidy High Street
Would benefit us all
So don't drop your litter everywhere
But rally to this call

Pride in our surroundings
Is something that we lack
So please let's make an effort
And try to get it back.

Here's hoping ...

by Lynne Heraud

RECIPE: EASTER FUDGE

This four-ingredient Easter fudge is a fun treat everyone will love. It is easy and only takes 5 minutes to make (not including the chilling time)!

INGREDIENTS

Chocolate chips
Sweetened condensed milk
Mini marshmallows
Mini chocolate eggs



METHOD

1. Pour the chocolate chips into a microwave-safe bowl and then pour sweetened condensed milk over the top.
2. Pop into a microwave for 2.5 to 3 minutes until the mixture is hot and the chocolate begins to melt.
3. Carefully stir the mixture until the chocolate chips have completely melted and the chocolate is smooth, then add the marshmallows.
4. Line a pan (ideally 8x8-inch) with grease-proof paper and pour in half the mini chocolate eggs into the bottom.
5. Pour the mixture into the pan and spread evenly. Top with the remaining mini chocolate eggs.
6. Place into the fridge to chill. It should take about 45 minutes.
7. Once cool, cut roughly into squares. If you cut the 8x8-inch fudge into 6 strips then each strip into 6 pieces, you will end up with 36 pieces of fudge a little over a 1-inch by 1-inch each.
8. Store in an air-tight container. It will last about a week at room temperature or several weeks in the fridge.

Anna Bond

TAKE YOUR NEXT STEP IN FOOTBALL WITH ST MARGARETSBURY FOOTBALL CLUB!

Are you part of a youth football team looking for the right environment to grow and enjoy the game? St Margaretsbury Football Club is inviting youth teams of all skill levels to join our club for the 2025/26 season!

Based at The Recreation Ground in Stanstead St Margarets, Hertfordshire, SG12 8EH, we're committed to providing a positive and supportive space where young players can develop, compete and – most importantly – love football. Whether your team is aiming for higher leagues or simply looking to improve together, we're here to help.



Here's what we offer:

- Competitive opportunities in leagues like EJA, JPL, SCFYL, and Mid Herts;
- Quality facilities, including floodlit pitch and changing rooms;
- A members' clubhouse with a bar and hall for team events and social gatherings;
- Affordable rates that include home and away kits.

At St Margaretsbury Football Club, it's not just about stars – it's about fostering a love for football, building confidence and creating a place where every young player can thrive.

Ready to join us? Let's get started!

Contact Gavin Wood, Head of Youth, on 07939 681170 or email gavin.wood79@yahoo.com.

St Margaretsbury Football Club – where every player finds their place. Get in touch today!



ST MARGARETSBURY FC
...is inviting enquiries from Youth Teams to join us for the 2025/26 season



- Pathway to Senior 1st Team Football
- Leagues: *EJA / *JPL / *SCFYL / Mid Herts
- Members Clubhouse with Bar and Hall
- Good rates that inc' Home/Away kits
- *Changing Rooms & Floodlights

Contact Head of Youth:
Gavin 07939 681170
gavin.wood79@yahoo.com

CONTACT
US NOW



ANNE ROBSON HELPLINE

If you or someone close to you is dying, you can talk to us.

At the Anne Robson Trust we aim to be there to listen to anyone who faces dying or the imminent death of someone they care about. We know that facing the end of life can leave you feeling isolated and alone.

Being able to access support is so important. Gaining knowledge of what may happen towards the end of life and being prepared helps both the person dying and their loved ones to feel a sense of control.

Call us on **0808 801 0688** – we have time to talk. Calls are free and confidential.

Visit www.annerobsontrust.org.uk/helpline-service to find out more.



The Three Villages Magazine

GLOBAL REACH, LOCAL ROOTS: FROM STANSTEAD ABBOTTS TO THE WORLD

For over 120 years, we have been proud that French & Jupps has been a mainstay of the Stanstead Abbots community. Rooted in tradition and committed to innovation, we have grown from a local maltster to a global supplier of high-quality roasted malt, producing our handcrafted malt through time-honoured techniques.

Throughout our journey, the local community has remained at the heart of our mission. We've consistently strived to give back to the local area, from funding swimming lessons at St Andrew's Primary School to refurbishing the Scout Hut, sponsoring the junior football team in Sawbridgeworth and funding the installation of the Maltster statue in Ware high street.

While our reach has now expanded globally, the core of our business remains the production of handcrafted roasted malt, a key ingredient in countless award-winning beers. Local breweries like McMullen's in Hertford have long relied on French & Jupps to provide them with the finest quality malt, ensuring the continued enjoyment of fine beers within our community.



As we expand globally, we're proud to share that at the end of 2024 we embarked on an exciting new chapter by partnering with Pro Brew Supply in Texas, USA, who will now be distributing our malts into America. To celebrate this milestone back home, we sought to create a unique and festive beer that would not only resonate with our local community, but also brewing communities across the pond. Given that Thanksgiving is a significant holiday in Texas, featuring pecan pie as a favourite state dessert, we felt inspired to develop a beer that captured the essence of this seasonal treat. However, could we create a beer that resembles a dessert? With the help of North London brewery, Hackney Church Brew Co., the answer was yes!

With the talented team at Hackney Church Brew Co. and their expertise, we embarked on this ambitious project. Utilising eight of our fourteen unique malt varieties, alongside pecan nibs and vanilla, they skilfully crafted 'Yippee Pie-Yay' – a bold stout that truly embodies the flavours of a homemade Texas pecan pie. Drawing inspiration from the iconic holiday action film Die Hard, the name reflects the beer's robust character and pays homage to the film's lead, Bruce Willis. Furthermore, to honour the spirit of the season and acknowledge Bruce Willis's recent Dementia diagnosis, we collectively pledged to donate 20p from every can sold to Dementia UK.



To bring this collaborative effort back to our local roots, we connected with The Hop Box in Ware, a renowned local and independent craft beer establishment, located just a short distance from the very fields where our barley is grown. Tom and the team were delighted to get involved and ordered Yippee Pie-Yay from Hackney Church to share this unique brew on their taps over Christmas.

While Yippee Pie-Yay has now stopped pouring, shining a light on local establishments like The Hop Box is incredibly important to us. This is where we believe local brewing journeys can come full circle, returning local product to the glasses of those who have often helped make the beers, and fostering lasting relationships within our community, both locally and globally.

As we look ahead to 2025, we want to raise a glass to the future and our local community, as we continue to craft our specialty malts for exceptional local and international businesses and foster a thriving brewing community for many years to come, right here from Stanstead Abbots.

James Marinos, Marketing and Sales Manager at French & Jupps

HALL & CO ACCOUNTANCY: EXPERT GUIDANCE FROM THE MALTINGS BUSINESS CENTRE

Based at Unit 96 in The Maltings Business Centre, Hall & Co Accountancy is a trusted partner for both businesses and individuals in the local community. With a wealth of experience and a client-focused approach, Hall & Co provides comprehensive accounting and taxation services tailored to meet your unique needs.

Led by Tim and Michelle Hall, seasoned chartered accountants, alongside Leia King (MCIPP), Hall & Co offers a wide range of services with over two decades of experience. As Tim explains, 'At Hall & Co, we provide a client-focused service, tailored around you and your business. Whether you are an established business looking for a new advisor, or are a start-up needing advice on all aspects of running your own business, we are here to help.'



Tim Hall FCA FCCA



Michelle Hall ACA



Leia King MCIPP

In addition, Hall & Co provides expert guidance on all aspects of Personal Accounting, such as tax affairs, self-assessment tax returns, tax planning and estate planning. They also offer specialised services, including Service Charge Accounts

As Tim emphasises, 'Whatever your accounting and needs, we have the expertise to ensure your business affairs are set up in a tax efficient manner whilst managing the admin burden of meeting regulatory requirements.' You'll gain access to expert guidance from a highly qualified and experienced team, ensuring your financial affairs are managed with the utmost professionalism.



In addition to their paid-for personalised services, for anyone looking to advance their financial knowledge, Hall & Co has also launched their free monthly newsletter, packed with advice for anyone looking to take advantage of their regular updates relevant to financial planning and regulatory updates. This is in addition to a wealth of accessible tools and resources on their website, including calculators for estate valuation, loans and more – invaluable tools as we look ahead to the new tax year.

With a client-focused approach, Hall & Co Accountancy always offer a personalised service tailored to your specific needs, ensuring your unique requirements are met. 'We provide a fixed fee service so you know in advance what you will be charged and our general advice is included in the price so you will never receive an unexpected bill,' Michelle explains.

So, if you're looking to take on the new financial year with a new venture, advance your existing business or personal finances, get in touch with Hall & Co today to discuss your accounting and financial needs for a free consultation.

Hall & Co

Hall & Co Accountancy Ltd
Unit 96, The Maltings Business Centre, Roydon Road
Stanstead Abbots
Herts
SG12 8HG

Tel: 01920 872148
Email: enquiries@hallandcoaccountancy.co.uk
Web: www.hallandcoaccountancy.co.uk

PLANNED CLOSURE OF RYE MEADS RSPB RESERVE



The Visitor Centre at Rye Meads

Rye Meads, one of Hertfordshire's treasured wildlife havens and a world-recognised Ramsar marshland site, is facing an uncertain future and many of us are deeply concerned about what this means for our local community. For over 50 years, the RSPB reserve has been a peaceful retreat for nature lovers, birdwatchers, families and anyone seeking a quiet escape in the countryside. However, in a surprising move, the RSPB has announced plans to close the reserve. This has left many of us, who've spent countless hours there, wondering what will happen to this beloved place.

The reserve that spans 400 acres has long been a home for a wide variety of wildlife, including kingfishers, otters, water voles and a huge range of birds. It's also a key stop for migratory birds along the Lee Valley Wetland Corridor. Its role in supporting local biodiversity and as a peaceful spot for the public can't be overstated. For many of us, it's been more than just a nature reserve – it's been a sanctuary where we can connect with the natural world.

However the closure is part of the RSPB's broader plan to address financial challenges. They've been struggling with reduced income and, unfortunately, some of their smaller reserves just aren't financially viable anymore. Though the decision to close Rye Meads was clearly not made lightly, it's left a lot of us confused.

Over the years, Rye Meads has become a place where so many of us have shared special moments. It's been a hub for environmental education, with school groups visiting to learn about conservation, and its trails, bird hides and seasonal events like the autumn migration watch have created lasting memories for families. It's hard to imagine our community without it.

That said, it's important to remember that while the reserve may be closing, it doesn't necessarily mean the end for Rye Meads itself. The RSPB has said it will continue to advocate for the protection of the wildlife here, and some local conservation groups – such as the Herts and Essex Wildlife Trust have already been asked to look at ways to ensure this area's ecological value is preserved. So, while this is a difficult time, it's not the end of the road yet.



Water vole corner



Ashby hide



Sign to Kingfisher Hub

The closure highlights just how tough things are for environmental charities these days. With rising costs to maintain large sites and fewer donations coming in, it's becoming harder to keep places like Rye Meads open. However, the outpouring of support from the local community shows just how much this place means to all of us, and it's clear that the fight to protect our local green spaces is more important than ever.

For now Rye Meads is open, and the remaining staff-members are maintaining the site and welcoming visitors. If you haven't been for a while, it's worth making a trip to enjoy the peace and quiet, watch the wildlife and appreciate the beauty of this special place. Let's all hope that this isn't the last chapter for Rye Meads, and that it can continue to inspire and serve our community for many years to come.

Anna Bond and Julia Davies

DIRECTORY OF USEFUL NUMBERS

THE 3 CHURCHES BENEFICE

Priest in Charge

Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870115/07488 914972

Lay Ministers

Mrs Elizabeth Goldsmith 01920 422065

Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

Mrs Rachel Melrose 01920 422092

Great Amwell with St Margarets

Churchwardens: Mr Richard and

Mrs Margaret Mellor 01920 460474

Assistant Churchwardens: Mr Martin and

Mrs Sue Vaughan 01920 877779

Mr Bryan Brace 01992 447845

Organists: Mrs Jill Hall 01279 842328

Mrs Lynda Harrington 01992 422398

PCC Secretary: Mr Richard Mellor 01920 460474

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

St John the Baptist, Great Amwell

Treasurer: Mr Richard Mellor 01920 460474

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870115

Wedding enquiries: Mrs Alex Richardson 01920 871391

St Mary the Virgin, St Margarets

Primary contact: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

Treasurer: Mrs Lyn Paddon 01920 487717

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870115

Wedding enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870115

Stanstead Abbots

Churchwarden: Mr Peter Melrose 01920 422092

Organist: Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

PCC Secretary: Mrs Michele Ross 07783 443332

Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Michele Ross 07783 443332

St Andrew, Stanstead Abbots

Treasurer: Mr Edward Trower 07919 003949

Baptism enquiries: Rev'd Dr Sarah Forrest 01920 870115

Wedding enquiries: Mrs Lynne Griffiths 01920 460668

PARISH COUNCILS

Stanstead Abbots

Parish Council Clerk: Ms Sarah Neighbour 07943 602877

Great Amwell

Parish Council Clerk: Mr Jeff Hughes 07736 172533

Stanstead St Margarets

Parish Council Clerk: Ms Christina Whellams 07422 582172

SCHOOLS

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College,
Stanstead Abbots 01920 870027

St Andrew's C of E (VC) Primary School,
Stanstead Abbots 01920 870097

St John the Baptist CE VA Primary School,
Great Amwell 01920 870135

CHURCH/PARISH HALLS

Great Amwell Parish Hall:

Mr Denis O'Donoghue 01920 739222

Stanstead Abbots Parish Hall:

Mr Andrew Day 07588 016148

The Wilshere Hall, St Andrew's Church:

Ms Maureen Freeman 01920 870632

NATIONAL & LOCAL HELPLINES

Police non-emergency number 101

NHS Telephone Advice Service 111

24-hour National Domestic Abuse Hotline 0808 2000 247

Herts Domestic Abuse Hotline 08088 088 088

Samaritans (Freephone) 116 123

The Three Churches Foodbank Hub 07487 350918

East Herts Citizens Advice Service 03444 111 444

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) 0800 328 0006

Anne Robson Helpline: Time to Talk 0808 801 0688

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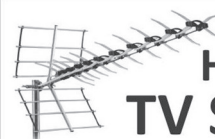
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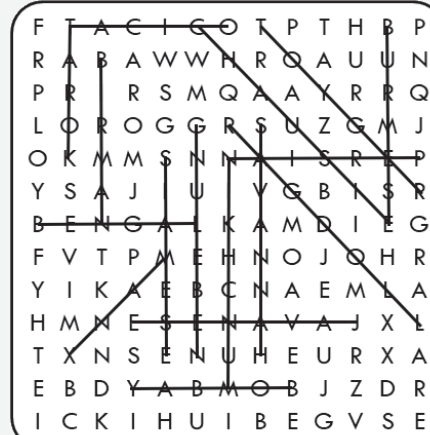
QUIZ: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

1. Sicily
2. Plato
3. 1989
4. Gold
5. Marie Curie
6. Nepal
7. Palindrome
8. *The Phantom of the Opera*
9. Vatican City
10. Stapes (in the ear)
11. Bald Eagle
12. Douglas Adams

WORDSEARCH: BREEDS OF CAT

GUESS WHO

1. Tom Hanks
2. Harry Styles
3. Queen Elizabeth II
4. Cher
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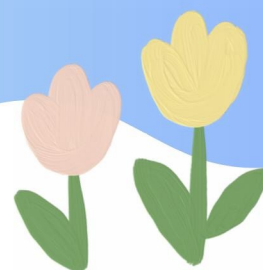
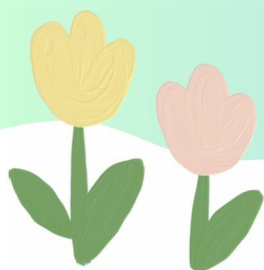
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